
Auxiliary Power

OARS AND PADDLES are too often ignored as auxiliary power for multihulls. If the multihull is small and light enough, an oar can move it along pretty smartly. It never fails to work, and it needs no maintenance. In the first 10 years of our voyaging, Carol and I never had a motor, and when we did put one on *Hummingbird*, the chief reason was that we had moved upriver of three drawbridges, and a new federal law required that motors be used under drawbridges.

I rowed *Two Rabbits* facing backward, sitting in the sail locker hatch, using a 9-foot oar and an oarlock on the inboard gunwale. Rowing is a very efficient use of the body's energy, and it wasn't much trouble to keep her moving at 2 knots. However, the loaded boat weighed less than a ton, and the human body isn't happy generating more than a fifth of a horsepower, except in brief spurts; so power-to-weight ratio was minimal.

Vireo, fully loaded, weighed nearly twice as much as *Rabbits*, and rowing her was a lot less fun. One evening we were becalmed in the lee of Bequia, about a mile from the harbor mouth. The lights came on, and across the water we could hear the steel drums tuning up. In those days Bequia was not stuffed with cruise ships, and the town looked inviting. But after a day in the tropical sun, no one on board felt like pulling that oar for an hour, so we stayed outside until a morning breeze allowed us to tack in. Later, coming home up the Inland Waterway, I must have rowed *Vireo* 25 miles in all. We should have bought a kicker in Miami.

A yuloh is a Chinese sculling oar, rigged with a trip line to make it easier to feather at the end of each stroke. Some multihull designers have recommended yuloh propulsion, but I doubt they've tried it. In 1977, when I raced on *Raka* from England to the Azores, the scrutineers for their own inscrutable reasons required all boats to have at least three means of propulsion, and Skipper George Payne built a yuloh for the 40-foot cat. This did pass scrutiny, but I was glad we never had to use it. Perhaps yulohs, like sculling oars, are not too cumbersome in boats where the operator can stand with his feet at waterline level or below it. Standing on the deck of a multihull means that the yuloh must be monstrously long to