

# A Swimming Pool, in the RIVER?

By Dan Bullard, aboard Great Ambition, Kadow's Marina, Vancouver USA

Do you live on the water and worry about letting your kids, friends and guests swim in the river? Think about the dangers! Submerged logs, old fishing nets, hooks and rusted barrels used in the old days as floatation. Currents, surges and tides can take your swimmers away from the dock and necessitate a rescue, or worse, cause a drowning. Boat traffic, lampreys, upstream sewage discharges, even neighbors on boats doing unlawful flushes from their head. And of course the constant danger of a faulty power line dangling in the water that can electrocute a swimmer.

Would you like to make sure none of these dangers can harm your guests and still enjoy a cool swim? You can do it by building a pool, and for less than \$300.

Now don't imagine that you are going to have to float 7000 gallons of water at 56,000 pounds that would take up to 70 styrofoam barrels to float. There is no reason to float a pool **on** the water, because water, floating **in** water weighs nothing. Let your pool float in the river, add a submersible pump, a filter and a floating chlorinator and you can turn an unused slip or gap between floating homes into the neighborhood pool.



The last four years I have built a pool in an unused portion of a slip I rent and I have to tell you, it's the best use of that part of my live-aboard space in the summertime.

To build the pool I used a 20X30 medium duty poly tarp (\$65 at Home Depot) to make a 6 foot deep pool in my 11X14 foot unused slip space. To calculate the right size tarp to use, add 12 feet to each dimension of your unused slip space to get a 6 foot deep pool. For example, if you have a 15X30 foot slip, you can turn it into a pool with a 30X50 foot poly tarp. If you are worried about punctures like I was the first time I did

this, buy a tarp that is twice as long as you need, then double it over. But it turns out that poly tarps are very tough, especially the medium or heavy duty versions. Nowadays I just use a single layer.

I used a long board that drifted by to bridge the space between the two slips, then I bought a grommet kit to double the number of brass grommets on the tarp. That way you can make sure that no part of the tarp is overly stressed. I then used deck screws and large fender washers to screw the grommets to the dock. Gather the tarp together in the corners to make sure that no edge falls into the water, add grommets where needed to ensure this, and you are ready to fill your pool.

To fill your pool you *could* use tap water, but at my marina, tap water is a valuable resource, so I used a submersible pump to suck river water up and filter it through two whole house filter units (\$20 each at Home Depot). I used a 20 micron pre-filter and a 5 micron final filter. The water comes out of the filters almost perfectly clear. While the pool is filling, the filters will get clogged, but you can use high pressure water from the tap to clean the filters so you don't have to replace them constantly. Filters are pretty cheap anyway, \$8 to \$12 for a pair of filters.

After the pool is full, I take one of the filter modules off and use just the 20 micron filter to act as an in-pool submersible pool filter. Add a floating pool chlorinator and buy a



test kit to keep an eye on the chlorine and PH levels and you too will have crystal clear water that will always be the same temperature as the river. With the hot weather coming, imagine being able to take a dip in water so clear and clean you can toss coins in the bottom and let the kids retrieve them with nothing more than open eyes.



Last year we went with a heavy duty Silver tarp, not blue and the result was stunning. Try your own color, many are available online.

Be sure that your submersible pump is plugged into a GFCI outlet to make sure that if the pump fails, no one will get shocked. Add a ladder and get a pool skimmer and blow the neighbors away with your floating pool that will put no more stress on the docks than a boat would.