

SUSPECT (MARVEL) Restoration Project: Update

Progress on Leak; Frustration with Engine

As reported in our August 12th Update, a stubborn, major leak forced us to haul the boat for a third time. To address the leak, wooden catboat expert, Bob Luckraft, suggested that we remove the lowest plank on her port side (the port garboard) in the area where the leak is located. This bit of catboat surgery would allow us to inspect the leak zone directly and help us to devise a solution.

Bob generously donated his services. He began the surgical procedures mid-August... a process he estimated would take three, full-time-equivalent work days.

On Day One, Bob removed the port garboard plank. Unlike the starboard plank, the port plank did not run the full length of the boat and would be easiest to remove. The screws holding the plank to the ribs were extracted (a labor intensive process) and the plank was removed.



Photo 1: Bob Luckraft removing the port garboard plank

As Bob had predicted there were no stopwaters (wooden dowels) located in the joints under the edge of the garboard where they should have been inserted. Bob speculates that an earlier repair had incorrectly inserted stopwaters in the seams below the garboard. Further, the existing stopwaters were made from ¼ inch **hardwood** dowels. These would not have swollen sufficiently to stop any leaks. Bob fashioned new ¾ inch stopwaters from Alaskan cedar, a **softwood** that swells significantly when wet.



Photo 2: No stopwaters where they should have been.

To insert the new stopwaters into the proper position, new holes needed to be drilled horizontally through the white oak keel. The curve of the bilge prevented the use of an electric drill so Bob drilled the holes using a classic bit brace and auger... yet another labor-intensive task.



Photo 3: Bob drilling new stopwater holes with a bit brace and auger

Once the holes had been drilled, Bob pounded the new stopwaters into place and secured them with a dab of marine epoxy. Thus ended Day One

Day Two began with Bob routing out all of the old caulking around the garboard rabbet (the inner seam against which the plank and caulking rest) and the deadwood. He then hammered new caulking cotton into the cleaned out seams.



Photo 4: Bob caulking the deadwood seams.

Rather than replace the old garboard plank, Bob decided to fabricate a new one from a piece of Atlantic white cedar that had been sitting in his shop in Falmouth for over 10 years. This project involved creating a template from the original plank. Once fabricated the template was placed atop the rough cedar board and traced. Bob then used a combination of saws and a belt sander to follow the trace lines and cut and tweak the new plank into shape.



Photo 5: Bob used a template of the old garboard plank to fashion a new one

With a bit of fussing the new garboard popped into place under the boat and against her ribs “looking like it had grown there.” Thus ended Day Two.



Photo 6: The new garboard looked “like it had grown there.”

When Bob returns this week or next for Day Three he will secure the plank to the ribs with new, countersunk and bunged bronze screws and then caulk it into place with caulking cotton and Interlux seam/bedding compound. A coat of anti-fouling paint will complete the process.

With some luck this complete restoration of the boat’s stopwaters, deadwood and garboard plank will have finally addressed the season-delaying leak. Fingers crossed.

All of which brings us to her engine.

As reported, the in-water tests of her Volvo MD7a diesel revealed a failure of its fuel transfer pump and its fuel injector in cylinder number one. Mike Brown’s donation of a functional fuel transfer pump addressed that problem. Unfortunately, our inability to remove the failed injector continues to thwart us. Replacement of an injector would normally take about 30 minutes. We’ve probably spent a full man-

day trying to remove the devilish thing to no avail. Out of desperation we have contracted the diesel mechanic at the Tripp boatyard on the hope that he may be able to apply some tool or trick that would succeed where we have failed.

If that does not work, we will have to remove the head from the engine and bring it to an engine rebuilding shop... yet another labor-intensive (and possibly expensive) process. Fingers crossed that the Tripp-Tech works his magic. Stay tuned.

We still remain hopeful that our beloved Old Girl will return to the water before season's end but the window continues to close... and, as we suspected, a few potential hurricanes are forming in the South Atlantic. No sense relaunching SUSPECT if a hurricane threatens.

Rest assured, however, that should this season end without a splashdown, we will honor all patron lunch cruises, races and adventures come next year.

Gotta love old wooden catboats, eh!?

As mentioned in our earlier updates. We are eternally grateful to all of our patrons out there for your generosity. Many continue to contribute to our restoration fund despite the unexpected problems and delays. THANK YOU.

Again, please share our restoration adventure with those in your network. The on-going repairs are cutting into our budget and winter storage looms. So any and all new funds would be appreciated.

As before, credit card donations are welcomed via our GoGetFunding web site:

<https://gogetfunding.com/marvel-an-historic-boat-restoration-project>

... or directly by check to Conway c/o MARVEL, Box 46, Westport Point, MA 02791 for deposit into the MARVEL fund.

I will send a follow-on update as soon as we have a definitive prognosis of the on-going engine repair and re-launch efforts. Stand by.

-John Conway