CATALINA 350 INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Notes from Bill Templeton



C350 Association Technical Editor Bill Templeton

Sometimes space constraints limit how much of what I submit can be printed. In the Spring 2018 issue William Von Wagoner described how he replaced the water lift muffler drain screw with a petcock. Unfortunately, his pictures were not included.....I begin this issue with the pictures as sent to me. First the sheared thumb screw; second the patch and third the newly installed petcock.







My "new" stuff this month is to share with you a story/adventure by our good friends the Macdonalds. I first met Jim and Sue in Ocean Gate, New Jersey as they "transitioned" from a Macgregor to their Catalina 34 Sujimo. Since that time they have retired and become "snowbirds" purchasing a beautiful condo in Punta Gorda, Florida where they live six months out of the year....still in NJ for the "northern" sailing season on their C34. But what about sailing in southwest Florida? Well, the smart thing would be to have a southern boat.... and being smart people they bought a 2004 Catalina 350. The boat, however, was in Annapolis, Maryland so the question became how to deliver Moonrakerto Burnt Store Marina in Florida. What follows is Jim's accounting of the "adventure"....a successful enterprise as Pat and I had the honor and opportunity of sailing Charlotte Harbor with them this past January. **–Bill Templeton**, pbtemp6816@verizon.net

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A Change of Plans for Our New-to-us Catalina 350

My wife and I are "Snowbirds", living part of the year in New Jersey and part in Southwestern Florida. We have been in Florida for 3 years now without a sailboat, so the plans were hatched for the 2017/2018 season to purchase a sailboat in the North East and sail/motor her down to our Florida home: joining the adventure of the southern migration of boats to warmer weather that takes place every fall.

In June of 2017 we purchased a new-to-us 2004 Catalina 350, the perfect boat for our needs of comfort, space, headroom (both my wife and I are tall), and easy of sailing. We found the boat-for-us in Annapolis Maryland with 200 hours on the engine (original engine) and 19 hours on the 4 KW generator. This boat was lightly used in its past life and would meet our needs for the snowbird trip southward both down the ICW, on the "outside" and then our eventual cruising in Florida waters.

Charts, books, software updates were purchased to make ready for the trip. We went over all the systems to ensure proper operation and the time was counting down for shove off. Our plan was to leave before the majority of boats left; just shortly after the Annapolis Sailboat show in early October.

And then, in comes hurricane Irma (September 9,10 2017) which hit much of Florida hard, especially the Key West area, a planned stop over before our run up the West coast to our home port in Charlotte Harbor. In trying to evaluate the conditions of marinas and services along the ICW post-hurricane, our plans changed to, "wait and see". We wondered how quickly services would be back up and running, so the plan was then to delay the date of departure by a few weeks and depart after the majority of boats left.

As we rearranged dates and trip planning, both my wife and I encountered unexpected health issues, that required some follow up tests. At this point we started thinking about other options of moving the boat south as dates started slipping further into the fall. The options were to hire a captain to take her (which ended up being slightly cheaper than the final cost and putting hours on the engine and boat) or transport her via truck. Friends of ours had the year



before, brought their boat down the ICW from NJ to Fl. They were good enough to share their recorded trip expenses with us, (fuel, slips, repairs and side trips) so we had an idea of the cost of our upcoming trip and could evaluate the difference in price for the other options.

As we gathered names and information on trucking companies. Most of the "boating industry professionals" we spoke to stated trucking was not a good option due to reliability of timing, potential vessel damage and missing parts due to disassembly and transit. Trucking was not ending up sounding like a good option. About this time we remembered a former sailing club member (Cedar Mar Yacht Club of New Jersey) who transported his boat from NJ to South Carolina. After some back and forth emails he recommended the trucking company he used to move his boat, without any problems, and we started the bidding process.

We contacted two trucking firms: one, a large national company, and the second a regional small 2- truck firm (the recommended one). The large firm came in about $500 dollars less than the smaller company. But after some discussions with my wife we decided we liked the "family business" approach of the smaller company. My wife did the negotiation with the smaller firm and it ended up that they were willing to meet the larger firms lower price. Lesson #1 these pricing estimates are negotiable.

With trucking companies, if you execute a contract a few weeks in advance of the shipping date, the prices are set at current fuel costs for the trucks. If fuel prices rise, they state in the contract an additional fee will be applied per the gallons difference. Our prices stayed within a few cents and we were not charged extra.

Next, we needed a rigging company at both ends to de-mast her and ready her components for shipping. With advice from the large Annapolis boat yard we were in, we contracted with one of the two highly-recommended companies in the area. As we entered into an agreement with them we explained we are both "hands on" people and would be readying much of the components ourselves. Having them handle the standing rigging, de-masting, removing radar components, antennas and securing large items such as the mast and boom for shipping. We also mentioned that we would be at the boat during most of their work. Lesson #2, Some of the boat service companies are used to dealing with clients that do not get involved with their boat's move.

The rigging company owner, on the day of the work, stated that his men "Bristled" at having owners present

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during their work. That being said we stayed out of their way, but always close enough to see how things were coming apart and that care was being taken. If we know how something comes apart it will help us understand, if needed in the future, how to re-assemble. After all it's our boat!

The rigging company bubble wrapped the mast, boom, radar equipment and shrouds, and labeled everything and did a good job. We then set about bubble wrapping everything inside the boat that could move. Everything was taken out of cabinets, drawers. All electrical and electronic wiring that was disassembled was labeled even if it was a simple connection. We packed equipment in lazerettes with bubble wrap, life jackets and throw cushions so that nothing would move. Every cabinet and drawer was locked and taped shut.

Some of the harder items to secure were the Bimini frame, shrouds, davits, removable tables and anchors. (the trucking company wanted the anchors removed from their bow position). Where the rigger tied the mast, boom and dodger frame with cordage we applied addition reinforced tape to help secure it. Lesson #3, the tape did make the bond tighter and more secure and easy to apply, but left residue on the boat that needed some elbow grease and solution to get off. All hatches were taped shut for driving rain intrusion to protect them from leaks and all through hulls closed for road dirt and grime getting in them.

The trucking firms, when under contract, put you on their long range schedule and give you a departure time frame of about a week, as time approaches they tighten it up to a few days. I was going to attend the loading and drive down to Florida for the unloading, owners should be at both departure and arrival to inspect the boat for damage that is the most important time if a damage claim is to be disputed. I took many photos of most of the boat before it left Annapolis. The trucker will also inspect the boat for existing damage, note it and provide you with a checklist copy that is used at the other end to account for any transport damage. He takes a copy and you take your copy at departure. It ended up being about a day and a half notice for the eventual load/departure time to be finalized. This is the nerve-racking time period as the marina wants to know when they need their equipment and personal ready to load the boat. Most marinas will not start loading boats later in the day, as it takes a couple of hours and they do not want to pay workers to stay past quitting time. Lesson #4, keep in constant touch with the trucking company or better yet, if they will give you the truckers cell phone number, to stay abreast of his best estimate of an arrival time at the yard. Relay the timing to the marina office as updates come in. When the yard is happy, you're not wasting time waiting for your boat to be loaded. In the trucking contract the company states if they have to wait more than couple of hours for loading they have the right to charge an hourly fee!

The 350 with its beam of 13 feet was considered an "over-sized" load on interstates in some states, and it requires an escort car and can only travel during daylight hours on the interstate. Some cities also do not allow over sized loads going through their "city limits" during daylight rush hours. Ask for the planned route and the anticipated route time schedule.

The transport down was uneventful, the boat arrived in Florida as it left Maryland; in good condition with some well placed highway dirt and dead bugs. We did experience some bottom paint wear even with the carpeted trucking pads on the hull bottom. Most importantly nothing was damaged, broken or missing. The re-rigging was uneventful, as we had a good reference on a reliable contractor in Florida.

The cost difference ended up being approximately $2000 more by truck and was a difference of 10 days traveling and rigging versus approximately 35/50 days on the water. So the adventures of the on the water moving of the boat south were missed, but we started our Florida sailing season earlier.

I do believe to a certain extent that the people in the trade that advised against boat transport may know many horror stories, but due diligence of contracts, making sure your desires are met, extensive labeling and going the extra distance to wrapping and securing items made this trip a pleasant one. We are now enjoying our 350 in the Florida waters and planning our future trips.

–Jim Macdonald, Moonraker C350 # 217

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