RADAR WITH REMOVABLE DOME MOUNT

Mark Ketcham: *Marcy*

The Radar dome is on most boats is normally positioned either up the mast (right in the way of the crane when stepping), on a pole at the stern, or on the backstay. All of them have disadvantages and on the Great Lakes, the Radar is only needed a small fraction of the time. When we do get “socked in”, it is a great asset.

After fondling all the units I could find, the C series really stood out. The Navionics charts, Sea Talk communications, and great GPS.

Placement above the navigation desk on the headliner allows viewing from both the seat and the cockpit. I intend to install a second set of plugs on the pedestal, when I rebuild it this winter, so I can operate the controls from the helm. The chart can be seen fairly well now, even with the smaller C70 head. I placed the fluxgate compass and the smart heading units under the desk drawer on the forward bulkhead. This is wasted space and is dry, low in the hull, and well away from the deviation causing stuff.

The GPS instructions called for low mounting away from obstructions or potential damage, after some trials, I mounted it at the stern as shown. Did have one “loss of signal” when the Admiral laid a cushion on it and had a snooze!

After looking at available mounts with prices from $275 to $1,500 I choked and got thinking. The pole and backstay mounts only get the antenna up about 10’ above your head and many boats have a section of “T” track on the front of the mast for hardware anyway, why not use this for a sliding mount? I had a 5’ section of track and a 6 wheel car left over from a furling mainsail project . The wheels are hard rubber and mounted on a aluminum casting that formed a 90 degree surface. I pop riveted a frame together from hardware store aluminum shapes, mounted the antenna and took it to the boat. The Admiral sat in the bosons chair and drilled and tapped the mast through the track. I positioned the track about 5’ off the deck so the antenna would end up about 10’ above. On hoisting the antenna, it looked fine but had more side to side movement than we wanted. Back home, I was tripping over an old set of Roller Blades. Urethane wheels and bearings! A couple of angle aluminum bolted to the foot long angle that mounted the small wheels and the mount works great. I had a friend weld the mount joints, could probably have trusted the big Pop Rivets but, why not.