

# FREEMAN K. PITTMAN INNOVATION AWARDS 2007

EDITED BY DAVID SCHMIDT



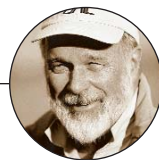
**KIMBALL  
LIVINGSTON**  
RACING GEAR



**PETER  
NIELSEN**  
CRUISING GEAR



**BEN  
ELLISON**  
ELECTRONICS



**JAY  
PARIS**  
SYSTEMS



**By definition, sailors are gearheads.** Whether it's a new sail, new electronics, or even a new mainsheet, they're eager to put their new gear through the paces. Few people recognized this love of gear and need for innovation more than the late Freeman K. Pittman, SAIL's technical editor from 1982 to 1996. Freeman was widely regarded by members of the marine industry as a true expert in the field of technically advanced sailing. SAIL honors his memory with its annual FKP Awards, which recognize the finest and most innovative new products on the market—the very stuff that Freeman sought out during his tenure at the magazine. Editor Peter Nielsen (Cruising Gear), senior editor Kimball Livingston (Racing Gear), electronics editor Ben Ellison (Electronics), and technical consultant Jay E. Paris (Systems) scoured the fall boat shows for new products on the cutting edge. Here's what caught their attention.

**16 TOP  
PRODUCTS**



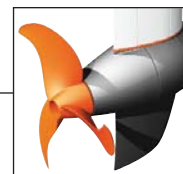
**RACING  
GEAR**



**CRUISING  
GEAR**



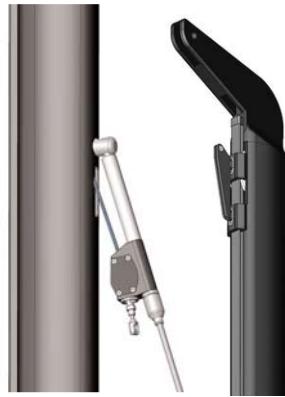
**ELECTRONICS**



**SYSTEMS**



» Hall Spars QuikLock



» Seldén Adjustable-Spreader Dinghy Mast



» Sydney Rigging Specialists Snap Feeder



» Southern Spars Element C6 Carbon Rigging



## » RACING GEAR

### Hall Spars QuikLock

It's obvious that what goes up must come down. But how are you going to keep it up until you want it to come down? After two years of testing on boats from 30-footers to America's Cup contenders, Hall Spars has introduced two versions of the QuikLock, one to be used with

mainsails and the other with headsails. The lock engages automatically when the sail is hoisted to its upper stop and the halyard is eased, then disengages automatically when the halyard is tensioned. There's no guesswork—or trip line. From \$2,600. [Hall Spars and Rigging](#); 401-253-4858; [www.hallspars.com](#)

### Sydney Rigging Specialists Snap Feeder

Attention, foredeck crew—your challenging lives just got easier. From the Aussies at Sydney Rigging Specialists comes the Snap Feeder, a modified Ronstan fixed-bail snap shackle with a prefeeder that opens to release the headsail luff or closes to trap it, any time you want. You don't have to pull the sail out of the luff groove or run the head through the prefeeder to get ready for the next hoist. Not that any Fantasyland residents in the back of *your* boat would ever yell HURRY UP, FER %#\*&SAKE! while you're frantically fast-fingering on the skinny end of the boat. And if you do get a prefeeder jam, how sweet to be able to just open the feeder and clear it. Close the Snap Feeder by pressing the halves together; there's no need to pull the pin. The only downside is that increased efficiency will only raise expectations back there in Fantasyland. \$138 [Sydney Rigging Specialists](#); 011-61-2-9555-4277; [www.rigging.com.au](#)

### Seldén Adjustable-Spreader Dinghy Mast

You've got your boathandling down cold, your hull is fast, and your sails are to die for—but the gearhead in you craves just a bit more tweakability. Seldén's adjustable spreaders can be angled anywhere from 0 to 35 degrees, in 2-degree increments, or you can order your bracket with an infinitely variable thumb-screw adjustment. Want to tweak the rig between races? Just capsize and swim on out to the spreaders, and even if you don't change a thing, let the fleet think you did. From \$991. [Seldén Mast, Inc. USA](#); 843-760-6278; [www.seldenusa.com](#)

### Southern Spars Element C6 Carbon Rigging

Finally there's a way to get low-weight/high-strength carbon into your standing rigging, and

it brings high-end systems back to low-profile, low-drag continuous rigging. Carbon fiber wasn't used in rigging in the past for lack of reliable terminals. Now Southern Spars offers Element C6, pultruded strands of carbon bundled into an encapsulated rigging component. The rods splay out at each end fitting; an epoxy cone is cast around them and carbon-wrapped. The claimed advantages include greater resistance to fatigue, greater strength than Nitronic steel rods at one-quarter the weight, minimal stretching, and less sensitivity to UV and moisture than PBO or Kevlar rigging. C6 can usually be retrofitted, so you can use the same spreaders, tip cups, and tangs. Contact Southern Spars for a custom quote. [Southern Spars](#); 011-64-9-358-3315; [www.southernspars.com](#).

PHOTO BY MARK CORKE (HALLSPARS QUICKLOCK)

## » CRUISING GEAR

### Harken Switch T-Track Battcar System

The low-friction luff-car systems needed on full-batten mainsails tend to make for an inordinately high luff stack when the sail is dropped. On bigger boats, putting on a sail cover can be something of a balancing act. This is one reason to like Harken's new Switch T-Track, which cuts stack height in half by flaking the sail on alternate sides of the boom. Another reason is that with a little fiddling it could be mated on one side to a trysail track, thus eliminating the need for the storm sail to have its own track. Contact Harken for a quote. [Harken](#); 262-691-3320; [www.harken.com](#)

### Lewmar One Touch Winch Handle

The locks on winch handles seem to sense when you're in a hurry and refuse to release their grip until after you get an earful from the helmsman for ruining a perfect tack. Lewmar's oh-so-simple solution is the one we've all been waiting for—just squeeze the handle and it unlocks. Brilliant. From \$77. [Lewmar](#); 203-458-6200; [www.lewmar.com](#)

### Henderson, Inc. Sailclamps

This is a product you hope you'll never need—but if you ever do, you'll sure be glad you've got it. Sailclamps allow a luff-tape sail to be quickly and easily converted to a hank-on sail, without damaging the sail. The plastic clamps bolt on over the sail's luff and can then be secured to a headstay with shackles (supplied) or Swedish hanks. You could also use heavy-duty plastic cable ties to bend a sail with a damaged luff tape on to a headfoil. The inventor, Ken Henderson, dreamed up Sailclamps after having to remove a damaged headfoil in mid-ocean and sail 1,000 miles with the only hank-on sail he had aboard—a storm jib. \$38.75 for a package of five. [KR Henderson, Inc.](#); 360-739-6751; [www.sailclamp.com](#)

### Zarcor Companionway CloZures

These made-to-measure retrofit companionway doors are constructed from Starboard polymer reinforced with stainless steel and fit right into the retainers for your existing washboards. You can choose from interchangeable translucent, clear, or bug-screen inserts. The doors can be quickly removed in case you want to refit your old washboards for an offshore voyage; for coastal cruising, the doors beat the pants off traditional washboards. \$795. [Zarcor](#); 800-877-4797; [www.zarcor.com](#)

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## » ELECTRONICS



» Maretron WSO 100 Ultrasonic Wind/Weather Station

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Frankly, Maretron deserves a prize simply for its tenacious dedication to building absolutely standard NMEA 2000 sensors and accessories. The rest of the industry, unfortunately, has shown little enthusiasm for taking advantage of NMEA 2000's multi-manufacturer data-sharing capabilities. Maretron's WSO 100 Ultrasonic Wind/Weather Station is of particular value to sailors, as it's the first ultrasonic wind sensor designed from scratch to deal with the problem of heeling. Maretron claims that the WSO is more accurate than its conservative specs suggest (+/- 5 percent on wind speed and direction), and the data it generates—temperature, humidity, and barometric pressure—can be fed to every willing device on an NMEA 2000 backbone all in one cable, including power. \$699. [Maretron](#); 602-861-1707; [www.maretron.com](#)



» Raymarine LifeTag System

### Raymarine LifeTag System

You may have the “will it work” worry with some safety gear, but not with LifeTag. Its receiver triggers an alarm whenever one of the constantly transmitting pendants moves more than 30 feet away (overboard!), or if one breaks, or if someone wearing one presses the alert button (problem!). A basic system, which includes two easy-to-wear tags, a receiver, and a loud buzzer, allows for up to 14 more tags to be added. The LifeTag system really shines when connected via Seatalk to existing Raymarine gear; then the alarm goes out system-wide and an MOB

waypoint is automatically recorded on the ship's Raymarine plotter. A second receiver can be rigged as needed on larger boats. Users are already figuring out other jobs for it to do, like minding a towed dink. From \$685.

[Raymarine](#); 800-539-5539; [www.raymarine.com](#)

### Captn. Jack's Garmin GPSMAP 76 Cx Package

It's a simple idea, really, but terrific for novice GPS users. Captn. Jack's is preloading Garmin GPS plotters with all the waypoints printed on the Maptech paper ChartKit or Waterproof Chart-Book of your choice. In fact, this is a great aid to even experienced navigators, as no screen



» Captn. Jack's Garmin GPSMAP 76 Cx Package

is quite as easily read, or as reliable, as a large printed chart. And since the Maptech books come with a CD of digital page reproductions and plotting software, you can adapt these bundles to laptop navigation. The packages will no doubt soon include Garmin's amazing new fixed-plotter line, due to roll out later this year. From \$499.

[Captn. Jack's](#); 800-227-5225; [www.captjack.com](#)

### Poly-Planar Modular Marine Stereo

A sign of how deeply Poly-Planar rethought its marine stereo is how long it takes to fully comprehend its flexibility and power. Start with the basic package, a MRD-70 AM/FM receiver

» Poly-Planar Modular Marine Stereo



and no-skip CD/MP3 player paired with an RD-44 control head; both are waterproof (cable connectors, too), and the head, in either gray or black, features a volume knob for gnarly conditions. There's an optional XM radio module—not to mention two auxiliary inputs for the likes of iPods, TVs, and so on. Better yet, you can add up to three zones with more RD-44s, an MZ100 amplifier (with digital sound processing), and RT20 routers. Each zone gets access to all the main sources, plus its own local sources, and an intercom feature mutes everything for a word from the captain or mate. From \$499.95. [Poly-Planar](#); 410-761-4000; [www.polyplanar.com](#)

» Torqeedo Electric Outboards



» Edson Marine Pump-Out Nozzle with Splash Guard



» Raven Technology 5kW Blackbird



» Mast Products Bay 15D Bulb



## » SYSTEMS

### Torqeedo Electric Outboards

Torqeedo makes short- and long-shaft electric outboards with removable lithium-manganese battery packs that look much like the black cowlings on a conventional outboard. It also makes units with power cords that can hook up to 12- or 24-volt battery banks. The midrange Travel motor weighs about 25 pounds, including the removable battery, and has a folding shaft that allows it to be collapsed so that it fits into a 12 × 12 × 17-inch waterproof travel pack. The distinctive skewed props are optimized for electric motors. Torqeedo will soon be entering the North American market. From \$1,500. [Torqeedo](http://www.torqeedo.com); 312-377-6116; [www.torqeedo.com](http://www.torqeedo.com)

### Edson Marine Pump-Out Nozzle with Splash Guard

Pumping out a holding tank can be a messy business; even if the pumpout station's hose nozzle fits your deck fitting, there's often some spillage when it's removed. Edson's new Pump Out Nozzle with Splash Guard, designed for pumpout-station use, combines a suction cup-like neoprene flange with a tapered hose tip that fits deck waste fitting

openings from 1 3/8 to 2 1/8 inches. The flange provides a 4-inch airtight seal around the deck fitting to minimize spillage. Marina operators will buy this, and boatowners will appreciate having less mess to clean up. \$44. [Edson Marine](http://www.edsonmarine.com); 508-995-5021; [www.edsonmarine.com](http://www.edsonmarine.com) **D.S.**

### Raven Technology 5kW Blackbird

The 75-pound, 5-kilowatt Black-

bird is an engine-mounted, belt-driven AC generator that produces 110-volt/60-cycle power at any fixed or variable speed between 3,000 and 10,000 generator rpm. Two applications come to mind. The most straightforward is to mount it on a 50- to 100-plus-horsepower engine on a boat with a relatively complex electrical system to provide pure sine-wave power while under way; this allows you to shut down the genset and keep the inverter offline. A second, more limited application (which requires careful study) is to mount it on a smaller boat's 30- to 40-horsepower main engine so it can also be used as a genset. Note that taking 10-plus horsepower and other auxiliary loads from the front end of the engine could significantly influence propeller sizing and raises other issues as

well. From \$7,500, installed. [Raven Technology](http://www.raventechpower.com); 207-721-1044; [www.raventechpower.com](http://www.raventechpower.com)

### Mast Products Bay 15D Bulb

Here's a new replacement LED bulb for navigation lights that fits traditional incandescent sockets. The 3.5-watt bulb consists of a cylindrical 50-LED array of 10 very bright cool-white LED columns and is designed to replace 25-watt vertical-filament bulbs. The bulbs are fully bright on sailboats even when 13.3 volts isn't available. In addition to its multi-voltage capability, the 15D's internal-diode bridge eliminates any polarity concerns, making the bulb truly plug-and-play. The expected lifespan of the Bay15D is in excess of 50,000 hours. \$49.95. [Euro Marine Trading](http://www.euromarinetrading.com); 401-849-0060; [www.euromarinetrading.com](http://www.euromarinetrading.com)