

FC News

Editor: Ron Walton

Autumn 2004

“Hi, *SAPO* is dead, I am ok, I rode the storm and it had its plus moments, regardless of loss ... Grenada is incredible still...”

I received this e-mail from Mary White on September 29, three weeks after Hurricane Ivan devastated the island country of Grenada where she had arrived May 31 on board *FC Sapo*, fifteen months after departing Thailand. Hurricane Ivan was the first hurricane to hit Grenada in almost 50 years and the strongest hurricane that far south ever recorded. Sadly, Mary and *Sapo* were there.

Prior to Hurricane Ivan's existence Mary had e-mailed me with the exciting news of her and *Sapo*'s return to the Western Hemisphere. And just as Hurricane Ivan was approaching the Caribbean I received a letter from Mary with a photo of *Sapo*, careened for bottom paint on a beach in the Langkawi Islands of Malaysia, taken just before she departed on the voyage to Grenada. Those communications are published in this issue of the FC News along with Mary's e-mails to me after Hurricane Ivan. The former express a relief to have made landfall successfully after crossing two oceans while the latter reflect the probable end of a voyage begun a decade ago in Mexico and which had almost returned Mary White and *Sapo* there.

More sad news also arrived by e-mail. Shortly after I published the Summer 2004 issue of the FC News, Elisabeth Smith wrote to tell me about the death (in April) of her husband Keith Smith, owner of *Maid of Slapton*, FC #32. This was particularly sad news for me because Keith had regularly contributed to the FC News during the first several years of its existence. I hope you will all read Elisabeth Smith's e-mail in this issue and please think about Keith and Elisabeth the next time you go to your Falmouth Cutter.

Several additional letters also came from the fleet and are published below. FC #1*, *Dazzler*, and FC #19, *Angelsea*, have new owners, and the latter has a new name: *Elise*. FC #33 *SeaCall* now has an address and a website. And FC #39 is being completed by her owner John Verlinden.

Finally, I have read Stan Grayson's new book *Sailing Small*, mentioned in the Summer 2004 issue of the FC News, and provide a brief review of it at the end of this newsletter. It is a *must read*.

Ron Walton
1671 Via Rancho
San Lorenzo, CA 94580
(510) 278-3335
rwsailor@mac.com

Dazzler, FC #1*

I'm sorry I didn't get in touch with you about selling Ogden's boat, I thought Jim Montgomery would let you know. Jim was a big help in informing me how to sell Ogden's boat.

The new owner lives in CA and has already talked to you. His name is "Fredrerick Dulien. 1733 Monrovia Ave, Unit R, Costa Mesa, Ca. 92627. Phone 949 637 3610.

Dot Booke

Sapo, FC #10

Hi Ron,

This is from Mary on *SAPO* ---now in Grenada (can you believe!!!!) I have thought to send you a photo of *SAPO* on the beach in Malaysia with a perfect bottom job drying in the sun---especially that now *SAPO* is the shabbiest vessel in the East Caribbean. Frankly, all the boats here put my teeth on edge--they are enormous and absolutely perfectly maintained. Most of them are on the hard with only workers scurrying around under them, but the ones in the water also make *SAPO* look like floating debris. I cannot decide where to go from here. Upwind and upcurrent here seems impossible (easier to sail west around the entire planet than to win back to shore from a few miles on the 'wrong' side of an island here), so it is important to have it figured out right at the start. Help would be appreciated, but somehow I never get any info.

Guess what? I am replying to you from my "Junk mail" folder. Sorry about that! Best Regards,

Mary

I, and I am sure all of the Falmouth Cutter fleet, would like to have been in Grenada to greet you. Congratulations!! And welcome back to the western hemisphere.

A couple of months ago I heard a rumor that you had left Malaysia and were heading west. Africa? Or the Red Sea? But no one could confirm it. What route did you take? When did you start? etc etc

*Is Grenada a good place to be during hurricane season? I don't know, but it sounds like it might be with all the big boats on the hard. Of course, maybe that is why they are on the hard. Ask around. Especially the crews of some of the big boats. They will be really impressed with your accomplishment no matter how *Sapo* might look, and I am sure will be able to give you help. Just ask.*

Thank you for your e-mail. I hope you will find more time to write us here at the FC News now that we are on the same side of the world.

ron walton



Here is the photo of *Sapo* on the beach at Bumbon Island in Langkawi, Malaysia. I put *Sapo*

on the beach and painted the bottom every year while I was in Malaysia. Before that I did it in Mexico and in the Philippines; later I did it in Madagascar. I would love to do it here (*Grenada -- Ed.*), but the tides are measured in “tenths” of a meter, which is inadequate. In all those other places I always had at least 7 or 8 feet at “springs”. At risk of boring you to death I will explain how I did it.

On the chosen day (if sunny, otherwise abort the project) I waited until the water fell below the height of the next predicted high, and then I motored slowly toward the spot on the beach where I wanted the boat. About 150 feet from the beach, I dropped my Bruce anchor (with a few feet of chain plus 200 feet of rope rode) off the stern and paid out the line as I went ashore. [Sometimes my judgement of distance was very bad and I would still be floating when I got to the end of the rode, so I always tied my life-ring to that end and could then just toss it over. Later I could swim out and tie more line onto that rode.]

I approached the beach slowly as possible, out of gear, and when we went aground we simply stopped and slowly tipped over. The first side I just let it go whichever way; the second side I put the boom out and everything in the boat on the side I wanted to lie over on -- it always worked.

While the water slowly receded, I was in the water busily sanding and rinsing. It was extremely handy to still be in the water while doing that cleaning. By the time the water was completely gone, I was finished cleaning and ready to paint. Sometimes I did a final rinse with fresh water, sometimes I did not; it did not seem to make any difference to how the paint stayed on. ???

Sapo lies at about a 45 degree angle (4 foot draft, 8 foot beam), a much better angle for painting than up-right. It is more like painting a wall than painting a ceiling! However, 45 degrees is an absolutely impossible angle to do anything inside the boat, so it was essential to collect everything I was going to need and put it outside before the boat went over! I became quite good at that.

I was always completely done before the water came back up the beach as far as the boat. That was good because by that time my cats would have become enamored of the possibilities of sand, beach, grass, and trees. It was their ONE opportunity in an entire year to leap about on land. It took them awhile to work up their nerve to jump off the boat, but once they did it (and did not have to swim), they liked it a lot. Sometimes they became very bold and went very far. I worried about them and tried to keep them in sight. Another cruiser had lost a cat to a snake on the very beach in my picture. He was right there and actually saw the snake seize his cat! No way to save it (I think he killed the snake, but the cat was dead anyway.) Big snake.

Anyway, slowly the water would surround the boat and the boat would slowly straighten up. However, the moment between the boat grounded and the boat floating is not ‘slowly’, it is abrupt, an all or nothing difference, it either is or is not aground. I would have the rode out to the Bruce taugh around a winch and when *Sapo* lifted free of the sand we would immediately start back to sea. The full moon high tides were my preference, chiefly because that meant that there was enough light to see where I was going when I came off the beach in the middle of the night. I would have the engine running while I pulled out to pick up the Bruce, but I would not put it into gear until I had that anchor back aboard.

Repeat for the other side.

The long shadows in the picture are cast by the rising sun, about 6:30 a.m. or so, which is not the time that *Sapo* usually was on the beach. There is a story that explains why I was wandering around taking pictures early that morning. The day before, just as *Sapo* had touched ground about 20 feet to seaward of where you see *him*, a huge wake from the ferry that goes between Langkawi and Satun (Thailand) came ashore, picked *Sapo* up and deposited him MUCH higher on the beach than I intended. In the middle of the night high water came and went but *Sapo* remained aground. Crank as I might on that winch, *Sapo* did not move. The following high tide was a bit higher, higher enough, so we came off at mid-day. Thank goodness. [It was very difficult to get the Bruce out of the sand into which I had buried it by cranking with all my might on that rode, by the way.] I still had the other side to paint, but I did not have the heart for it just then. I waited until full moon the next month -- and did it on another beach on another island in the Langkawi group.

Oh, in case you are wondering if it really is a Falmouth Cutter ---I painted the green gelcoat of that strip just below the teak (is it called a “boot top” or something???) (*I think it is called a wale*

strake; the boot top is just above the waterline.--Ed.) When it was green it heated up in the tropic sun and all but melted everything in the cubbies inside. White stays cool.

You asked me about my route from Asia. I departed Thailand on Feb. 21, 2003, went west across the Andaman Sea and passed north of Sumatra into the Arabian Sea. I stopped for two months in Chagos Archipelago (Indian Ocean) and then proceeded to Madagascar, over to Mayotte (French Island in the Comoro group. All the others voted to become independent of France and seem to be regretting it -- they are poor, the Mayotte folks are comparatively rich), back to Madagascar and south down the Mozambique Channel to Durban, South Africa where I stayed for awhile. Then around South Africa (farthest south I went was 35 degrees. Horribly cold -- it was their mid-summer.) Northwest for thousands and thousands of miles. Only respite was Saint Helena Island (place of exile of Napoleon -- took a tour and learned way too much about all that.) The life and people of St. Helena are wonderful; they plan to ruin it with an airport; they do not know that they will ruin it. Ain't progress great! I stopped a couple of days at Fernando de Noronha (a Brazilian island a few hundred miles off the South American coastline) but left again as soon as I found out they wanted all my remaining U.S.\$ just for the privilege of anchoring in the South Atlantic swell. I aimed for Tobago and was within 11 miles of the bay I had chosen when (yet another) white-out squall interrupted my trip. When I was again in the clear, I was 18 miles from that bay with not enough daylight remaining. I would have to stay out another night, during which (of course) the current swept me along and Grenada thus became the landfall of choice. Ta-dah! (*Mary was at sea a total of 172 days between Feb. 21, 2003 and May 31, 2004. -Ed.*)

Yes, Ron, Grenada is out of the so-called hurricane zone. How I can tell is that Insurance companies tell their policy holders to stay below 12 degrees 30 minutes or so. I am anchored at 11 degrees 59.9 minutes or so. I must be safe, don't you think? And NO, I do not have insurance. Geez. While Florida was being attacked by Hurricane Charley the other day, we were busy bracing for Earl. I enjoyed it because it cleared many boats out of the bay where I was. They crowded in some place else and tied up to mangroves, etc. Basically, nothing happened. Oh, the wind blew (about as usual when it is being feisty) for a couple of hours. One unattended MONSTER catamaran did drag anchor, which gave all the keyed up guys something to do. Dinghies galore converged on that catamaran and it was soon reanchored.

You recommend that I seek information from the people on boats here. Well, yes, but... I think there is a culture-type problem. Sort of alien races non-communicado. One person that I have talked to -- an Australian who I first met in Durban -- said, "these people are not cruisers, they are caravanners." Okay, I don't really know what he meant either, it is an Aussie thing, caravanning, but I think he meant that they are doing a different thing than I am. I don't think they can help me. Another insight came off the VHF that I sometimes leave on "scan" and listen to everyone's conversations. Americans this time. The comment: "I don't like the sailing, but I love the social life. It is like camp for old people." I don't think anything that person tells me will help me either. Face it, I'm just an eccentric old broad (with cats, yet) in a tiny sailboat that they wouldn't be caught dead in even if it weren't so 'long in the tooth.' And a damned snob to boot! (and loving it)

Mary White

P.S. Left Thailand Feb 21, 2003. In Chagos Arch. March 23 to May 21. In Madagascar June 5 to July 4. In Mayotte July 8 to Sept 20. In Madagascar Sept 25 to Oct 10. In Durban, S. Africa, Oct 30 to Feb 6, 2004. In St. Helena March 20 to Apr 2. In Fernando de Noronha Apr 23 to Apr 26. Arrived in Grenada May 31, 2004. The passages are the times between, all slow, I never motorsail.

I received your letter this past weekend. Thank you for the letter and the photo.

Reports here in California about Hurricane Ivan said it was following Frances. No mention that it was a threat to Grenada. Obviously, that was wrong. And also obviously, the "insurance" companies you mention in your letter, who drew a safe demarcation line on a chart, were wrong. So, I hope you found a good "hole" for Sapó yesterday (September 7, 2004 -- Ed.) and that you are all safe.

Ron Walton

Hi SAPO is dead, I am ok, I rode the storm and it had its plus moments, regardless of loss ...

Grenada is incredible still....I have written a bit of an article that may see print...I will send a photo of SAPO's remains if development ever becomes an option here.

Landlubbing Mary

Thank you for your reply. I am glad to hear from you that you are alive. Everyday I have been checking the websites for information. I learned that Sapo was aground in a place called Prickly Bay; but there was no information about his crew. Also, none of the photos posted from Prickly Bay showed Sapo.

Your son Berkeley told me that you and your feline friends were alive, which was the best news of all, but that Sapo was badly damaged. I am very sorry to hear from you that Sapo is lost; I guess I hoped to hear that he might be salvaged and repaired.

Please keep me posted.

Ron Walton

Thanks for writing back. I am at different machine that seems to work better, but my brain is not much good still. If SAPO would float, I would be aboard in a heart beat, rig down, bowsprit gone, boomkin broken, ripped, torn stainless everywhere--but I don't think it will be given the chance--bogged farther and farther in sand and a long way from deep water--reef and seas never stop. It is hard for me to go aboard (emotionally) so still lots of things in there and on there etc. Looters come often, move stuff around, take some but leave most??? I wonder what they want? They left a GPS, just moved it to the cockpit and left it??? The mast is okay, but not upright--one chainplate bent so far it finally cracked at its bolt (easy repair). I was 'proud' of my 12 year old rigging -- NONE of it gave way (but couldn't cope with no bowsprit, right?) e-mail very borderline and expensive. By the way, witnessing an entire island nation of which 99.9% of the people lost most of their houses etc. with no water and no power etc etc is VERY INTERESTING. Bye.

Mary

Sad to think of Sapo so damaged and helpless. If he can be made watertight again, there must certainly be a way to relaunch him?

And sad to think of Grenada so damaged and helpless as well. Right now Grenada and the other islands in the Caribbean damaged by Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne are off the radar screens of the news media here in the US. I hope the US and other countries are providing aid, but I just don't know what is happening. In the meantime, I guess it will be lawless and, as you say, interesting. Good luck.

Ron Walton

Elise, FC #19

I am writing in request as to how to join the owners association. We are Bob and Lois Plank in Gettysburg, Pa. A few months ago we purchased *Angelsea* from Terry Hill. We plan to rename her *Elise*. When we found her in Annapolis, Md she was sitting next to another FC owned by Jerry Kovach. Thought that was neat that only so few of these are in the world that two were there side by side. Anyhow we want to join up. You are doing a great job with the newsletter and hope we can add something from time to time.

Our address here is: 629 Natural Dam Road Gettysburg, Pa 17325. Phone: 717-334-0902. E-mail: lobo@supernet.com

Elise is now at Maryland Marina in Middle River, Md. The Chesapeake is only about an hour and ten from here so we are there a good bit. Lois and I are teachers, Lois teaches French, German, Spanish languages in middle school; I teach woodworking and cabinetmaking in high school. So the summer offers some time to sail.

When we found *Elise* she was in need of help. The dorades were leaking water into the cabin and the boomkin had some wood decay due to some unbedded fittings. Over the past few months

we built and installed a new boomkin out of teak, made new dorades,rewired the 12 volt panel, cleaned, made new companionway boards with a screen, installed ears on the bowsprit for better footing, sailed, installed a gps, made new sail bags for the gib and staysail, had fun and are really happy with the boat. This winters projects are going to be a cockpit grate, a grate for the forward deck just aft of the bowsprit, replace the wood on the boom gallows, install a 110 volt panel and outlets and re do some things in the cockpit. We will be busy.

We want to replace all of the blocks with new teak ones. Do you know if there any available blocks in teak other than the ones from ABI? The blocks we have now are made of some type of hard rubber and I don't think that they are the original ones. I even toyed with the idea of making them myself as I have some lignum vitae that would work and last forever.

We will send some pictures of *Elise* in the future and try to get some news to fuel the FC NEWS. I will contact Jerry and tell him to send the rest of his information. Have a great day.

Bob & Lois

If the blocks you have are Southcoast Blocks, they are probably original. And those are good blocks, in my opinion. They don't mark the boat and they don't need to be varnished. Also, Lin & Larry Pardey use them on their boats. But, if you still want to get rid of them, let me know.

Ron Walton

Maid of Slapton, FC #32

I am sorry I hadn't written before but I didn't have your email address. Sadly Keith was missing from his boat in April and found 11 days later in the River Tamar. He was moored and just spending two days working on the boat. It is absolutely devastating and maybe you would like to inform anyone who knew Keith. I know he was interested very much in your publication.

Sincerely,

elisabeth smith

Sea Call, FC #33

Thanks for the updates. My address is: 34300 Lantern Bay Dr. #72, Dana Point, CA 92629. Phone # is 949-487-2004.

Steve and Eileen Kaufmann have renamed *Kastoria*. She is now *Keiki*.

I was sorry to hear about Keith Smith. My wife worries about me working alone on *Sea Call*. We recently spent a few nights at Alamitos Bay. Check out photos at sea-call.com. Please excuse the quality of the movies. This is my first attempt.

Phil Cunningham

FC #39

Please update my information with the following. Address: 297 Stonecliffe Aisle, Irvine, CA, 92612. Phone: 949-679-0670. E-mail: jpverlinden@compuserve.com

I bought FC #39 in September last year and picked it up in May 2004 as a kit boat with hull/deck/ballast/engine/ major external woodwork done (e.g. taffrail, bulwarks, bowsprit). The boat is currently residing in an RV yard in Irvine where I am finishing the exterior hopefully for this year. The interior will be done over the next couple of years. We (my wife Cheryl and I) have not named her yet waiting until we are ready to launch.

I have been enjoying reading the newsletter (and the archives) as they have been a good source of information for the various customizations that have been done over the years on this stout little yacht. It would be great if we can collect a couple of pictures (outside and inside) of

each FC either on your site or on Terry Hill's site (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/falmouthcutter>) for all to admire. I hope you hang in there Ron as you have been doing a great job and it would be a shame to see the newsletter fade away.

John Verlinden

John, thank you for your encouragement regarding the FC News and for the news you sent. I look forward to hearing more about your progress towards finishing your FC and learning its name. And I too would like to see photos of all the boats on the two websites.

Ron Walton

A Book Review

“My original aim was to sail around the world.” How many of us sailors are honest enough to say that to a stranger? Charles Stock is, in Stan Grayson’s new sailing anthology: *Sailing Small: inspiration and instruction for the pocket cruiser*.

And how many of us have sailed around the world now that we own the “boat”? After all sailing around the world has been the “dream”. But the reality of life is also more like Charles Stock’s: *“I was free to sail as far around the world as I liked, provided I was back in good time to go to work on Monday morning.”*

In nine chapters, each written by a different author, Stan Grayson the editor guides us into the world of *Sailing Small*, a world where learning to cruise is an ongoing and lifelong adventure. A world where the details make the difference to the enjoyment of the voyage, whether that voyage is only a weekend sail in the Thames River Estuary or the Chesapeake Bay; a year long voyage down the ICW or the west coast of the U.S. to Mexico; or, a multiyear process of designing, building, and testing a new small cruising sailboat. Indeed, the main theme of *Sailing Small* is the details of preparing your small sailboat and yourself for cruising. Such as always diving on your anchor to make sure it is set properly and not hung up in bottom debris. This saved *Sea Dart* when anchored in deep water in high waves off Barbados; a larger yacht dragged past *Sea Dart* with its main anchor jammed in a bucket that had been on the bottom. Without that foresight by Ron Reil, Tristan Jones might never have owned *Sea Dart* or made his *Incredible Voyage*.

But the details of boat preparation is not the only theme of *Sailing Small*. Other than circumnavigating, the authors of *Sailing Small* have experienced most of what we all dream about when cruising and they also tell those stories with an eye for the details which don’t come with any owner’s manual and with a sense of humor at times that will surely engage the most serious among us. Imagine a pressure cooker overfilled with rice going wild like a machine gun in the galley. Or sitting on the head bucket in the cockpit while sailing your boat on a spinnaker run, the crew banished below for privacy.

From galleys to heads, from spinnakers to storm trysails, from estuary sailing to coastal cruising, *Sailing Small* is a wonderful contribution to sailing literature. I will put it on the shelf in my boat right next to L. Francis Herreshoff’s *The Compleat Cruiser*.

And, by the way, one of the chapters of *Sailing Small* is by Mike Meier, former owner of FC #9, *Mariko*, and describes the preparations and voyage down the west coast of the U.S. to Mexico he and his wife Helen made aboard *Mariko*.

Sailing Small by Stan Grayson is available directly from its publisher Devereux Books, P.O. Box 503, Marblehead, MA 01945, www.devereuxbooks.com, (781)631-3055. Its price is \$16.95 plus \$4.00 shipping and handling. Or it can be found in better bookstores, without the shipping and handling.