

## *MM Summer Blue Sheet #2 from Puget Sound Washington*

### **Preparing for Summer Part II I RAISED THE MAST BY MYSELF**



Before I launch this story let me quote from the sales brochure for my sailboat:

“One person can raise the mast, launch the boat and sail away in 10 to 15 minutes...The mast is so light that a kid can raise it.”

I have owned the boat 27 years and never come close to matching their claim with or without help. There have been times that we have raised the mast in about an hour. I’ve even done it by myself. This was one of the years when I tried it alone.

I begin by lowering my small dinghy from the bulkhead to the beach. I can pack it on my back.

The tide is low, so the water is a long way out. A hundred yards maybe. I carry beyond sand and small gravel, across a wide patch of barnacles and another wide stretch of sand dollars. I reach the sandy area where I launch my little boat. Why is the dinghy heavier this year?

A short row puts me at the boat where I snap the dinghy line on to a cleat, climb the boarding ladder and prepare to go to work. Can I remember all the steps? It’s been a year.

1. Get the mast support device with the roller on the end and clamp it in place.
2. Remove the bolt from of the foot of the mast which holds it to the boat when trailering
3. Slide the mast back on the roller so that the foot is where it bolts to the step bracket
4. Line up holes in the step bracket on the boat with holes in the mast foot bracket

We pause here to explain that it is not easy to get all four holes lined up so that the bolt can slide all the way through. I remember that I’ve done it before as I wrestle with the 30’ mast.

Using most of my surplus strength I finally get the holes lined up. I have used up my hands as well. I need one more hand to put the bolt in the holes. I think of the terms “short-handed,” and “helping hand,” and “need another hand.” The sun is hot and sweat pours for the hour it takes for me to finally use a leg to free a hand to fight the bolt (luckily) into place.

5. Bring block and tackle from below deck for use in raising the mast
6. Bring the specially designed mast-raising pole from below deck
7. Attach mast fore-stay piece to end of mast-raising pole
8. Line up holes of mast-raising pole with special holes in base of mast

We pause again to explain that the mast-raising pole is 10 feet long and must be held upright bearing the weight of the block and tackle and fore-stay while the two bolt-holes are lined up with the special bolt holes in the base of the mast. Perhaps we have already described how difficult it is to line up four holes and get a bolt through with only two hands! More sun, more sweat. Knees tired and bent on hard deck. Holding that pole perfectly upright seemed impossible. At some move the holes must have lined up as I had a bolt in the right place.

9. Hook up the block and tackle to raise the mast by pulling on the line fastened to the mast-raising pole (which allows for leverage for block and tackle to raise mast)

I am remembering that sales brochure: “*The mast is so light that a kid can raise it.*” My youngest grandson can do it, but he’s husky and 21. I’m not husky and I forget when I was 21. So my pulling didn’t do anything. Finally, I wrap the rope around a sail winch and inch the mast up until I can crawl forward and install the fore-stay holding pin.

10. The mast is raised. 5 hours!

I report to Max via my Smartphone. He replies

*“You and the boat are aging together...and she has one more year in her – every year.”*

That may be true but if there is to be another year I’m not going to try to raise the mast by myself. I’m going to line up a helping hand. Or better yet, I’ll stand by and maybe coach and be ready to offer the extra hand myself.

Let it be said, for this year, summer has started. The mast is raised!

— For the Moment...Art Morgan, June 13, 2014