

Why Me, God?

I've created a maritime version of the Old Testament's Book of Job. Satan says to God: "There is one of your favorite servants, sailing his beautiful yacht on your beautiful ocean. I'll bet you I can bust his bum." So God and Satan make their bets. Poor old Captain Job. He never questions "Why me, God?" or even says "Curse you, Raymarine, Garmin, Volvo or ProFurl."

Every day there is a new test. Monday, the watermaker springs a leak. Tuesday, the seals on the marine toilet go bad. Tuesday is a double day, as the computer also contracts a terminal virus. That's OK; Wednesday is an off day and Job fixes the computer and the toilet. After spending the night at anchor in shallow water with 30-knot winds in the morning, he discovers that, although the engine has been running an hour, the batteries have not charged. He almost cries out "Not another problem! Why me, God?" as he realizes both alternators are not delivering any amps. OK, he gets that fixed by the afternoon. It is only a broken wire, but it's getting harder and harder to focus efficiently with the continued onslaught of daily new glitches and breakdowns.

He counts the Job list. It has 35 entries on it. There is still the busted watermaker, the autopilot computer that failed its smoke test a week ago, the strange leak in the outboard motor that is dripping oil down the shaft, the need to retrieve the Vise-Grip that slipped into a hidden and



inaccessible place in the bilge, the leaky main hatch, the leaky mast collar, the broken oven that needs a new thermostat (he hopes it's only that), and the two not-

The list of endless, thankless boat jobs, from fixing the busted watermaker to plugging strange leaks, is staggering — but steadfast salts prevail.

yet-installed solar panels he has carried around for a year.

Not to mention the lack of time to do the routine maintenance such as oil changes and cleaning, the overdue winch servicing, a halyard replacement, reefing line replacement, sunshade repairs, past-due filter changes and so forth. Job wistfully eyes the new, exciting projects he is working on; they are sitting on the settee in a box. He was building a switch panel for some aft deck lights, and a clever device to prevent fuel overflows when pumping up the day tank. He enjoys these creative jobs. But they remain half-finished and set aside; their priority is downgraded to deal with the daily major and minor breakdowns. He hopes to make the boat better and more comfortable, as soon as the list gets smaller. He hopes to leave the frigid south and sail north to Queensland or the Pacific islands.

Did Satan give God odds, or is it an even bet? Job is steadfast. "I am a sailor," says he, "and God has provided me with spare parts for a reason, and exotic ports in which to use them." Amen.

Jeffrey M. Stander