

## Have Portable GPS, Will Charter

**M**y wife and I are avid sailors, but cannot afford our own sailboat, so we charter. When we first began chartering, I purchased a Magellan Nav 6000 handheld GPS Chartplotter, because you never completely know the navigation capabilities of a charter sailboat until you leave the dock. It served us well over the last seven years. In November, a friend purchased an Island Packet Cat, and asked me to help him move it from Destin, Fla., to Port Charlotte, Fla. During the 10-day trip, the limited capabilities and slow processor of the Nav 6000 got me thinking of a replacement. I searched the Internet, but found nothing that improved on the Nav 6000, so I decided to build my own, and came up with the Standard Horizon CP 180i as the basis.

To make it a portable GPS, I purchased some RAM Mounts equipment, and went to our local Ace Hardware Store and purchased a 12-volt extension cord and three stainless steel, 4 mm x 20 mm machine screws, washers, and lock nuts.

I cut off the female end of the extension cord and soldered the two wires to the black (ground) and red (12-volt power) wires of the Standard Horizon supplied power I data cord. I used a multimeter to make sure that I got it right. Also, I pre-positioned shrink wrap of varying sizes so that the final product was waterproof and looked good.

The GPS was \$420 with shipping. The total price for my system was less than \$550. Granted, my system is not truly portable as it requires a 12-volt power outlet. However, I have yet to find a charter boat without one in the cockpit. I always plugged my Magellan Nav 6000 into external power.

Since subscribers like myself are always looking for the most capabilities for the least amount of money, I thought you might be interested in my little project.

Chet and Patty Parham  
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*The complete assembly installed. Clockwise from top left: The Standard Horizon 180i; the GPS/chartplotter's power supply; and the RAM Mounts equipment.*