

ALEX SALOMATOFF HAS THE ANSWERS TO YOUR



Alex Salomatoff.

BOAT QUESTIONS!

If you have a question for Master Mechanic and Owner of Alex's Marine Plus in New Windsor, NY, simply call Alex at 845-565-9199 or e-mail, AlexsMarine@aol.com

DID YOU KNOW YOUR BOAT HAD A BELLOWS?

Well it does and it is a very important part of your boat's regular maintenance!

Ignoring your bellows can sink your boat!

You'll find bellows only on stern drives and not inboards or outboards, however personal watercraft have them also.

The power plant of stern drive boat are exactly that, the engine is mounted in the stern of the boat with a



lower drive unit for steering the boat. It is this lower drive unit that contains the bellows.

While an inboard uses a rudder, a stern drive changes direction when the lower unit moves when you turn the steering wheel. That's what makes a part like the bellows necessary. The lower unit can tilt, which makes U-joints vital to allow for the movement. They contain bearings which, in turn, necessitates the watertight protection that the part offers.

Water would damage the bearings and cause them to rust. It's a costly repair that would have you checking a boat payment calculator to see if you can afford a new craft.

How do I know if my bellows is bad? First indication is water in your bilge. Did it come from the bellows? A loose gasket or clamp may also be responsible. You may notice a loud noise when you're driving it. That can indicate additional damage involving the gimble bearing and the U-joint bellows. Shifting problems would point to this one. Overheating might mean the exhaust one is bad.

Under any circumstances the bellows should be checked yearly and if you see or hear any of the aforementioned symptoms get the boat out of the water before it sinks and

call us, the replacement of the bellows requires special tools and usually there are three bellows, it is best to replace all three at the same time.

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