

The View from Atlantic Avenue
By Tom Duym

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Getting a Job Done for a Profitable and Safe Venture on the Ocean

As I was steaming The *Ruth* up Blue Hill Bay for an EMSP info session for students at George Stevens Academy, and admittedly feeling quite satisfied with how this boat project has come together, I realized that it is really a project that involves the whole community, especially if your existence involves boats in any way. And in Downeast Maine, that community can stretch across many miles of coastline. The *Ruth* started out as a working lobster catcher with good bones and some genuine “Novi Character”. Older Novis (she was laid up in 1992) are not known for speed but with the 210 hp Cummins and a reconditioned prop, she chugs along pretty economically at 10-11 knots, which just feels, well, proper for this mini fish boat.

As I fiddle with a new multi-function display screen, I really appreciate the ability to pop in to Blackmore Electronics and spend the time talking over what would be reasonable options to upgrade *Ruth's* electronics. An honest discussion, a couple of obvious decisions and a week later, there sits a new install with nicely cleaned up cabling and logical wiring based on my crude attempt to get enough done to just get underway.

Long Cove Marine came up with a custom exhaust riser that solved some not so simple geometry for converting her to wet exhaust from a dry stack. All with a couple of photos and a less than adequate verbal mash-up from me, works great! Billings Diesel and Marine were very accommodating for a haul out. Fifield Lobster allowed me to open a fuel account so I could fuel up at weird times and I don't even sell any product to them! (I would if I could actually catch any amount of something...) Kennedy Marine in Milbridge for finding some great shape engine parts that “were out back somewhere” saving me time and money. Hamilton Marine for all the extras you miraculously need upon entering one of their stores.

My point is all these businesses, though certainly run to make a profit and keep people employed, exist with an unspoken understanding of just what it takes to get a job done when time is money and quality can make the difference for a profitable and safe venture on the ocean. It is a reflection of these fishing small communities and the shared values that fishermen, boatmen, shoreside support and family livelihoods depend on. The accommodation and consideration of getting a job done right and in a timely fashion is not a marketing gimmick, it is a way of life. In these close communities it is the critical infrastructure we need to keep this industry going well into the future and embrace the adaptability that the future may require.

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