

## Poor Man's Air Conditioner

There have been many articles written in response to installing air conditioning systems aboard various types of boats dependent upon where in the country you're located and as to how much time you're planning on being on the boat. Since I can't afford a dedicated and professional air conditioning system, my eyes would end up skimming over the articles haphazardly knowing that I wouldn't be tested on the content. And really, Southern California isn't exactly the Death Valley of the temperate challenged. But there are those days when the breeze dies and the Santa Ana conditions create hot temperatures that send most people to the cool zones, official sites that include shopping malls with ice cream parlors. It was during one of those heat spells that caused an epiphany that I now can relay to the 350 readership.

The last thing I plan on doing to any boat that I'm sailing is to poke a hole into her, at least deliberately. That eliminates water cooled systems and thankfully, the expense. I then perused the local Lowes for ideas and came to the same conclusion that those in the window units mounted in any way, shape, or form, would require getting in and out of the boat a deadly game of body contortions. These window units and others require venting systems that pump the hot air out of the living area and I wasn't quite sure as to how to accomplish this without painful and expensive reworking of the boat. The option of venting the air into the sleeping area of the ship's captain was summarily rejected with extreme prejudice.

Then one day, I checked the Costco online website and they had a thin unit with a small footprint and a five foot venting hose very like the one dryers use to vent hot air out the back wall. Hmmm, I looked around at the salon and pictured the perfect hole already punched above the hanging locker, although a bit more elongated than I have hoped. The fever was upon me as I quickly measured the height of the window...yes, it would accommodate the hose quite nicely. I decided not to use the Lewmar window as the exit panel but instead opted for two walls connected with wing nuts so that the installation can be removed for serious rain storms or boat washing. The panels are made of that wonderful Starboard sheet that I acquired at West Marine. The Lewmar window was my inside template so that there would still be a match to the inside gasket around the window.



*Figure 1*

*Figure 1* shows the panel with the venting hose mounted. I had to slightly trim the hose bracket but since it was plastic, it trimmed easily. The outside panel is larger so that it can match up to the outside aluminum frame.

*Figure 2* shows the outside panel with the carriage bolts permanently mounted and gasket material to help sealing to the outside frame. I added screening material for pest control.



*Figure 2*

Figure 3 is what it looks like from the outside view. The black clips are used to hold a plastic sheet for those rainy days and I find the hot air exhaust sufficient to blow the sheet while in use. Assembly simply requires mating the two pieces by slipping the inside panel onto the long carriage bolts and spinning the wing nuts until just finger tight.

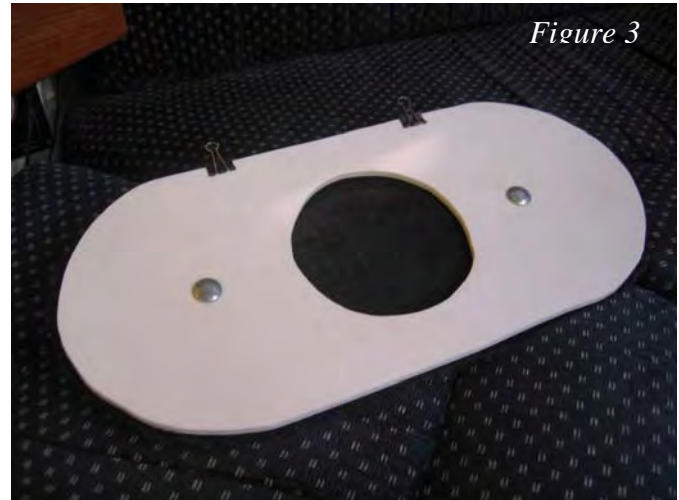


Figure 3



Figure 4

Figure 4 shows the outside panel installed and you can see that I added a port visor for those misty days that we sometimes get here in Oceanside.

Figure 5 is the inside panel with the hose attached and ...



Figure 5



Figure 6

Figure 6 shows the unit sitting on the one storage area that was sacrificed for cool comfort in the summer. Any similar AC unit can be used and the current 10,000BTU system I have now is adequate for Southern California. I use a truck buckle belt system during sails to hold the unit to the wall and haven't had any problems. This ended up being a rather inexpensive alternative for the poor man in these economically trying times. Best thing is that it's not permanent and can be stored during the off season.

Article by Scott Townsend - Based in Oceanside, CA  
C350 # 190, "Copacetic"