

The Watchhorn

December 2008

Holiday Harbor/Cabrillo Marina

I was helping a tenant connect to the Holiday Harbor Wi-Fi portal the other day, a resource available to Holiday Harbor tenants free of charge, when I began to think of how dependent we have become to our ever-changing technology. What has man come to when his first thought upon arriving at his boat is how close he is to the nearest Internet source? Isn't a boat supposed to be a getaway from the complexities of life? Isn't a machine, comprised of thousands of pieces of silica, plastic and metal interwoven into a maze of artificial intelligence, one of those complexities?

My father turns 63 years old this month. In his 30 career as a high school teacher he never once touched a single computer key (nor has he used a cell phone for that matter), and if you asked him what a PDA was he would probably assume you were calling him a derogatory name and put his fist in your mouth. His definition of the Internet would be a Yellow Pages with frontal nudity. Personally, I couldn't imagine life without my computer. What has happened in the last forty years to make us so dependent on the latest piece of electronic equipment? From the days of the cave man up until WWI, the biggest technological advancement came in the form of the bicycle. There were no touch screen computers, no satellite phones or GPS. Our culture seemed to thrive on the beauty of wide open spaces, of endless fields of golden wheat as it danced with the breeze. Those days are gone, hidden in the relentless buzz of microprocessors.

Indeed, as I climb aboard my 1968 Islander sloop, I have to admit I feel a sense of panic. It is as if I step through the looking glass into a fourth dimension of space and time as I descend the steps of my companionway. Gone is the hum of electronics, of mechanical "things" that do my work for me. My sloop has no GPS, no forward projecting depth sounder; it doesn't even have a wind speed indicator. When I want to know what direction the wind is coming from I have to lick my thumb and stick it in the air, and I have to admit, some part of me deep down rejoices at the thought. I have been raised in a society that cloaks their youth in a haze of digital, high tech, solar paneled protection in the hope that pushing buttons on a computer screen is a better life than digging a ditch on the back forty. I think they were wrong.

So what do we do to reject these mechanical influences and get down to basics? We buy a boat. In many eyes, a boat is the complete rejection of technology, of work, of a busy lifestyle. It is anything we want it to be and nothing we hate. We don't even have to leave the slip if we want, all we have to do is cross that imaginary line between oppression and freedom, located directly over the gunwale of our boat. There is still one major problem, however. As we carefully walk our beer from the fridge to the cushion under the bimini, we trip over speaker wires, bump into GPS receivers, and splash alcohol all over our thousand dollar digital mapping screen. We forget to unplug the satellite cable from the T.V. if we do take the boat out of the slip, and will lose all the food in our full-sized refrigerator if we don't run the generator during the short hop from Holiday Harbor to Avalon.

So while I applaud all of the ever-shrinking gadgets that make our life that much easier, I encourage each of you to search for that hint of peace only found in the sounds of the ocean. Turn off your mapping software and replace it with a worn out chart. Empty everything in your fridge and throw it in a cooler full of ice. If you are a power boater, turn of your engines every once in a while and listen to the silence that surrounds you. It is intoxicating. And besides, where are you trying to get to in such a hurry? Sometimes to truly get somewhere you have to start out by heading into nowhere at all.

D.H. Jr.

Real News

- Don't miss the annual **Holiday Harbor Christmas party**, set for December 6th from 3:00-6:00PM. It will be a time of good food, good people, and good times. Last year we had a great turnout and everyone went home happy and with their bellies full; what more can one ask for? Shortly after the party is the L.A. Harbor Float Parade, whose brilliant lights can be seen from the patio as they motor by within feet of the Holiday Harbor docks. We hope to see you then!
- If any of you have been interested in reserving the Boaters Lounge, now is a great time to sign up. The use of the room is free to tenants, there are chairs, tables and supplies for at least thirty people, and the 2009 calendar is wide open. Please keep in mind the lounge is available only during normal business hours.