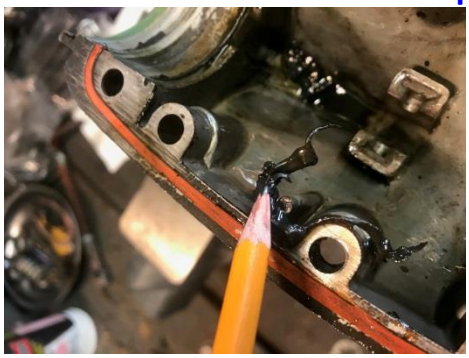
When the "Right Stuff“ is the “Wrong Stuff”

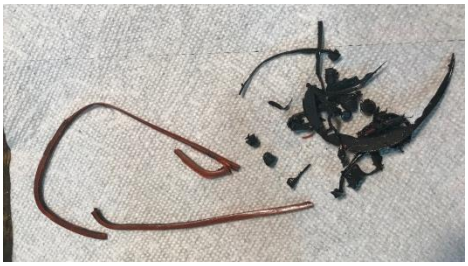
Report & Photo’s: Ron Stevenson



Excessive “ Right Stuff” slopped all over the inside of the skeg

Orange silicon seal spread in the skeg groove., The proper BUNA rubber cord seal was missing.

Skeg all cleaned, groove all cleaned, new Cord laid in groove & affixed with 3M, 847 adhesive



The garbage remnants of the black “ Right Stuff” & the semi-cured Orange silicon seal that were removed from and around the skeg.

One thing I was taught, and never forgot, was how to rebuild lower units and do it the correct way.. Even the terrible “ ElectraMatic” lower unit. Commonly nicknamed “ Fail-a-Matic” even by my senior OMC mentor. In this article I won’t go into the diseases of this notorious lower unit or the special tools I bought to service them.. I look at my Electramatic tools from time to time and think…Yuk-never-again-am-I-touching-an-Electramatic!

Anyway…over the past years I’ve rebuilt many, many JohnnyRude lower units.

One customer complained that his motor “ wouldn’t stay in gear”. Upon disassembly, someone had forgotten to insert the clutch fork pivot PIN. The clutch dog was able to slide from FWD to REV without using the gear shift lever !

Another lower unit I repaired; the customer had complained of excessive oil leaks.

I knew at once, that someone had been into this lower unit before. The very First screw I removed holding the skeg on was covered with a black tar substance.

I knew right away that someone had smeared the screws with black Permatex “ RIGHT STUFF”. This is the Wrong Stuff for lower units. This stuff is not designed to seal lower units. Whoever did this, smeared the Wrong Stuff all over. It was on the gear set and down in the skeg cavity.

The other tragedy was that this same person tried to fill the skeg groove with Orange silicon seal. This sealant is no good for lower units at all. Silicon seals work great for sealing bathtubs…not outboard lower units.

The proper skeg seal is the special oil proof BUNA rubber seal...nicknamed the ‘ spaghetti’ seal.

To properly hold the seal into the groove, you must thoroughly clean the skeg groove first. Then, cut the spaghetti cord to the proper length. Apply a thin line of 3M, 847 adhesive in the groove. Lay the spaghetti cord in the groove applying pressure with your fingertip along the cord to “wet-out” the cord. This guarantees the cord seal is seated in the groove. Once that’s done place the skeg aside.

The person who thought that filling the threaded screw holes with ‘Right Stuff’ would stop leaks, was not thinking clearly. I had to take a dental pick and pry the hardened crap out of each individual threaded screw hole.

I could go on and on about the many poor re-sealing jobs I’ve seen over the years. This is just a small portion of correctly rebuilding-resealing a lower unit.

In my next article, I’ll touch on properly changing a shift rod “0” ring...