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The Curse of the Pox

Cleaning and sealing may revive anodized aluminum.

Perhaps it's a result of leaving my boat in the California sun and polluted air for half a year without a washdown due to being away, but my 29-year-old CS36 has suddenly developed a bad case of the pox on every piece of aluminum hardware on the deck. Any suggestions for dealing with it?



PS ADVISOR

on the BoatUS website (www.boatus.com), suggests cleaning the surface using a mild abrasive like Bar Keeper's Friend (www.barkeepersfriend.com) and fine bronze wool, and then sealing the surface with a wax. Sparmaker Seldén Mast recommends applying Woody Wax (www.woody-wax.com) using bronze wool to seal the surface and remove the pox. Casey cautions against using a polish on aluminum as some are so abrasive they will peel away the anodizing. We've had success with Mothers (www.mothers.com) and Prism Polish (www.mppros.com), but we do not recommend using the Mothers with the Powerball on aluminum. Be sure to read the label on any polish before using it; some advise against use on anodized aluminum.

Luther Abel
 Indulgence, CS36
 Alameda, Calif.

While regular washdowns and waxing/sealing the aluminum twice a year will help prevent the dreaded pox, reviving stricken aluminum hardware is not as easy because the anodized coating has been compromised.

Boat maintenance master Don Casey,

STICKY ZIPPER

I recently purchased an Islander 36. The cabin overhead is a sort of PVC material with a series of nylon zippers to give access to the underside of the deck. Said zippers are, well, completely zipped. I can't budge them; I've tried the proprietary Teflon-based zip lubes; the various low-friction

general lubricants like Sailcote; and finally the old all-systems stand by, WD-40. The zippers are still stuck fast. Do you have any ideas, suggestions or remedies?

Terry Rugg
 Tatenda, Islander 36
 San Diego, Calif.

Most of us attack stuck or corroded zippers with force, but that is a bad idea. Usually, the zipper pull can be coaxed loose, or at least broken off and the zipper teeth will remain serviceable. Another bad idea is using WD-40, or any petroleum-based product, on plastic zippers.

Our suggested course of action would be to try soaking the offending zipper (slide and teeth) with vinegar. This cheap remedy won't harm the fabric. When you cannot soak it (as in this case), wipe it down with a rag soaked in vinegar, and use a toothbrush to remove any corrosion. If that fails, spray the zipper with a silicone spray. Be careful with overspray though; surfaces to be painted or varnished can be contaminated and adhesion will suffer.

Then, attach a cord to the zipper slide and try to coax it in the direction of closing the zipper. If this too fails, then you'll need to carefully break the zipper slide in half and remove it, then replace it. Once the zipper is repaired (and with any new zippers), be sure to use a zipper protectant like Snap-Stick (www.shurhold.com) or another waxy product designed to will keep it from corroding and jamming again.



Photo courtesy of Terry Rugg

Reader Terry Rugg, left, gave up on the stubborn zippers aboard his Islander 36 and turned to the Islander Owners Association for help. He credits Corky Stewart for helping him find out how to replace the zippers: islander36.org/zippers.html.