

Shipshape – A Plan

By Jeff Adams

The lessons learned by elders provide wisdom for our betterment. Gil, a neighbor from my childhood beach-life engrained in us that if we were going down the hill from the street level parking to the beach cabins, make sure we didn't waste a trip with empty hands. The same held returning up the stairs. In doing so we learned indirectly how to keep the place neat and tidy.

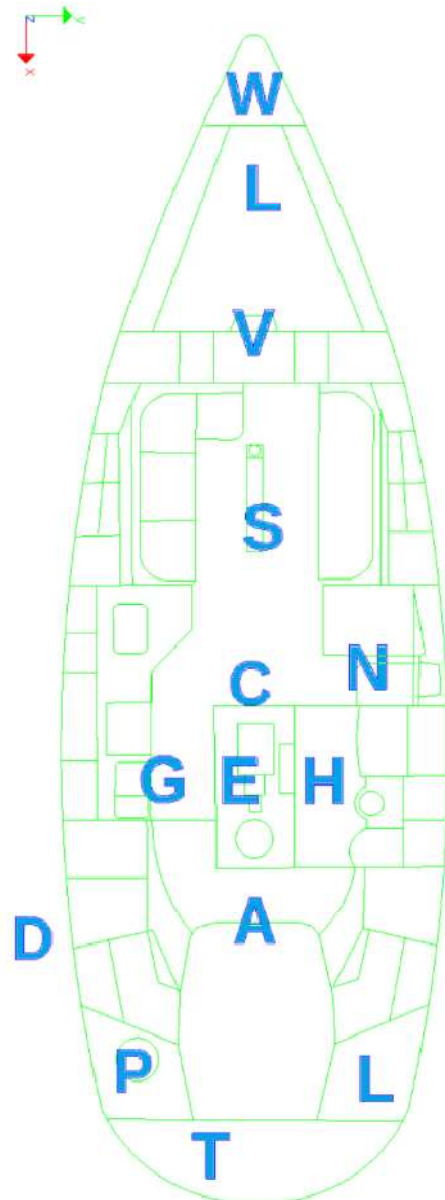
My wife Sue and I grew up on the beach. Like a beach cabin, a boat is either shipshape or it quickly becomes a hovel. A yacht is understandably shipshape, and a floating hovel is not a yacht. Sue and I now own and sail a 1998 Bavaria 38 Ocean, our *Zephyrus*. We purchased it from a mutual childhood friend eight years ago. Mike, the seller, is a lifelong sailor who had his name at the top of two trophies in the Lahaina Yacht Club before the big fire destroyed it, noting his accomplishments in the Vic-Maui Pacific Ocean sailboat race. Mike knows a thing or two about sailboats. He said to us, "Guys, this is the ultimate cruising boat. Trust me, you two will love it and I will make you a deal." He bought the next beer and with that we flipped over a bar napkin and completed the buy/sell agreement.

During the purchase inspection the surveyor said, "What kind of slob owned this boat? He didn't even try to make it

presentable for a survey." I apologized, telling the surveyor Mike was our good friend and a slob. We completed the sale and didn't look back. Mike is still our friend, and the boat is everything he said it would be in comfort and in sail-ability following a deep, post-purchase cleansing and several dumpster runs.

With *Zephyrus*, we have explored the far reaches of the Puget Sound and cruised annually through Washington's San Juan Islands and the Gulf Islands of British Columbia. The boat stands up in a blow and is outfitted to be cozy enough to use year-round in the Puget Sound. We have our sights on a circumnavigation of Vancouver Island or a trip up the Inside

Passage to Alaska. We also called the boat our only home for five years as liveaboards.



Primary Zone

Hands-On Experience

The only way we could have spent so much time aboard our 38-footer was by being vigilantly shipshape. Our boat is just big enough for two mature adults to call home, though our collective five adult kids are always welcome to join us for a weekend cruise because the guest cabin (a.k.a. the vee berth) is ready for them. I can imagine, but don't want a bigger boat, yet anything smaller seems impossible. The cost of bigger still isn't an option and on anything smaller we would have had to either move off or stay slip-bound, unattractive alternatives to our plan to use our boat so shipshape it was.

There is a logical method for being shipshape. When it comes to storage, nothing is left to random happenstance. Shipshape involves thoughtful planning. Anything brought aboard is meant to be aboard and if it comes aboard, it will be "properly stowed." Most boaters have their own meaning for those terms, but for us it means clear walkways above and below deck, and uncluttered living space with settees cleared and berths made and ready to use.

The same holds for above deck and in the cockpit.

PRIMARY ZONE (Bow to Stern)	LEFT-RIGHT ORIENTATION	FORE-AFT ORIENTATION	STORAGE COMPARTMENT (Lowest to Highest)
W-Windlass & Anchoring	P-Port side	F-Forward	B-Bilge
V-Vee Berth	C-Centerline	C-Center	F-Floorboards or on-Deck
S-Settee	S-Starboard	A-Aft	U-Under Seat or Bench
N-Navigation Station			S-Seatback (behind)
G-Galley			L-Lower Locker or Cabinet
E-Engine Room			M-Under Mattress
H-Head			D-In Drawer or Desk
M- Master Cabin/Owner's Suite			C-On Countertop, Shelf or Tabletop
D-Deck			T-Top or Upper Locker/Cabinet
I-In-Deck Fwd. Storage			H-In Hanging Locker
C-Cockpit			W-On Wall or Bulkhead
L-Lazarette			R-Rail or Rail mounted
P-Propane Locker			A-Arch/Davit
T-Transom			O-Other
PRIMARY ZONE (Bow to Stern)	LEFT-RIGHT ORIENTATION	FORE-AFT ORIENTATION	STORAGE COMPARTMENT (Lowest to Highest)

When the winds howl, we never have to worry about what might crash below. If something isn't necessary for our foreseeable comfort, use, enjoyment and repair of the boat, it isn't welcome aboard. Clutter is the enemy. If something is temporarily required to affect a repair or improvement, it still needs onboard stowage, or at the end of the day it will automatically end up in the dock box or in the trunk of my car. Being shipshape has allowed us to cast off on Friday afternoons generally less than 30 minutes from our arrival at the boat.

We have developed a six-dimensional storage plan for *Zephyrus* that helps

make and keep our storage optimized and tidy. After seven years, the boat remains as uncrowded as seems imaginable on a 38-footer, though it is typically stocked with provisions and spare parts for an extended cruise. Our storage methodology uses a four-letter identification code for all storage compartments and spaces onboard *Zephyrus*. Ours is unique to our boat. Yours will be too.

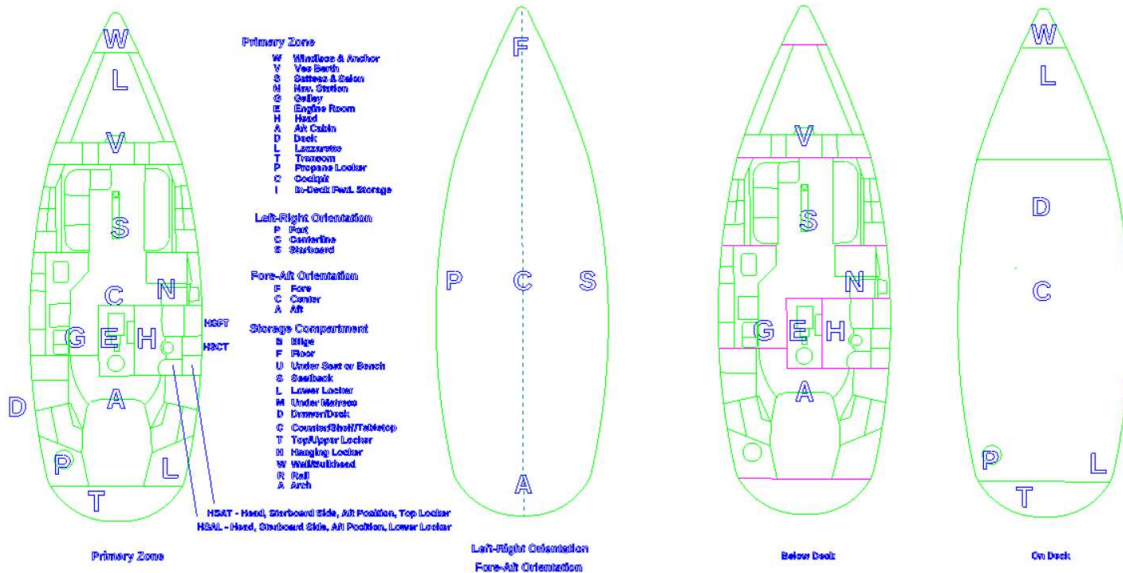
The first dimension is the deck level which for us is either above deck or below deck. The relation to the companionway determines whether something is inside or outside and thus above or below deck. Next comes

the “primary zone” that could generically refer to “cabin area” below deck and “deck station” above deck. Fortunately, with 38 feet, we can combine cabin and deck station zones without confusion in the unique first letter in our naming methodology. This letter is followed by a relative athwart port-center-starboard indicator followed by a relative fore-center-aft indicator which make up letters two and three of the scheme.

This method is designed to more accurately identify

of the master cabin. The P and the A are relative to the specific zone which, in this example is the Head. W, the final letter in the code refers to the “Wall or bulkhead,” but more generically it is the relative height and type of storage compartment or space which ranges from the Bilge up to the upper Rail on the solar arch followed by the catch-all “O” for Other. There is a possibility that there is still room for duplication, and thus ambiguity that we address by adding a numerical indicator, if needed, which

locations. This creates a mathematical potential of nearly two thousand four-letter storage spots within *Zephyrus*. Fortunately, there are only 126 unique locations on our boat that we identify with a resulting and unique four-letter code. On *Zephyrus* we have an LSAL which means Lazarette, Starboard Aft Locker which is where most spare lines, aft dock lines and the emergency tiller are stored. Going below deck and forward, we have an VPAU, the storage location found in the V-berth cabin, Port



the zone and then the relative location within the zone. For example, the code for the inside wall area of the head behind the shower stall starts with “H” and is followed by a “P” for Port side, and an “A” for Aft, and finally a “W” for Wall. In absolute terms, “HPAW” is starboard of the engine room and starboard of the galley and forward

we use for stacked drawers and the like.

Our boat has an inside and outside, fifteen zones, each with three fore and aft and three athwart indicators (including C for both center and centerline, respectively), where there are twelve uniquely identified storage compartments or

side, Aft, Under the seat. Here we keep a plastic tote of hose clamps under which we store the jumper cables. We also have a nearby VSAU that identifies the opposite, starboard seat wherein the spare hatch and portlight parts are stored.

We recorded the contents of possible storage

locations each on a simple spreadsheet. This log is reviewed annually to determine what needs to be updated. We currently have five named but unused storage locations aboard. These are less convenient than the ones in use but may be used later if we need additional space for such things as stores for a longer cruise.

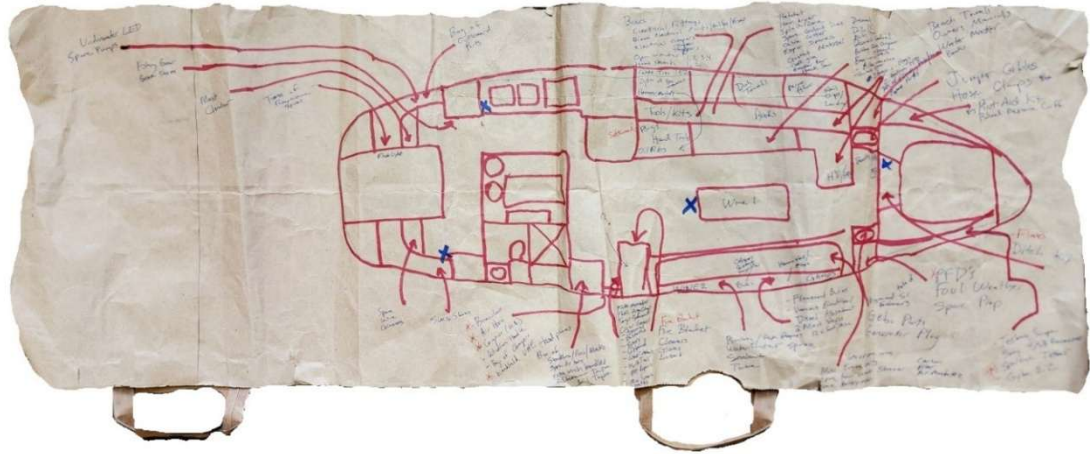
There is one empty full boat width unused area in the vee berth cabin that has always been intended for a future bow thruster or full-sized water maker. Currently it is empty but could easily fit a couple scuba tanks and dive gear.

It helps that everything on the boat belongs aboard, has a place on the boat and stays on board, even when not in immediate use. When we moved back ashore to a tiny beach house next to Gil a couple of years ago, we decided that we liked the boat being fully stocked and outfitted "as is" and ready to use. *Zephyrus* remains our primary residence; it's also our vacation house. Instead of moving all the galley wares, tools, clothes, toiletries, food, etc. back

and forth to the tiny cabin, we simply said, "we can do without this, or we will replace that with a second set that will stay in the cabin." Moving "ashore" was easy after five years of simplistic boat living and the boat remains

cordless drill is not available.

Zephyrus is an older boat in the life stage where things routinely break or require repair. We know this and we plan for it to avoid weekend ruining surprises.



shipshape, ready to go. When we use the boat we travel lightly, bringing a current book to read, maybe a laptop, a few fresh clothes, or not, and a bag of fresh groceries. When we are done cruising, we secure the boat, give it a cleaning and then generally with one trip up the dock we take off the garbage the dirty clothes and other personal gear that we will need before our next return. Because it is so easy, the fridge on the boat stays freshly stocked and ready, just like in the cabin. If something breaks while we are out, we generally have the spare parts to fix it and the correct tools to address most issues without panic or having to be reminded the hard way that our only

How-To Steps:

One rainy day while messing about on the boat, I decided to draw a rough, inside floor plan of *Zephyrus* on an unfolded grocery bag. Then I placed it on the table in the settee, proceeded to open each of the storage compartments and write down the contents.

Eventually it occurred that it would be easy to download the actual floor plan of our boat from the internet, which I did. Then I opened it up in a drawing program on my PC and started thinking about how I could identify each space and its contents in a visually logical way. After a few iterations, the method I described above became

clear. I sketched the four-letter location codes with their related components, fine-tuning as it progressed. It was mentally challenging yet fun, and the unnecessary gear started coming off the boat.

Once drawn, I shared the concept with friends. One said, "Why bother? Chaos is inevitable on a boat" to which I replied, "...if you keep your boat like a hovel..." Another said, "I've been boating exactly like this for 30 years and I already know this. You don't need to tell me."

would work well for boats 20 feet to 200 feet long though the boats they had in mind would have a unique set of quite different storage codes but that generally follow the same methodology. Ben, who runs Sail Bainbridge charters said, "I'm going to do that and make a couple extras to include all my safety gear and locations such as through hulls, first aid kits, radios, placards, barf bags and fire extinguishers. Maybe I'll even include the expiration dates on the stuff that needs to be renewed." Why not?

this methodology, the resulting set of documentation will be unique for every boat and owner. We find that it is good to annually sit down and make sure we are both aware of what is aboard and what we don't have or just don't need. Changes to our documentation and the related accumulation are now minor and we still see no reason to upgrade to a bigger boat. Candidly, my car and our dock box are disaster zones full of un-homed boat supplies, but our boat is not. One unforeseen benefit is that our hull's painted water line is about 2 inches above the actual outside water, probably because we have only what we need to peacefully enjoy our shipshape *Zephyrus*.

<p>VPCF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sue's sea/deck boots • Jeff's sea/deck boots 	<p>VCFM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMPTY-Reserved for future water maker
<p>VPAU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumper cables • Tote of misc. sizes of hose clamps • Additional softwood and foam bungs 	<p>VCCB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to depth transducer • Access to speed through the water transducer • Sponge, turkey baster and ladle


Others saw that a bit of up-front organization would have immediate benefits in a tidier, more usable, and safer boat. Others recognized that the methodology

After nearly sixty years, Gil is still our wise, next-door neighbor on the beach and our cabin, his cabin and *Zephyrus* all remain shipshape. By following

Jeff, and his wife Sue Adams, are homeported on Bainbridge Island, Washington, where they operate Torrid Marine, makers of Yacht Quality marine water heaters and other systems designed to make yachting more comfortable.



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OCEAN NAVIGATOR
THE VOYAGER'S RESOURCE



Jeff Adams (*Short Tacks, "Shipshape," page 26*) and his wife Sue are homeported on Bainbridge Island, Wash., where they sail their classic Bavaria 38 Ocean, *Zephyrus*, throughout Puget Sound and the Salish Sea. In this issue, Jeff uses first-hand experience to explain how to effectively organize equipment aboard your boat. The Adams currently own and operate Torrid Marine, makers of yacht quality marine water heaters and other systems designed to make yachting more comfortable.