

FC News

Editor: Ron Walton

Spring 2000

I want to begin this issue of the FC News by thanking both Lore & Carroll Allen for sending me their old issues (back to 1983) of the Falmouth Cutter newsletter and Greg MacDonald for making me copies of all the Falmouth Cutter newsletters (back to 1981) which were published before I began as editor. As I wrote in the previous issue, I had never seen any of the old newsletters. They are a real treasure. In future issues, I will borrow from this *lost knowledge* to pass on some words of wisdom to the new Captains in the fleet.

One discovery I made by reading the old newsletters is that there are at least five Falmouth Cutters whose owners are not receiving the newsletter. The boats and owners (?) were and maybe still are:

English Girl, FC # 8
Gary Adalian
21 Catspaw Cape
Coronado, CA 92118
(619) 424-6937

Grace, FC # 5
Brinton Wells
845 HWY 81 West # 20
New Braunfels, TX 78130
(512) 625-7793

Dazzler, FC #
Ogden Booke
106 S. Jayson St.
Slidell, LA 70458
(504) 641-0064

Windwalker, FC # 3
Christopher Dahl
Seattle, WA

Palanthia, FC # 1
Ingmar Mellin
Buellton, CA

English Girl is the only Sam L. Morse Co. boat in this set, the others were built by Nor'Sea / Heritage. If any of you, especially those who live in the area where these boats were last heard from, can help to locate them, it would be appreciated. One of my missions since becoming editor has been to locate all the Falmouth Cutters and get them on the newsletter mailing list. None of these people have yet responded to my first attempt to contact them.

The Third Lyle Hess rendezvous is being organized by Cliff Unruh of the Lyle Hess Association. Cliff has proposed that this year's edition of the rendezvous be held on San Francisco Bay. There are a lot of Lyle Hess designed boats there. While the venue is not yet firm, Cliff has been getting some positive feedback from the harbor master at South Beach Harbor in San Francisco. Tentative dates are the weekend of July 22-23. South Beach is located just south of the Bay Bridge, right next to the new baseball park. It is also just a short walk from downtown S. F. and a slightly longer walk to Pier 39 and Fisherman's Wharf. For more information, contact Cliff Unruh: telephone: (559)638-2222, FAX: (559)637-0331, e-mail: CliffUnruh@aol.com, website: <http://members.aol.com/cliffunruh>.

For a while in January I thought we had lost Lyle Hess, because the newsletter I had sent him came back with no forwarding address. Since then I have learned his mailing address is now

Lyle Hess
5911 E. Spring Street, PMB 360
Long Beach, CA 90808

Lyle is 87 and his health is not too good so if you write to him, I don't know if he will respond to you. Also, for you Web Surfers, there is a web site at LYLEHESS.COM to check out.

There are letters in this issue from the owners of *Mariko*, *Second Look*, *Further*, *Hokje*, *Angelsea*, *Coconutz*, and *Maid of Slapton*. I want to thank all authors of these letters and to ask the fleet, as always, to keep those letters coming. But, before the letters, I have reprinted a short

essay Lyle Hess published in the very first Falmouth Cutter newsletter. Enjoy.

Ron Walton
Mijita, FC # 5
1671 Via Rancho
San Lorenzo, CA 94580
(510) 278-3335

My Ideal Boat

I was at Catalina Island one night in a real blow. The sea was white with foam and the swells were huge. I asked myself, 'what if I had to leave tonight, what kind of boat would allow me to safely do it?' A good sea boat should be close winded; she should have reserve buoyancy; a fine bow, but not too fine where she is cranky when running; buttock lines to provide plenty of lift; and she should be fast. Most importantly, she should be small enough for easy singlehanded, and yet still have a pleasant easy motion at sea. A short time later I designed the Falmouth with these qualities in mind. She represents fifty-two years of experience and study.

The Falmouth is my ideal boat. I can't say that about any boat I have ever designed, even *Seraffyn*. I can sum it up by saying the Falmouth is not a little boat, it is a small yacht that the able seaman can take anywhere in the world in comfort and safety.

Lyle Hess

Mariko, FC # 9

Just a quick note to say thanks for the newsletter and keeping us on the list.

Mariko has still not sold (*c. 31 Jan 2000 -Ed.*), but have several buyers trying to pull the money together. We are asking \$57K these days.

Was in Mazatlan on vacation. It was great to see Mexico again. From the airplane we could see all the islands and places we visited on our cruise.

Keep up the good work.

Mike Meier

Second Look, FC # 11

I wanted to bring you up to date with our new address in Montana since we have finally moved into our new home, after building for over a year. Our new address is:

John & Nancy Riebe
8694 Theisen Road
Belgrade, MT 59714
(406) 388-2636
E-mail: riebeto@AOL.com

The boat is all covered up right now until we get a positive spring. We have had a very light winter up here, but the bad weather could come in at any moment, as you are finding out on the coast. As soon as I can get to work on the boat, I need to strip all the bright work and revarnish the boom gallows, bowsprit, and boomkin. Have come to the conclusion that custom covers need to be

made to cover all varnished surfaces during the periods of nonuse because the sun and water condensation eats right through all topside, flat surfaces, and eventually one needs to strip everything in order to bring the best appearance back to the bright work. Feather edging small defects only works so long before the whole surface looks patched up. If anyone has a solution to this problem with varnish, I would like to hear it. Have used Epifanes varnish with many coats, but still have ongoing problems. Using Amazon Golden Teak oil on the teak seems to work well, but even this process has to be reworked at least twice a season. Have noticed that too much sanding has resulted in a thinning of the teak surfaces in some areas to the point where plugs have been popping out of bolt holes, so I would advise using bleaching and brightening solutions on the teak before oiling, rather than sanding the teak back to clean new wood. I can see why there are those that just let the teak go gray, and forget the whole process. Just a shame we can't keep our boats looking bristol as they did coming out of the yard at Costa Mesa. If one added all the hours spent on maintenance, we would probably go for all fiberglass hulls, even though such boats have a boring look.

We will probably haul the boat to the waters north of Anacortes, Washington this summer with our trailer, and then make the decision whether to leave it up there in a yard between cruising trips. There are some big lakes to try between Montana and the coast if I can locate adequate ramps for launching and mast stepping facilities. One of the reasons the marinas in Washington State are so great is they are experienced at stepping masts and travel lifting all types of boats.

My advice is do your cruising while you are young, for age will make it tougher to tackle extensive cruises. We will always remember our month trip to Baja, to Puerto Escondido and 18 days of sailing up as far as Punta Chivato. Launching off of the ramp was a challenge with no travel lift, and no fresh water to wash off the trailer. Had to replace one wheel bearing when I got back home, because I lost a buddy hub on the way down and my temporary can and grey tape patch didn't keep the salt water out of the bearings. Always take complete bearings, seals, and grease to repair damage, since parts are almost impossible to find in the towns. Also smart to travel with other boats, so you can get help in case of breakdowns. We traveled with two other boats: a Vancouver 27 and a Coronado 27. Needless to say, my Falmouth was the easiest boat to launch and retrieve due to the shallower draft, along with the roller type trailer that I have. A large Eze-Loader trailer is no longer made in my size, and most new trailers are pad support type, which means they have to be launched into deeper water. Well, that's about all I can add for now. Will keep you posted on our future plans.

John & Nancy Riebe

Gary Felton (former owner of Angelsea, FC # 19) suggested in the 1995 issue of the newsletter that, after varnishing, wait two months, then overcoat with a couple of coats of clear Awlgrip. He says you will then only have to recoat your varnish with Awlgrip once a year, in the tropics! And when it finally comes time to strip and recoat, the varnish undercoat allows you to get the Awlgrip off the wood without destroying the wood.

Ron Walton

Further, FC # 15

Just a note to change our mailing address. Now at:

Doug & Coni Hodgson

Further

13990 Highway 202

Clatskanie, OR 97016

Hokje, FC # 18

Happy New Year.

It sure was wonderful receiving your letter and pictures of *Mijita*. Its been many years since I have seen her. She looks great! I really like the salty and well seasoned look she has about her. Here interior is even more beautiful than I remember.

In regards to the exterior teak, I have given it some thought, and I think keeping it clean is the best bet.

I never did get back to you on your question about my using bronze toggles on my life lines. You were concerned about the possibility of the lifeline kinking. After you put forth your question I was also concerned. So...what I did was sit on top of *Hokje's* house and kick out on the lifeline. Then I stood on the dock and kicked in on the life line. Both kicks were very hard and there was no damage either way.

By the way... I really like your idea on the anchor snubber. And your sails are beautiful.

Well, Ron, I sure hope you're getting some good sailing in. As for me, would you believe I only had my boat out twice last year. Being self-employed has kept me busy. And I've been doing quite a bit of work and big improvements to my cabin in Pine Mountain. But still, I can't make any excuses. I need to make sailing time.

I am ready to at least sail *Hokje* over to Cat Harbor and hang out for a month. I'm planning it for either April or May.

In regards to your question about past newsletters, the one person I know of who had it going for a while was Donna Hayward. As a matter of fact, it was Donna who assisted me in finding *Hokje*.

Ron, I sure hope to see you and *Mijita* some time in the near future. Until then, you be well. May the wind always be in your favor, along with gentle seas.

Jack Lelah

Jack, thank you for your compliments. I have enjoyed our telephone conversations and other exchanges ever since I began editing the newsletter. In fact, I think you were the first owner to contact me after I took on the job. I am glad you did that experiment with the toggles supporting your lifelines and that there is no problem. It looks like a neat solution. I also like your use of the covering from double braided rope as a cover for your lifelines. I have never seen that before.

Ron Walton

Angelsea, FC # 19

It's been a dream of mine since I was a kid to one day own a small cruising sailboat. I grew up in Indonesia -- my father was a US diplomat for the UN. As a child we would take sailing trips to the Thousand Islands off the coast of Java. The sailing bug hit me very early.

I started a boat savings account after I landed my first real job eight years ago with AT&T (I am 29). I sailed on friend's boats when I could, read my share of the Pardey's and others cruising books, went to the boat shows where I saw a BCC in Annapolis four years ago, and kept saving my pennies in that boat account. My wife, Mary Ann, and I took a trip out to CA and visited Roger Olsen at the factory five years ago. I left the factory with a promise to myself that, as soon as I could afford one of these beautiful boats, one would be mine.

The opportunity presented itself in October 1998. I was surfing the web, not being productive,

and ran across a link to Gary Felton's WebPage offering *Angelsea* for sale. I flew to St. Thomas that weekend and returned to work Monday the proud new owner of a FC. Gary kept *Angelsea* safe through the 1998 hurricane season in St. Thomas and on May 21, 1999, Gary and I set off from St. Thomas headed for Bermuda, then on home to New York City harbor. I owned my boat for seven months before she finally came home.

Angelsea is FC # 19; factory finished in 1983 for an elderly gentleman in CA who passed away a few months after she was christened. Everything was factory finished except the interior furnishings. Gary Felton, her second owner, completely rebuilt the interior in 1990. He did an amazing job and she is now as beautiful inside as she is outside. I will keep her named *Angelsea*.

To increase interior space, Gary had the engine removed. I like engines and don't want to have to always rely on the sails. I am planning to have a diesel engine professionally installed this spring and would appreciate talking with anyone who has done this or had it done.

The boat came with a Dunlop four-man liferaft, a 9ft Avon inflatable dinghy with 8hp Yamaha outboard, Siemens solar panel, one marine battery, sextant, sight reduction tables, VHF, SSB receiver, and a home-made self-steering wind vane. For the trip home, I added a 406 MHz EPIRB, a ditch bag, flares and flare gun, handheld waterproof VHF, GPS, complete medical kit, laptop with weather fax software, lots of charts for the trip, and many other things I can't remember right now. Feel free to contact me for specifics.

Gary and I spent nearly three weeks working 10 hour days getting *Angelsea* ready to take offshore. My rosy expectation had been that we would be ready to sail within 4 or 5 days of my arrival in St. Thomas. Buy some food, hop on board, and get underway. I was on limited vacation time and I wanted to be making the passage, not working my %\$@ off every day getting the boat ready. Patience is not my thing.

If you wonder what took us so long, think about checking your rigging. This work alone took us 4 days. We took all the rigging down, soaked it in Ospho (*phosphoric acid solution used to clean rust stains - Ed.*), rinsed it, let it dry, then inspected it under a magnifying glass for cracks. Then we put it all back together and watched while a professional looked it over and tuned it. We repeated this detail of checking for all the boat systems.

Don't think this doesn't apply to you? *Angelsea* wasn't a dump when I bought her. She was in extremely good shape!! Gary Felton, the previous owner and a professional sea captain by trade, put the boat through an amazing check list before taking her out of the harbor, just to be safe. It is a little embarrassing now to admit that I honestly thought that the meal menus would be the most challenging part of our preparation. It seems silly in retrospect.

If I have a complaint about the cruising books I have read, it is how easy they make the preparation sound. I could not fathom the time involved to prepare, but was really glad we had taken the time when we hit our first bad weather on the trip. We slept easier knowing that the probability of something failing was low because we had been meticulous. There's enough to worry about without adding the boat to that mix. The preparation was an invaluable learning experience for me.

Anyway, back to the trip. We had been monitoring the weather daily on the Internet, viewing weather faxes/forecasts, and listening to Herb on SSB. We left a 1pm on May 21, 1999. The wind was blowing steady, 10 knots out of the SW - a perfect send-off. We made the whole trip without an engine, from off dock in St. Thomas to anchor in Bermuda to back on dock in New York. It was pretty neat -- Lin and Larry would be proud!

It's a strange feeling setting sail knowing you won't see land for another week or so. I had butterflies in my stomach both from anticipation that had built up from three weeks of preparations and from seven months of anticipation from the time I bought *Angelsea*. I was also *really* scared about getting seasick. I got sick as a result of that fear. I never had feed-the-fish sickness, but I was uncomfortable and stayed that way for most of the trip. Since then I have not been sick. I have sailed off the New York and New Jersey coast in some messy conditions which leaves me to believe that the seasickness was mostly nerves and self-inflicted by worry.

The trip to New York was lots of sailing. Up and down for days and days and days. Most of my memory of the trip is now random thoughts. I remember the first night watch was wild. Gary wrote "God help us!" in the log book under his last entry before my first after-dark watch. The night was dark, black, no moon. Sailing into that dark seemed fateful. I didn't see anything that night. No lights to report. I was a little frightened listening to the water moving past the boat at 5 knots. We wore lifelines at night whenever on deck.

I remember noticing how really blue ocean water is. Really blue. We did lots and lots of sail changes. When the winds dropped to less than 10 knots, we sailed with a drifter or asymmetrical spinnaker. Frequently there were line squalls on the horizon in the evenings. So each evening we would usually end up changing, reefing, or doing something with the sails. We usually had to do this during our dinner -- Murphy's Law. We did a 3 hours on, 3 hours off watch schedule, so we really didn't see much of each other. This surprised me, being confined in such a small space for two weeks and interacting so little. We slept a lot during our off watch times. The rocking boat seemed to drain me.

We saw a water spout, hit a gale 80 miles south of Bermuda, and had to beat two days to St. George's harbor (a diesel would have been nice right about then), watched dolphins playing at the bow, got soaked in several downpours, took salt water baths, and spent 10 days getting to Bermuda and 6 days to New York City. There is really no way for a non-writer like myself to capture the magic of this trip. There was always something new and different to notice. The world, oceans, and mother nature is truly awesome.

One night the stars seemed to go on forever. Counting them kept me busy during a few watches. Sailing Wing-on-Wing in the middle of the ocean with spinnaker flying on port and main to starboard AND in flat seas at 4 knots was a fabulous break. This lasted almost 10 hours. Confused seas from a gale and clocked winds made for sloppy sailing; I think that is when I wished I was in an armchair sailing in a good cruising book. No wind for a few hours each afternoon was nice to get some rest; *Angelsea* made squiggly circle patterns on the GPS until the wind pick back up.

The only complaint I had with the boat offshore was if I wasn't wearing my foulies, then the splash of water that ran down the side deck would roll down my back when I laid in the cockpit. If anyone has figured out how to fix this without making the boat ugly, let me know. Other than that little inconvenience, I don't have a single thing that I would change with her (ok, I need a diesel still). But the fact is, Lyle Hess designed a little boat that performs really, really well. She is built really well. She sails really well. We are really luck to be owners.

Thank you Lyle Hess, Sam Morse, Roger Olsen, the Pardey's books, and Gary Felton for my *Angelsea*.

I was transferred to Atlanta in September 1999. Currently *Angelsea* is on Lake Lanier. We have circumnavigated the lake several times. I am trying to decide whether to trailer her out to either Savannah in the Fall for a coast cruise down to Georgia or Florida to cruise the Keys. I am interested in Mark and Eileen's upcoming adventure to these parts aboard *Puffin*. Please share!

Anyway, before I make the newsletter too heavy for a 33 cent stamp, I will close up. I love talking boats, so please feel free to write or call me. Pleasant winds!

Terry Hill

Coconutz, FC # 29

Coconutz is lying in San Diego. He recently underwent an electronics refit. New JRC radar, Furuno GPS, Magellan GSC-100, Magellan Pioneer GPS, Horizon Intrepid VHF with remote mic, ICOM R-7000 (unlocked military model), two solar panels, and a CD player. I was able to get the Furuno GPS to talk with the JRC radar, but can't get either to talk with the Horizon Intrepid VHF.

Haul-out and bottom job in late '99 at South Bay Boat Yard. New 6HP Suzuki L/S auxiliary. New charts and pubs. Catalina beckons and April is the month. New e-mail address is *minitug@hotmail.com*. We've been on the mooring waiting list at Catalina Harbor since January 1987, and hope 2000 is our year.

In the summer of '97 I was serving as Mate on the Clean Seas oil response vessel *Mr. Clean*. We were moored in Avila Bay about a half-mile off the concrete oil company pier. During my hitch I saw a Falmouth arrive and hook up on one of the moorings. I wasn't able to see the name or hailing port, and have always been curious whose boat she was and where she was bound? Does anyone have any info?

The BCC *Fiddler's Green* with a Florida hailing port is permanently berthed near *Coconutz*.

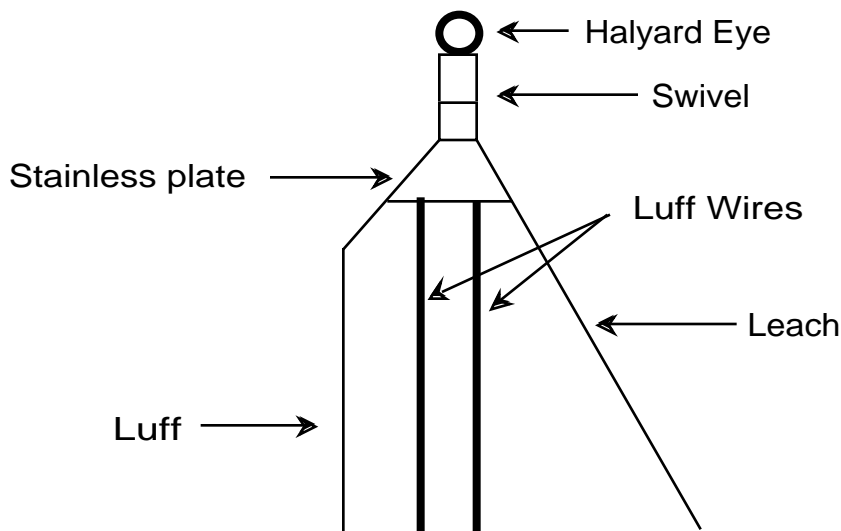
Tony Cannon, BCC *LIAHO* (Let It All Hang Out) moved from Long Beach to Morrow Bay to enjoy sailing in the waters north of Pt. Conception.

Alan Spears
642 Marina Pkwy PMB 97
Chula Vista, CA 91910
minitug@hotmail.com

Maid of Slapton, FC # 32

Nothing of great interest to report as, although I enjoyed a very pleasant season's sailing up until last November, no "hair-raising" experiences occurred during 1999. I can report that I have had no cause to regret the removal of the sea toilet, holding tank, and piping as described in your Spring 1998 newsletter.

One item that might interest other owners is the SPEEDY furling system for free flying headsails. Parallel luff wires connect to a triangular plate at the head swivel;



at the tack the parallel wires are connected to a thin furling drum, one on each side of the drum swivel. The system is manufactured by NEMO, an Italian company that, to be honest, I had not heard about until I happened to see a demonstration in a rigger's shop. Many of the European charter fleets and sailing schools are refitting with their roller reefing systems so I guess that says a lot concerning the standard of engineering.

The SPEEDY is obviously just a furling system, but it does save the need to fight a large drifter

over the side when the wind has piped up rather rapidly. Someone still has to go forward to hand the "sausage", if the working jib is to be used, but it is a lot easier than struggling with an acre of flogging Dacron.

The furled sail can then be rolled up and dropped below. By using Dyneema (one of the wonder fibers) for the luff wires, rolling the sail is easier and weight is saved as compared to the use of conventional stainless.

I'll be in touch again before too long. Best wishes to other Falmouth owners and thanks for your work in keeping us all in touch.

Keith Smith

After I saw the "sea toilet" on Zarpé, FC # 36, I understood perfectly your reason for removing Maid of Slapton's. By the way, how has your experiment with exterior wood finishes gone? The last time you wrote, you were testing a water based product.

Ron Walton