



# THE LIGHT LAGUNA MADRE YACHT CLUB

*October 2008*



(not my boat)

## Maintenance Madness

*Brian Mikiten*

I both love and hate my boat. I love the way it points and the surge of power it provides when I come around a buoy and set the sails for the new course. It is roomy, great fun to sail and gives me a sense of peace especially when I'm offshore with my family and out of cell phone range. But there is the other side of boat ownership - maintenance. While I've discussed this in past issues of *The Light*, recent events have reminded me of how important even the little items can be to the boat owner.

I had a sailing instructor who once said that all boats are sinking - it is just a matter of time and a good bilge pump that keeps them afloat. I found this to be the case after a recent visit to my boat. I arrived on the island at 7:30 p.m. and stopped by the boat to be sure it was still connected to shore power before heading to the house. This has been a problem in the past and I've developed a habit of checking power the day before sailing just to be sure the batteries are hooked up and charged. I pulled the companion way hatch and was greeted with floating sole boards. Lovely. I had a leak and my bilge pump had failed. So much for sailing.

### *Plastic in the ocean!*

If you are out in the gulf be aware of the large amount of debris floating on or just below the surface due to Hurricane Ike. I've heard a few explanations for this including the destruction of a plastic recycling plant in Houston by Ike. It is floating up on the beaches, getting in propellers and hurting the sea life.

While it may seem overwhelming at times, try to pick up any plastic (or other trash) you see in the ocean. That piece you recover may save the life of a sea creature or someone's propeller.

The coast guard continues to report debris in the gulf so check the website before you go out and continue to monitor the Notice to Navigators to ensure your safe boating.



As a design engineer, I've been trained to find the weakest link in a system and ensure that this potential failure point is as robust as possible. The bilge pump on all of our boats has two such points - the pump itself and the power supply system (fuse, battery, wiring) that runs it. In my case, the fuse housing with its cheap copper ends failed because the holder was put in the bilge and got wet. A typical bilge pump costs less than \$100.00 and the fuse holder is \$3.00. In my case, the \$3.00 part and more importantly, its location was responsible for the problem. Fuses do not belong in a bilge.

The leak is another issue. The last time I was on the boat, I pulled a few of the thru-hull sensors to check for barnacles and other debris. One of them didn't go back in perfectly and I noticed a small drip but didn't worry about it since I'd be back down shortly and heck, it was right next to the bilge pump. Life and work has kept me from the boat but it taught me a lesson that at my age I shouldn't have needed to learn again. Do the repair now so that it doesn't get worse.

As I pulled the sole plates, vacuumed out the bilge with a wet-dry vac and generally cleaned up the damage, I thought about other areas that we should all inspect especially in the corrosive salt air ocean environment.

- 1) Look for corrosion at all electrical connections behind your fuse panel, at the battery connections and the back of all connectors. Consider removing connectors and putting them back together several times to help clean them.
- 2) Pull up the sole up and look for leaks and test for mechanical and electrical issues. I had a chance to move a drain and replace a few screws while I had everything pulled apart.
- 3) Take a hard look at the engine compartment with an inspection mirror. I found a hose clamp that had corroded. It took only a few minutes to replace but could have been a disaster later.
- 4) Give a gentle yank on your connectors and be sure they are sound. If you are worried about doing this, you should replace the connectors and trust your gut.
- 5) Take the time once a season to take everything out of the boat. I found two leaking containers and a pile of junk left by the past owner in an area that I had prior to this incident, no reason to access.
- 6) Check your water bladder/holding tank. This is a common area for leaks.
- 7) Check the fuel line, connections and tank.
- 8) Check the steering system. Depending on the configuration, you may have quite a few cables and other fittings that need attention on a regular basis.
- 9) Check your standing rigging and look closely for corrosion at the joints.
- 10) Finally, know your boat. I spent too much time in the dark trying to figure out what lines went where.



### Reminder To All Members

**Anyone interested in serving on the board, please contact any board member. Several positions are available and you'll help the club grow and continue its success.**

*~ Fleet Captain's Report ~*September Race Results

Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup> was the first Gulf race of the fall series. Four boats made it to the starting line

Rocky Poovey took the honors of first home and first on corrected time! Most of us are convinced that Rocky moved the Sea Buoy because the rest of the fleet had some difficulty rounding the moving target after he rounded. Some also say that he took the wind with him too because the rest of the fleet found little in his wake. Great sailing Rocky!

Zephyr did a great job as well. Bob Fisher timed his tack for the sea buoy perfectly and made it on one pass. He crossed the line only a few moments behind Night Magic and took 2<sup>nd</sup> on corrected time.

It was a great race despite the nearly 2 knot current at the buoy! Many of us firmly believed that King Neptune keeps moving that buoy just to keep us on our toes.

The finish on corrected time was:

Night Magic  
Zephyr  
Sea Gal  
Summerwind

Bill & Cathy Maples on "Wind Dancer" did an outstanding job as committee boat. The start sequence was perfect and all of us racing really appreciate their efforts.

During the Fall Racing Series we are planning to present trophies for the races at the next social. The winners and the committee boat will receive their coveted LMYC Texas cocktail glasses on October 11th.

On Sunday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, we held two races in west bay. Rocky took first in both races. The really close finishes between our new racer, "Never Again" and "Sea Gal" made for exciting racing. The second race had a total time spread of 10 minutes 10 seconds corrected time between first and the last boat. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> were only 44 seconds apart! Wow, that's close racing!

Race results:

<u>Boat</u>	<u>Race #1</u>	<u>Race #2</u>
Never Again	3 <sup>rd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Night Magic	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
Sea Gal	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Zephyr	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>

Bill and Cathy Maples performed the committee boat duties again and did an outstanding job. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> race the committee boat had to initiate a general recall as half the boats crossed the line early. A race recall is not something that is done too often in our racing but was clearly the proper action to be taken and was well done.

As a reminder, it is important that all of us monitor channel 69 during the races to hear instructions from the committee boat. Many of us only turn on our radios if we want to transmit – we really should be listening.



### October Racing

The fall series continues with a Gulf race on Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup> and a Bay race on Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. This might be everyone's chance to beat Rocky because he'll be up racing *Night Magic* in the Harvest Moon Regatta and won't be here to give us much competition. Good luck to Rocky and his crack crew in the Harvest Moon!

### Arroyo Colorado Cruise & Dinner Postponed

Due to a number of conflicting factors I have decided to postpone the Arroyo Colorado Cruise & Dinner originally scheduled for October 25/26<sup>th</sup>. When and if I can work out the details we'll reschedule and let everyone know what's happening.

### The Nautical Auction is just around the corner

Don't forget that our annual nautical auction is just around the corner. This year it will be held on November 8<sup>th</sup> during the social. Remember to save up your goodies to be auctioned off to help out the club. This is always a fun event to save your allowances and be sure to attend.

### The Harvest Moon Regatta is Almost Here!

If you are like me, you know about the Harvest Moon Regatta run by the Lakewood Yacht Club and starting in Galveston running to Port Aransas along the coast. I've never had a chance to run it but hope to do so in the near future. A long race like this one especially for a boat coming from the SPI area is quite a challenge mostly because of the trek up the coast and back after the race is completed.

The next running will be 22nd annual running of the event and promises to bring in over 200 boats. The rules are straightforward and require a boat of 27' or greater length on deck and manned by four capable and experienced sailors.

One of the nice benefits of a race of this size is the fact that you will be with so many other sailors all going in the same direction. There is nothing like safety in numbers and all the benefits of having other more experienced people around you.

The weather looks great, the moon will be almost full and the winds are predicted to be quite favorable. Good luck to all who enter this year or next. We know that Rocky is representing the club and hope others will follow.

[www.harvestmoonregatta.com](http://www.harvestmoonregatta.com) for more information.





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Social announcements will now be made via email to ensure that they are timely. If you are not getting them, please contact Peggy.

Thanks to Jim for his regular contributions.

Brian Mikiten - Editor and Rear Commodore

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Port Isabel, Laguna Madre, Texas

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