

FC News

Editor: Ron Walton

No. 32

Summer 2009

The FC News is back for its 32nd issue since 1997, the 57th Falmouth Cutter newsletter since 1980.

Because its been so long since the I last published, there are a lot of letters from the fleet in this issue, from Mike Latta of FC #1 *Narwhal*; Sid Bertheaud of FC #2 *Bandit*; Larry Schmidt of FC #2* *Dora Rose*; Richard and Mary Woods of FC #11 *Honu*; Jorge E. Pasarell of FC #16 *Topito*; Christopher Grenda of FC #18 *Hokje*; John Bowman of FC #19 *Elise*; Dennis Mahon of FC #25 *Maramenum II*; Todd Gauthier of FC #27 *Lagniappe*; Tom Frenock of FC #33 *Finesse*; and John Verlinden of the still unnamed FC #39. I have also included letters from Roger Olson, former owner of Sam L. Morse Co., which he wrote in response to Mike Latta's letter. Mike passed the latter along to me, and so I hope Roger is okay with my publishing them.

I hope you are all enjoying your FCs during the current economic problems.

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Narwhal, FC #1

I have had a problem (big time!) with my steering ease ever since having a new 2 cylinder Yanmar installed this past spring. *Narwhal* and I wandered around up in the Sea of Cortez again and unfortunately now when under power alone she steers like a Mac truck with 2 flat tires and no power steering. I literally have to horse her around. It's obviously some kind of cavitation effect from the increased hp and the 3-bladed prop I have. Have you heard about this FC 22 problem occurring before? And if so, what's the solution? Also, now that Cape George is building them, do you think they would have

any info? The 2 cylinders were being installed years ago at Morse, so there must have been some kind of discussion on this. I will contact them (CG) to find out. But anything you and/or other owners know about this would be greatly helpfull. I need to know if tweaking the prop is enough, or do I have to go back to a 2-blade?

I am back in my favorite Mexican town, Mazatlan, to fix all the stuff that broke over the summer/fall. (I had to jury rig the back stay in order to get here, after it started unraveling sailing to La Paz from Guaymas. etc., etc.)

Mike Latta

I have been waiting for your arrival here in Panama....have you swallowed the anchor in Mexico?

I wish I had the answer for you but I do not have a definite answer. I presume the rudder is easy to turn under sail or normal and your problem is entirely when motoring. I know that too much thrust over the large rudder will cause this to happen. When the rudder is straight, there is little surface area exposed to the prop thrust or turbulence. When the rudder is moved to one side or the other, it exposes a large surface and the force of the water pushes it back to centerline. If I am right, then the problem is more severe at higher speeds and less at lower speeds. The prop size sounds too big. If I remember right the normal 2 blade prop was 11×14 . When you increase a blade you must reduce the pitch or diameter. So you should have a 10×14 prop. For some reason my mind keeps jumping back to 9×14 for the three bladed prop. At my age, I am surprised I remember it has a prop.

Make sure your rudder bearings are not worn. I wish I could be more help but that's about all I can think of now. If you have a two bladed prop, try it to see if it works. Let me know how it goes.

Roger Olson

P.S. I was thinking, you should check to see if the load with this prop is too much for your engine. When you push the throttle all the way forward the boat engine should immediately (2-3 seconds) go to about 2500 rpm then in another second or two reach 3200 or maximum rpm for that engine. If it takes a longer time to reach maximum rpm, the prop is oversize for the engine. If the engine will not reach max rpm, the prop is even more oversize. What I am leading to, is that if the prop is too big for the engine, then the engine will be damaged in time. If the prop is ok, then the problem is the thrust of water over the rudder.

Again, check your rudder bushings. If they are worn or out of alignment,

the prop thrust will cause a binding. I seriously doubt this is the problem but leave no stone unturned.

Bandit, FC #2

My name is Sid Bertheaud and I am the proud owner of FC#2, previously owned by John Hull. My boat is still located in New Orleans, LA and at present still bears the name *Bandit*.

Thanks, for your wonderful web site. I look forward to using it help me as I work on my boat. I will need lots of advice. Like, how wide is the keel at the very bottom? I have been told by someone it is 12 inches. Is that true? I have not had my boat out of the water yet.

Sid Bertheaud

Welcome to the Falmouth Cutter fleet, Sid. It is true that the FC keel is pretty wide at the bottom. I believe it is about 12 inches wide at its widest point. But the keel does not have sharp edges at its sides, instead it has a healthy radius on either side, so the flat part is not 12 inches wide.

Ron Walton

*Dora Rose, FC #2**

It was good to talk with you the other day. Hope you can get some sailing time in soon. Since I last wrote, I have been sailing locally quite a lot, usually for 2-3 days at a time. The motor is working well and now has 75 hours on it. The veriprop feathering propeller is finally adjusted to its best pitch and feathers beautifully, but it is a bit noisy when motoring. Probably this is because there is no twist to the blade foils, but it sure is nice to see those flat blades streaming straight back when sailing.

Winter, 2008, I rented a mooring in Morro Bay instead of hauling out on the trailer. One night, we had thunder, lightning, and 75 mile per hour gusts for 8 hours. I stayed onboard to make sure nothing chafed. The bowsprit was in the water with every wave. I took everything off deck that was removeable, even the boom. 30 boats had significant damage, I had none. It was good to be on a strong mooring. I cannot imagine being at sea in similar conditions.

Projects this year have included putting bronze railings around the cockpit and rigging for a cruising spinnaker. The railing is 7/8 inch OD, bronze pipe connected in 3 places on each side. It looks good and adds immensely to the security of the cockpit since my boat has no lifelines. Eventually they will be part of a sitting height dodger system I am now designing.

I will send pictures when it is complete. The cruising chute I got at a swap meet is brand new and huge. It is tacked forward of the headstay and sheeted through a single block at the end of the boomkin with a continuous sheet. Even being continuous, the sheet is over 65 feet long. This monster is a handful when sailing by yourself, but so pretty and lots of fun, but only in light air. I set and douse it from the forehatch in the lee of the main with the autopilot steering. It jibes in front of the boat which allows for the potential of running over the sheets. If you had a long run and knew there would be no need to jibe, I think I would only use one sheet to simplify things.

I would be interested in hearing about other peoples experience with these sails, especially while singlehanded.

Larry Schmidt

Honu, FC #11

Second Look is now *Honu*. *Second Look* was a fine name, but I constantly found myself looking at her first and all others second so a new name seemed warranted. *Honu*, as you might know, is the Hawaiian word for sea turtle. There is a plurality of references to the *honu* in Hawaiian lore, all of them good and all of them portents of good luck. That we would name our boat *Honu* is logical if you consider its sailing performance, its terrestrial ability and our continued need for good luck; not to mention the fact that she was almost 25 years old when we were allowed to buy her. Anyhow, thats what it is and thats what it will be until they pry my cold lifeless body away from her. Then its someone elses problem.

We began our affair with *Honu* when we convinced John Riebe to sell her to us. It was a cold November day in Bozeman, Montana. Being from Hawaii and Florida cold does not set well with our family, but that day it seemed to make little difference. Winter was coming and I was not certain we could outrun the storms had we accepted delivery before years end. Consequently, we did not set out to bring her to Florida until May of 2006.

Our first cruise was the 2500 miles between Bozeman and Winter Garden, Florida. Looking back it was accomplished with a mix of exhilaration and fear. We stopped at Wall Drug along the way. I imagine we have the distinction of being the only cruising sailboat to stop at Wall. Dont know about Wall? Well its sort of South of the Border come to South Dakota. Dont know about South of the Border? You got Google?

It was a good trip. Some nights we stayed on the boat, some nights we splurged and got a room with a shower. The Tennessee Mountains were fun but nothing the boat couldnt handle. The boat seemed to draw a crowd. My biggest problem was avoiding other vehicles whose drivers seemed intent to get a close up look at her regardless their personal safety.

We did the shake down that summer off Captiva Island. My wife wrote of it in our last epistle. We found that San Carlos Bay is shallow, the wind stops at noon and that people seem to drive motorboats the same way they do their cars. At any rate, we survived, ran aground once (my wife says twice), nothing catastrophic unless you consider the captains ego. We had some good day sails. Its a good boat.

Christmas '06 found us in Marathon. We had great wind each day (15 20) and had a blast putting our little piece of heaven through its paces. Of note is the fact that we sailed when no one else would leave the harbor. And, we sailed comfortably. One of the things that constantly amazes me about this boat is its ease of motion compared to other boats of its size I have sailed. To my mind, it is comparable to most of the 30 footers and beats my old Catalina 27 hands down (And, I loved that boat).

Mid-January *Honu* went back on her trailer and back to Winter Garden where she sat on our extra lot until summer. Then it was back to Marathon the entry point for a cruise up the gulf coast to Captiva.

The cruise from Marathon to San Carlos Bay is not to be missed. Along the way you pass miles of pristine Florida as the Indians must have seen it. We stopped at Cape Sable the first night and anchored off a beach that went for miles without a human foot print. Later that evening we found out why when hordes of blood thirsty bugs descended on us intent to drive us insane by morning. It almost worked. It did work well enough to send us offshore for the rest of the passage, but that was fun and it is, also, not to be missed.

The month of July was spent day sailing with one quick trip up the Caloosahatchee. It was a good month and we learned a tremendous amount about how *Honu* likes to be sailed. Of note, travelling under the main and drifter we clocked 8.2 knots on the log at one point for about two hours; this

in 10-12 knots of wind and a flat sea (cross my heart!). Did I mention I love this boat?

As I write, *Honu* sits on our extra lot waiting for me to get the time to put her back in the water. I've occupied my free time in the last few months, carving a new boom gallows (made necessary by a low hanging branch), refinishing the interior and installing a propane stove and oven. As of this morning I lack just one more fitting. The project has been a challenge for me and a constant source of amusement for my wife, but its gorgeous.

I am under instruction to find a cruising ground for the summer that offers a cooler environment. I guess that means someplace in the northeast. I am open to suggestions. Next winter I think well put her over in St. Pete and explore that section of the coast for a while.

Well, there you have it. Nothing stellar, but then *Honu* has had more miles under her keel in the last couple years than, I dare say, a lot of boats. Shes perfect for the two of us. Shell get you there and back and will exhibit a reasonable turn of speed. Now if we can just rid ourselves of the two kids who seem to show up whenever the boat is in the water, life will be perfect.

Richard & Mary Woods

Topito, FC #16

It's been a long time without writing. I have *Topito* now in Vieques Island, Puerto Rico. I am considering crossing the Atlantic to go cruising in the Mediterranean. For a long time I've thought about removing the inboard and installing an outboard. I have noticed this is your setup in *Mijita* and would like any comments from you if possible. I have two main reasons: 1) More space. I would be sailing with my wife and my 5 year old kid, so we will need as much space as possible. They won't be crossing, just meeting me on the other side. 2) I have heard from one sailboat designer that when the prop is removed and the space filled, the boat will sail much better: less drag, point better, more speed, etc. I would like to hear what your feeling is on that. The other question I had is that I have been offered a used 6 HP 4 stroke Mercury outboard. I'm not sure what engine you have, but I would guess this engine would suffice for going in and out of harbors and the casual motor sail. And I guess my final question would be if you have any recommendations on the engine mount to use.

I like the new format of your web site. I have attached a picture of *Topito* for the gallery (at anchor in Parguera, Puerto Rico). I do not have good interior pics yet, but will try to take some.

Jorge E Pasarell

You are correct, Mijita has an outboard engine: a Honda BF8A, 8 HP. It is an older model, now called the Classic 8 because the new 8 HP is bigger and heavier. I suspect that 6 HP 4 stroke outboard you are considering is about the same weight: 85 pounds or so. That weight requires a pretty big engine bracket to handle it. Plus the bracket needs a large lift so that you can get the engine low enough in the water when powering, for proper cooling, and high enough when sailing, so the engine doesn't drag in the water. The bracket I have (made by Garhauer) on Mijita is okay for bay sailing with the Honda I have; for offshore I would either go to a smaller engine or a sturdier bracket. I suggest looking for a bracket with at least 14 inches of lift plus a weight carrying capacity significantly higher than the weight of your chosen engine. I think West Marine sells some that will do. And there are probably others out there as well.

Regarding horsepower: a 5 or 6 HP engine would probably be plenty. Mary White sometimes powered her FC with a 2 HP Honda to get into ports. I bought the 8 HP Honda because it was available with an extra long shaft which was 25-1/2 inches long, 3-1/2 inches longer than the long shaft version. That made it easier to get the engine low enough in the water; the engine it replaced was a Johnson Sailmaster which I believe had a 27 inch long shaft.

Regarding how the boat sails with the prop aperture filled. I, too, have heard that the FC sails better in that case. Gary Felton, former owner of FC#19, and a very experienced sailor, performed that transformation on FC #19 and believes that is the case. See The Falmouth Cutter, March 1995, edited by Donna Hayward, which can be downloaded from the Archives page of my website as fcn25.pdf.

I look forward to seeing more pictures of Topito and also putting them on my website.

Good luck on your plans to sail to the Med. It sounds like a lot of fun and I hope you and your family enjoy yourselves.

ron walton

Hokje, FC #18

I thought I'd let you know that finally, after 7+ years, *Hokje* is in Alameda. I had her transported up from San Diego earlier this week and she is currently resting in dry dock at Nelson's (front row, East side of the hanger). The plan is to put her back into shape (mostly cosmetically - i.e.teak), inspect and replace the rig, finish the cabin sole, add new sails (tanbark, still in the box after 6 years) and hopefully set out to explore and sail the bay. The brightwork needs to be done. I played around a few years back with the forward hatch - doing a teak wash with a two step cleaner and brightener. The wood comes back nicely. I spoke with Jack Lelah (*Hokje*'s prior owner) who is now a huge fan of oiling teak versus using varnish. He swears that as long as you keep the wood oiled, it looks almost as good without all the fuss. I may do the bulwarks and taffrail this way, leaving just the hatch covers, bowsprit, boomkin, rudder cheeks and tiller with varnish. The rest I think I will keep bare and bleached to it's natural blonde color.

I have Tanbark sails (original cut) new and still in the box from Skip Patterson. The rig is a question, especially for the heavier summer winds in the bay. It will be inspected and replaced if needed. I can't recall the name, but I spoke a while back with the outfit that supplied the original rig/fittings for SLM when *Hokje* was built. The guy said they had the dimensions and could ship me new standing rigging with no problem. Otherwise, she's a solid boat with a recent in-water survey that spoke highly of her. I very much look forward to getting her out on the bay!

Christopher Grenda

Elise, FC #19

Back in the summer of '07 I decided to take some time off from work and take *Elise* on a trip down the coast. I was keeping her in Baltimore, so the general plan was to head down the Chesapeake, take her out around the capes (Hatteras, Lookout, Fear), and then duck into Florida at some point before the Gulf Stream became an issue. After two months of preparing the boat and getting myself ready, we took off from Baltimore Harbor in early September. We took our time exploring the bay, working our way south and stopped in Hampton, Virginia for a few days at the end of September, watching the weather carefully. On October 1st, we headed out the bay and around Cape Henry, and turned south. I was doing the trip single-handed,

although my girlfriend, who wasn't able to pull away from work, occasionally met up with me to sail during the weekends.

I was determined to sail the whole trip, regardless of wind speed and direction, so the engine stayed off except for one instance where I had to get out of the way of a surfacing submarine coming in over the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (some nice gentlemen from the Navy came by in a small boat with a very large machine gun fixed to their deck). My first stop was Beaufort, NC. This took me a little over four days. Occasional light winds and running into the edge of the Gulf Stream out around Diamond Shoals delayed me a bit. This was my first solo experience off-shore. The windvane turned out to be priceless, allowing me to nap occasionally, go down below and prepare meals, study the charts, etc. -it worked wonderfully, probably steering better than I could. With *Elise* filled up and finally resting on her proper lines, I can attest to the advice given by Hess in one of the older FC Newsletters regarding weather helm - she sails much much better. The motion was easy and she was as stable as can be.

Beaufort is a wonderful boating town. Everything is within walking distance, the people are extraordinarily friendly, and the town has a couple of really great restaurants. After a few days, I headed south to Charleston. It's a good feeling when you're finally clear of an inlet and safely on your way out to sea. This was one of the nicest legs of the trip, clear skies with wind off my quarter at 15-20 most of the way. There's plenty to see and do in Charleston, but with the anchorages and marinas far from the downtown historic area, I didn't think it very boater friendly. I stayed a little longer than expected due to tropical storm/depression Noel coming up the coast. I was getting restless, so the day after NOAA dropped the Gale Warning I decided to set out for Hilton Head. NOAA was calling for winds out of the north at 25, gusting higher, with seas 6-8 feet. After getting outside the harbor, it became apparent that a single-reefed main and a yankee was too much sail, so I went down to a double reefed main and just the staysail. She balanced very well like this, surfing down the waves and occasionally hitting 8+ knots. Not once did she feel unstable though - as many times as I questioned myself, not once did I question the boat. Getting close to Hilton Head earlier than expected, we had to hove to for several hours to wait for daylight. It amazed me how calm the movement was and how little we drifted, once hove-to.

After a week at Hilton Head, doing some daysailing on Calibogue Sound, Todd Gauthier (owner FC#27) joined me for the leg down to the St Johns River and Jacksonville. After doing so much single-handing it was nice to

have some company and an extra pair of knowledgeable hands. Although Todd had to leave after we got down to St Augustine, I continued south down the Intracoastal to Fort Lauderdale. There are so many places to stop on the ICW in Florida, and depth is really never an issue for an FC, it was nice to be able to stop every night and get some proper rest.

Once in Florida I wasn't quite ready to pack things up and return to the real world, my girlfriend - who was able to arrange for several weeks of vacation - and I decided to head over to the Abacos for January ('08). We were fortunate: a weather window opened up just at the time we were planning to leave. We made it across the Gulf Stream without issue and cleared into West End, Bahamas the following day. From there we worked our way east across the banks to the Sea of Abaco and Hopetown. What a wonderful area to cruise!! Especially for a Falmouth Cutter! Depth was never an issue and I found the charts to be extremely accurate. There are so many places to anchor and explore, and you're always relatively close to a marina if you want to go ashore for showers, etc.. With the water so clear, you can literally stand out over the bowsprit and see your anchor in 20 feet of water! Perhaps some of you folks over on the West Coast should consider putting those trailers to use and seeing what wonderful things lie over here on the other side.

John Bowman

Lagniappe, FC #27

We renamed the boat. Her new name is *Lagniappe*. My family is from south Louisiana. *Lagniappe* is cajun for "an unexpected gift, a little something extra." As you know she survived hurricane Katrina in August of 2005. We lost everything else..house, stuff etc. We followed all the proper proceedings based on the article on your web site as it relates to re-naming and will certainly avoid any bad luck. Clearly she has abundant good luck and certainly is not ready to be claimed by Neptune just yet.

Todd Gauthier

Finesse, FC #33

Regarding FC #33, the certificate of origin cannot be found by Todd Uecker at Cape George nor by Sumio. It appears that all Falmouth Cutter

records have been lost, except for 2 or 3 that Todd located in his "data dump" from Sam L Morse. However, if anyone is in this situation in the future, they can enter the first-3 letters of the HIN into the USCG Manufacturer Identification Code (MIC) Database at http://www.uscgboating.org/recalls/mic_database.htm. For Sam L Morse, all HINs begin with SFJ, which returns the appropriate info. Still need to take delivery of Hull 33, but US Customs said that this info would suffice.

By the way, Hull 33 is no longer named *Wee Billy Mac*. We did the denaming ceremony during a great sail outside of Sidney, BC, including the incantation and champagne offering to the gods. We think that the new name will be *Finesse*, but we are still in the name-picking process.

Now for another question for you as the *info coordinator* for all things related to FCs. Has anyone had one documented with the USCG? I am not sure that the FC would measure up to the 5 tonne requirement, and it seems that the easiest thing to do would be to check if anyone else ever went through the process. Do you have any knowledge of a documented FC? Your response will be appreciated. Thanks for your help.

Tom Frenock

My FC Mijita is documented. To document an FC, it must not have an inboard engine. Coast Guard documentation requires that the cargo carrying capacity of a vessel, its net tonnage, be 5 tons. A FC has a net tonnage of 5 tons only if it does not have an inboard engine, as is the case for Mijita; a FC has a net tonnage of only 4.5 tons if it has an inboard engine.

Ron Walton

Unnamed, FC #39

One of the more interesting projects for my Falmouth Cutter was the scuttle hatch. This presented some interesting problems in 3D design. Not only did I have to contend with a tapered scuttle coaming but when I measured the opening of the coaming, I noticed that there were no real square edges! The opening was a trapezoid with dimensions of parallel sides differing by up to 1/4 inch. Apparently, no two boats have the exact dimensions as the building process is dependent on the temperature, viscosity of the resin, and the pressure used when applying the resin; all of these can cause minor variations in size. To complicate matters, I added a self-imposed problem: I

did not want a flat design, but rather a sloping hatch with a crown (much like the one I saw on FC #38 Geoffrey Jenk's boat). The crown ended up at approximately 76 inches radius.



The frame and top of the hatch are made of teak.



The interior of the hatch is made of cherry wood.

This project took quite a few hours to complete, but was very rewarding. One more project complete before she hits the water, only 999 to go!

John Verlinden