

FC News

Editor: Ron Walton

Winter 2000

Welcome to Y2K. I hope you all had a happy holiday and new year and no bugs, of either the computer or biological kind. But since it is a new year, what resolutions have you made that also involve your Falmouth Cutters? Enquiring minds would like to know.

In this issue we have letters from the Falmouth Cutters *Bandit*, *Anne Marie*, *Puffin*, and *Francesca*. *Bandit* is the missing-from-the-mailing-list, Sam L. Morse Co. FC # 2, which Roger Olson and I had been looking for the past two years. We also have an alumni letter from Bud and Ginny Morrison, former skipper and first mate of *Ginnywake III*, and a letter from John Boye, who discovered a Fisksatra while looking for a Falmouth Cutter to buy.

Jason Feeny and his girl friend departed for Costa Rica in December on board *Zarpé*, FC # 36.

Angelsea, FC # 19, was sold to Terry Hill this past year. Welcome to the fleet Terry and thank you for your telephone call. Please write when you get a chance; we would all like to here about the ocean passage you made to deliver *Angelsea* home. Terry's current address is:

3394 Brandon Hall Way
Marietta, GA 30062
(770) 509-5477
tmhill@att.com

By the way, I think *Mariko*, *Aspeden*, *Ferial*, and *Ingaare* still for sale.

For anyone who has a Ratcliffe windvane selfsteerer on their boat, Ratcliffe has a new telephone number: (781) 826-3516.

Finally, as newsletter editor for more than two years, I have often wondered what the newsletter was like previously. Can any of you help me? I would like to obtain copies of the newsletters published before I became editor. Thank you.

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

Bandit, FC # 2

My long delay in replying to your note accompanying **FC News** last June may suggest disinterest, but nothing could be farther from the truth.

I am a painter - watercolors. I paint mostly marine subjects on the Gulf Coast. Since finding a studio space in the French Quarter, my time has been occupied assembling an inventory of finished work. I am launching a small "retirement business", a modest enterprise with all the attenuating problems of planning, marketing, budgeting, *spending*, and licensing. Having put a chunk of my retirement savings into this effort, my investment has riveted my attention to the drawing board.

As you can imagine, I haven't been sailing much in recent months. That's an unusual change of course in my life after living aboard seventeen years.

When I bought my Falmouth Cutter, *Bandit*, in 1991, I was winding down a broadcasting

career in Los Angeles. I had the prospect of free time. I had visited Sam's yard in Costa Mesa many, many years before and was entranced by the design of this little cruiser. But it wasn't until '91 that all the necessary circumstances came together and I bought this particular boat. I was the third owner.

I drove to Costa Mesa shortly thereafter to meet Sam Morse again. We spent an hour chatting. Delightful man. He pulled out a file on my boat. I learned he had built the hull and deck, assembled them and completed some other work which I have since forgotten. The first buyer was a sailor in Costa Mesa who owned and operated his own boat yard. Evidently that man finished her, very traditionally and very well, according to the design intentions of Lyle Hess. I have never had a problem attributable to workmanship.

When I was talking to Sam the last time, he was building Hull No. 29, which I believe was his last Falmouth Cutter. *Bandit* was identified as Hull No. 2. I don't know how to resolve the apparent contradiction with your information (in your Summer 1999 register of owners) identifying *Mon Desir* as Hull No. 2. The contradiction is, I guess, mostly academic.

Since having her trucked from Los Angeles to Galveston Bay four years ago, *Bandit* has sailed the Texas and Louisiana coasts. After a year free of freeways (painting around Rockport, Texas), I sailed east with the intention of finding Key West. I stopped in New Orleans for a brief layover three years ago and was hypnotized by the history, architecture, and hospitality in this city. While I have crewed on races and boat deliveries east and west, back and forth to Florida and Texas, *Bandit* has been unnaturally still in her slip most of the time. But we have had some very good, and some very difficult times, off the California coast and here on the Gulf coast.

I contribute regularly to *Pontchartrain*, a monthly publication for sailors and marine businesses in and around New Orleans. A friend here puts it together. I rewrite most of the editorial content, which has been my only distraction (other than showers and meals) from painting. So I enjoy this kind of thing. But I just don't have anything to report about *recent* adventures aboard my boat.

In the way of incidental information, I was surprised to see any of these little boats once I left California. But there's one across the lake in Madisonville, LA. My first year here, I met her owner, Mitch Kilgore, listed in your register. I enjoyed talking boats with him. Then I saw *two* more in a little bayou harbor in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. One was sadly neglected. The other was very spiffy. The sailorette aboard was polishing and told me about the boat. She and her husband had ordered it custom made from Sam a few years earlier. That conversation was couple of years ago.

About the time I last sat down to write this letter, my word processor evaporated and left me with the "Write" feature in Windows which does not "feature" a spell checker to keep me from looking too ignorant. While I am up to my neck in alligators, and have been since March, the reptiles in question aren't the usual Louisiana critters I have occasionally seen undulating across the bow. I am busy working on paintings, many of which portray small sailing vessels on the Gulf Coast. But I am not too busy to read the **FC News**. I am enclosing a check to defray postage and mailing costs - I didn't see any regular subscription information. I hope this keeps me on your mailing list. And I do appreciate your efforts.

John Hull
221 Lake Marina Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70124

John, there is no regular subscription information because there is no set subscription. All owners of Falmouth Cutters for whom I have addresses receive the newsletter. To defray my costs I do accept contributions from owners and request contributions from nonowners. In that spirit I accept your contribution. Letters from owners are even more valuable since without them there could not be a newsletter. So I also especially want to thank you for your letter and

invite you to please stay in touch. By the way, do you have a telephone number or e-mail address?

For your information, Falmouth Cutters were built by Heritage Marine before Sam got the molds and were called Nor'Sea 22s. Mon Desir is Hull No. 2 from Heritage Marine. In my owners list, there are several boats with identical hull numbers. The first boat of each such pair is the Sam L. Morse Co. boat.

By the way, how many of those small sailing vessels in your paintings are Falmouth Cutters?

Ron Walton

Anne Marie, FC # 7

In November 1997 I embarked on my Sea of Cortez expedition, departing from my home of 34 years in Des Moines, Iowa with the *Anne Marie* in tow behind my one-ton Ford van, 18,600 pounds of boat, trailer, truck, and stuff. Two years later I am happy to report that I have not looked back. The people I met and the experiences I lived have been extraordinary and have added a new dimension to my life. Here are some of the highlights and lessons of the trip.

The Vessel

Anne Marie's hull was molded in 1982 and she was custom completed in 1984 as S/V *Essence*. Some of you may recall an October 1984 article in **Cruising World** magazine about *Essence*. Lyle Hess helped the original owner find a boatbuilder to finish the boat and Lyle was there to give his expert guidance in the process. *Essence / Anne Marie* was built incorporating much of what Lin and Larry Pardey advised in their books: all bronze deck fittings, hand spliced stainless steel standing rigging, sail inventory, and anchoring system. But she departs from the Pardey's boats in several ways. She has a Volvo diesel engine, an Ample Power monitored electrical system, solar panels, a watermaker, a VHF radio, an HF radio receiver (important for weather forecasts), modern navigation instruments (as well as a sextant), both a (Ratcliffe) windvane selfsteerer and an internally mounted Autohelm tillerpilot, and a Tinker Tramp inflatable dinghy / liferaft with 3 hp outboard motor.

Preparations

I acquired *Essence* in 1990 and renamed her S/V *Anne Marie*. That first year I sailed her on a local lake in Iowa. Then I rented an unused farm machine shed to put the *Anne Marie* in and proceeded to go through the boat from bowsprit to boomkin. The hours spent here were worthwhile because I acquired a first hand knowledge of the details of the boat, her machinery, and general construction. A few of my projects: new seacocks, an engine overhaul, and installation of a watermaker.

As my projects were completed, the tools needed for each job went into a separate kit that became the ship's tools. When it came time to leave, the tools were all there, exactly what was needed. On the cruise I never lacked the proper tool for any job. The complete kit weighed 75 pounds. I did leave behind a few larger tools: table saw, jointer, shaper, drill press...

Organization

Good organization is important on any vessel, but on a 22 footer life would be miserable without it. On the *Anne Marie* everything has its place and is easily accessible. I remember one guest, obviously distracted by the shipshape *Anne Marie*, finally asking "do you really live on this boat?" Everything was stowed. Nothing was lying about on counter space or at the foot of quarterberths. Organization takes thought, time, and work to accomplish. However, it pays dividends in livability, convenience, and safety.

A bonus for maintaining a shipshape boat was the admiring glances the *Anne Marie* got wherever we went. Lasting friendships have grown out of those meetings. Today, e-mail messages are exchanged regularly with these friends, some of whom have scattered to such distant places as New Zealand, Australia, and Europe, as well as back to the US and Canada.

Lean and Mean as Possible

Any cruising boat is going to be heavier than the same boat sailed out of a marina on weekends. Before leaving, I was very concerned about this weight issue, knowing it would affect the *Anne Marie's* sailing performance. I had raised the water line with barrier coat and bottom paint to the top of the original boot stripe. Fully loaded, the *Anne Marie's* actual water line came to about an inch below the new water line. As the cruise progressed, I found things aboard I was using little or not at all. I got rid of those things. Today, the *Anne Marie* floats about two inches below the new water line. Two years from now, maybe she will float even higher. I hope so. Less really is more. Seasoned travelers learn the art of traveling lightly and cruisers are well advised to do the same.

Cruising at Last

The cruise started with the road trip from Des Moines to San Carlos, Sonora, Mexico. San Carlos is located about mid Sea of Cortez on the mainland. It was an excellent point of embarkation. The marina facilities are excellent there and also there is a good launching ramp. After getting the *Anne Marie* rigged and into the water, I did some day sailing out of San Carlos to make sure all was working. Then I left the boat and returned the van and trailer to the machine shed in Iowa.

Back in San Carlos I quickly formed friendships both within the cruising community and with the local folks (baker, butcher, etc.). The Mexican people are very warm and friendly and are anxious to help you and make you feel welcome. Spanish came fairly quickly by putting forth a little effort; just a couple of new words a day quickly built into a basic vocabulary for everyday necessities. After awhile I could even give directions to a Mexican driver in Spanish. Directions from a Gringo? I had a good chuckle.

Near the end of my stay in San Carlos, I became a grandfather for the first time. The *Anne Marie's* namesake had given birth to Zachary Scott Deaton, displacement: 7 pounds. Becoming a grandfather was as deeply profound an experience as becoming a father.

From San Carlos I sailed north a little way up the coast, visiting several anchorages, trying to get the feel for this new cruising life. Then the time came for the crossing to the Baja, my first singlehanded, offshore trip. I left in the early evening, motoring in flat calm conditions and no wind. As the sun set, I could just see three large volcanic mountains on the other side to the west... the Tres Virgines, less than 100 miles away. During the night the wind slowly increased, so I put up the sails. By the time I was within 30 miles of my destination, Santa Rosalia, I was reefed and beating into 30 knot winds and steep, choppy seas. Those last miles took over 9 hours to cover, but the boat proceeded forward steadily, albeit slowly, and behaved very well. Fatigued but exhilarated, I sailed into the protected harbor at Santa Rosalia. Friends from San Carlos took my dock lines; I will never forget those smiling faces and welcomes. Santa Rosalia was the last marina where I was to tie up for the next 7 months.

My plans were to stay at Santa Rosalia for just 2 or 3 days. Two and a half weeks later, I finally got around to leaving. In Santa Rosalia I learned one of the most important lessons of cruising: slow down, take the time to be drawn into the community, and enjoy the more subtle aspects of your destinations. Boredome was never an option. Everything was exciting: daily trips for more fresh bakery goodies, exploring remains of old copper mines, new friends, and ... oh, I must mention the "Exquisitos" (incredibly delicious hot dogs, probably the best in the world) eaten on the steps of the church (designed by Eiffel of Eiffel tower fame).

First Real Blow

For me, the worst sailing conditions encountered occurred on the sail from an anchorage named San Juanico to a cozy, well protected bay called Ballandra on Isla Carmen. During the winter, northers blow regularly in the Sea of Cortez. A couple of days after arriving at San Juanico (an absolutely beautiful anchorage with pinnacle rocks, osprey nesting atop the pinnacles, sandy beaches, etc.), the worst norther of the season came in. It lasted for seven days and blew 30 to 50 knots day and night. I stuck tight there, firmly anchored, until it appeared that the weather was finally improving. Short wave radio forecasts (Chubasco net) also suggested the winds were

lightening up. I left in about 20 knot winds on a broad reach for Ballandra. Not an hour later, the wind was back up to 40-50 knots. With the large seas, it was definitely a hand steering day. Seas curled and the tops of the waves began to break. The steep seas would approach very close to the stern and I tried to estimate their height; my best guess was 3 to 4 feet *above* the boom gallows. But the *Anne Marie's* decks stayed mostly dry. Sometimes as the boat raced diagonally down the face of an overtaking wave, I would have sworn that she was going to dip the bowsprit at the base of the wave. I don't think she ever did. At worst, a little spray came aboard forward. Incidentally, I always use a harness and jack lines while underway, calm or not so calm.

In this blow, I decided to experiment. I wanted to heave-to and test that technique in truly challenging conditions. The tricky part is timing the turn through the wind so the beam is exposed to the oncoming seas at the least vulnerable time. I studied those seas for quite a while, timing them in my mind, before making my move. The boat was under double reefed main and staysail only. Success! Yes, yes, success! As the boat quartered into the seas with the staysail backed, she settled down beautifully and rode the seas almost, emphasize almost, like they had been miraculously becalmed. I stayed hove-to long enough to make a sandwich for lunch and then continued on. The Pardeys strongly recommend this storm tactic and now I know why. Try it and you will be glad you know that option, assuming you have the sea room to do it.

A Different New Years Celebration

New Year's Eve of 1998 found me quietly at anchor in a serene anchorage between Isla Partida and Isla Espiritu Santo. A full orange moon rose exactly in the narrow cut between the islands. The moonlight sparkled on the wavelets. I could hear the breathing of a seal surfacing for air. No descending crystal ball at this New Year's celebration, just an incredible full moon silently tracing its age old path through the heavens. Not one silly horn blew and no confetti fell to break the spell. You had to be there.

The Jewel Destination: La Paz

A day later it was on to the delightful and bustling little city of La Paz. I anchored off the El Mogote peninsula, downtown La Paz just a half mile away and in full view. I hardly had gotten the hook down and set when I was hailed on the radio. Old friends had spotted the arrival of the *Anne Marie*. I spent three months there exploring the city, hauling out and bottom painting, making a quick bus trip to San Diego to renew the visa, and reuniting with friends. On two occasions I had the bittersweet experience of sharing farewell dinners with cruising friends departing for the south seas and beyond. I was saddened by their leaving but happy for them. Subsequently, I have received e-mail messages from these friends describing their passages to such exotic places as the Bay of Islands in New Zealand and Sydney. What a joy to hear from them. These couples are so great. I am filled with admiration of them.

Lin and Larry Pardey

Speaking of cruising couples, one day I had just landed my dinghy at the Marina De La Paz, and there appeared Lin and Larry Pardey, right in front of me. They were visiting, via land, old friends from previous voyages. During their stay I had three conversations with them. One evening, they gave a talk at one of the La Paz hotels. Admission was by donation to a local school children's breakfast program, and the large meeting room was almost full. The Pardeys are wellsprings of good information and good will -- experienced wisdom freely and happily shared.

Other Notable Experiences

* An evening string concert of Vivaldi and Beethoven in the open courtyard of the La Paz City Hall.

* Sharing fresh fish with friends in the cockpit

* Seeing a breaching whale rise to become airborne just off the bow

* Awakening to the pandemonium of breaching and frolicking dolphins in the anchorage

* Sharing with a good friend two sea turtles swimming alongside

* The sea lions of Los Isolotes

* Snorkeling with angelfish

- * Finding a delicate paper nautilus shell while beach combing
- * Securing and cooking a Thanksgiving turkey with friends in Conception Bay
- * The same repeated for Christmas
- * Hot sulphur springs right on the shore line
- * Evening campfires on a sandy beach

Joy after unimagined joy. And all you have to do is wake up and let the day happen.

Return and Another Beginning

I returned to San Carlos after departing La Paz. On arrival, I resisted going into the marina for a few days because I didn't want it all to end. Then, I moved the boat to Port Townsend, WA. (Mecca, in a sense, for me; where the sailing bug first bit while visiting there on a business trip years ago.) Since arriving, eight friends from Mexico have visited.

For the winter I have moved to the south end of Port Townsend Bay to Port Hadlock. Seals and otters visit the marina. Birds and deer are everywhere. Snow covered mountains are spectacular and the trees are tall. I am always looking up, like a New York City visitor. What a change from the warm desert climate of Mexico to the Pacific Northwest! I am still a newcomer here, but the public libraries here are nothing short of fabulous. Then there is the Rose Theater in PT, in a class all by itself. And it is so nice to hear National Public Radio again.

A New Century

Today is January 2, 2000. Checked the boat today for Y2K bugs. The tiller still turns the rudder. The halyards seem perfectly capable of raising a sail. The Volvo diesel started on the first turn. My gosh, the sextant appears to be still working just fine. As is the GPS. Even my laptop computer is allowing me to finish writing this letter. Cruising has revealed an expanded sense of life, friendships, self-sufficiency, and adventure...and now at least...a little bit tested.

Greetings, fair winds and calm seas, and new and challenging horizons to all.

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(360) 379-3010
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Puffin, FC # 23

I would first like to thank you for the superb job in maintaining the newsletter. It is my favorite piece of mail to uncover as I sort through the bills. If Eileen finds the newsletter, she puts it on top of the stack for me.

Presently, I am writing to inform you of an upcoming trip. *Puffin* is now moored near Clearwater, Florida (escaping the hurricanes thus far). With eight weeks available in January and February, we are planning to cruise south to Key West, up the Keys to Miami, then onward to the Exumas and as far south as Georgetown. The Turks and Caicos might be visited if time permits. The trip will end in Fort Lauderdale where *Puffin* will be decommissioned and trucked back to the Pacific Northwest. Goodbye sunshine, hello rain.

I have two questions: 1. Does anyone know of a place to purchase a 14 foot oar and locks? 2. Where is the best location to store it on deck when not in use?

Mark and Eileen Bigalke

Good luck on your cruise. Please write to tell us all more about it. I always get a thrill when I receive a letter from one of the boats in the fleet. That is what really makes doing the newsletter so much fun. And thank you and Eileen for your contribution to the newsletter.

In the Pacific Northwest, check with Barkley Sound Oar & Paddle Ltd. for large oars and

hardware. Their telephone number is 250-752-5115. In the Northeast, check with Shaw & Tenney at 207-866-4867. John Lipton, owner of Walt Whitman FC # 37, is having a 12 foot oar made by the latter and had Sam L. Morse Co. install a neat set of rowlocks from Shaw & Tenney when they built Walt Whitman, FC # 37. Both these companies advertise in **Wooden Boat** magazine. If anyone knows of any other oar and oar hardware manufacturers, and there must be others, I would sure like to hear from you.

I have a 9 foot spruce oar for Mijita made by Barkley Sound. It is intended to be used on the side of the boat as a "Bahamian scull". The latter is a single action oar stroke in which the oar points almost straight down into the water next to the boat and the oar is feathered on the "prime" stroke and unfeathered on the "power" stroke. I said "intended to be used" because I have not yet found a suitable large (greater than 2-1/2 inches I.D.) oarlock and socket; I have only been able to find a galvanized oarlock without a socket. If anyone can help here I would appreciate it. The rowlocks from Shaw & Tenney are not big enough for this oar.

I store the oar on board with the blade lashed to the port forward lifeline stanchion and the handle hung beneath the bowsprit pulpit, similar to the way the Pardey's store their oar. A 14 foot oar might have to be stored differently, lashed to a shroud for instance.

Ron Walton

Francesca, FC # 28

Great news letter! It really brings the community together. I'll try to put together a longer letter later.

Ron Whitsel

Thank you Ron, for your generous contribution. It is greatly appreciated. Please send that longer letter, as we all look forward to hearing from you and Francesca

Ron Walton

FC Alumni News

For health reasons, we moved to Palm Springs in June. We sold the boat. (Ginnywake III. See the Autumn 1999 issue.--Ed.) I had several bad falls (bad eyesight). Bud didn't want the First Mate lost at sea.

We are enjoying the climate here. We are close to the pool for our early swim routine. We go for a walk after breakfast. When it gets too hot, we will travel. We are fixing a Dodge Caravan so we can enjoy California beaches, and other camp grounds near water.

Of course, all of the above depends on doctor appointments.

Bud & Ginny Morrison
P. O. Box 3132
Palm Springs, CA 92263
(760) 323-2908

John Boye and Tom Thumb

Many of you will remember John Boye. He was looking to buy a Falmouth Cutter and wanted to receive the newsletter. So he made a very generous contribution of 100 stamps, enough to cover the postage for almost two issues. In October when I was out sailing he found me, from on board the sailboat he bought while looking for a Falmouth Cutter. I asked John to write and tell me more about this neat looking, small, double-ender that he had just bought, as I had never seen another boat like it. (It looks like a slightly smaller, nonlapstrake, aft cockpit Nor'Sea 27.) Here is John's letter.

It was great to see you on the Bay and in the Estuary the last two weekends. As you can see, I am not among the lucky owners of Falmouth Cutters, but I have acquired a boar with which I am most happy. Almost exactly a year ago when I was in Sausalito for a sailing course I spotted a most unusual and interesting boat. Recently, while in the Bay area I took my wife to see it just out of interest. It turned out that the owner was aboard and we began talking. I quizzed him about the vessel and the more I learned the more I felt the boat was what I was looking for. It turned out that he had just begun thinking of selling this handsome little craft to get a bigger one (to take his grandchildren cruising in), when Marian and I walked up and expressed interest. When we walked away the deal was done.

The boat is a Fisksatra, built in Sweden in 1974, double-ended with externally hung rudder, twin headstays and backstays, full-keeled with cut-away forefoot, extensive sail inventory, ground tackle, etc. The boat was sailed here from Sweden. It is very clean and well-maintained inside and out.

Lenght: 25'

Draft: 4' 1"

Beam: 8'

Displ. 7k

Engine: Volvo Diesel

I want you to understand that I have much appreciated your support and encouragement in regard to finding an FC. As things turned out I didn't get one, but they're fine boats and I'd be proud to own one. I wish there were more of them around. The Fisksatra is likely the only one in the U.S., so I guess rarity is no problem when something is "suppose" to happen. Getting this boat definitely happened in a special way and the former owners and us have become friends.

By the way, *Mijita* looks great and you two look very integrated. I liked the way you were sailing along so casually on wind vane -- heading into that bee hive of traffic around Alcatraz on Fleet Week Saturday. Wan't that a scene? I'll send you the pics I took of you and *Mijita* when I develop the roll.

Mary White wrote to me from Malaysia regarding the sale of her FC. She sure sounds like a great person. I wish her all the best in finding a buyer and in the next phase of her life.

I have ordered a new trailer for my boat (*Tom Thumb*) and will travel when and where I can. We'll spend some time in the Bay each year. Also, it's been too long since I saw one of my best friends. He lives in New Zealand...

John Boye