

Spring Re-Commissioning – Check for a few neglected maintenance items

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By the time you read this, spring will have sprung and most of us will be fully engaged with our boat getting ready for splash time & a summer of activities. Most people have their rituals set but it’s always a good idea to remind people of a few items to ensure their boating season gets off to a good start. Also, now is a good time to do a few of those “find, fix and replace” projects that you have been putting off all last season while the boat was in the water. Most have the boat out of the water and now is the easiest time for a few neglected projects that many of us never get around to. I’ll focus on a few items that many of us never get around to

In no particular order here are a few things to double check before launch.

Stainless Steel Hose Clamps – When was the last time you looked at your hose clamps? I mean -really- looked at them. Most quality hose clamps will last a long time, but not indefinitely. It’s important to look closely at your clamps for any sign of rust or deterioration. If you see any signs of rust its best to just replace the clamps. Even quality Stainless Steel can rust especially in enclosed stagnant locations when devoid of oxygen. A location that is especially susceptible are the hose clamps around the stern tube where the shaft leave the boat, the other side of the hose is attached to your stuffing box. Many times the underside of those clamps on that hose are never inspected and vulnerable to deterioration. It’s advisable to replace those clamps with “T-Bolt” Band clamps. These are far superior to regular worm clamps and ideally suited for large hoses of this type. Also remember that all hoses below the water line should have two hose clamps

Thru Hulls/Seacock Valves– Have you greased your thru hulls this year? Forespar, manufacturers of our Marelon Thru Hull/Seacock Valves suggests we lubricate the Valves twice a year

1. Close valve.
2. Remove hose from tailpipe.
3. Remove remaining water from valve/tailpipe.
4. Swab waterproof grease (water pump grease, winch grease) or LanoCote™, generously, on ball.
5. Reattach hose, checking for fatigue and rusted hose clamps.
6. Activate valve a few times. When boat is hauled, you can perform steps 4-6 from outside the hull to lubricate opposite side of ball and seals.

Stuffing box – Did your stuffing box drip a bit too much for your liking last year? Many people have converted to dripless mechanical stuffing boxes like the PSS. For those that haven’t now is the time to replace your stuffing box packing. I have been a big fan of the GORE marine flax packing. It has excellent qualities that made stuffing box’s virtually drip free.

Windlass – Not everyone has a windlass, but for those that do, when was the last time you had it greased ? It’s very easy to forget about it, but its right up front on your boat week in and week out, dragging through grit and grime & doused with salt water. If left to itself it will fail on you at the most inopportune moment (been there-done that). Maxwell advises greasing the windlass at least once a year. It’s very easy to do. Here is a link to the procedure in pictures <http://www.catalina36.org/articles/miscellaneous/maxwellWindlass/maxwellWindlass.htm>

Engine Fresh Water Antifreeze – Many of us always check the impeller and the raw water system of our boats but neglect the Fresh Water Antifreeze (Typically the green stuff). It’s recommended by Westerbeke to flush out and change this ever few years. When was the last time you did this? I know I have neglected it myself, now might be a good time to change it out or you might be looking at larger bills down the road when internal rust takes over that the fresh water part of your cooling.

For a full check list of Spring Commissioning items go to
http://www.catalina36.org/site2004/Spring_Commissioning_checklist.htm