

FC News

Editor: Ron Walton

Autumn 2000

It's autumn already. Hard to believe, except for the fact that as I write this I have just finished with my autumn varnishing. Whoever invented varnish was a sadist, and whoever uses it is a masochist. But it sure makes the wood look nice!

The 3rd Annual Lyle Hess Rendezvous took place on the weekend of July 21-23 at Richmond Marina Bay, here on San Francisco Bay. I sailed *Mijita* there. I had the only Falmouth Cutter there; Mike Latta could not bring *Narwhal* up from Moss Landing. But there were eight Bristol Channel Cutters in attendance plus one Lyle Hess 26 foot cutter. And, with all the boats backed into their slips, the line of bowsprits pointing out into the fairway was impressive. Cliff Unruh, founder of the Lyle Hess Association, did a great job organizing the event and also brought his Lyle Hess designed Balboa 20. In addition, a couple of Nor'Sea 27s and a Montgomery 15 came, along with a Laurent Giles designed *Trekka*-class boat.

I have received only two letters from the fleet since I last published, one from Alan Spears of *Coconutz* and one from Keith Smith of *Maid of Slapton*. Both are included here, along with my own recollections of a harrowing sail this summer. Note Alan's new address.

I also received a telephone call from Ogden Booke, owner of a Falmouth Cutter named *Dazzler* made by Heritage Marine. This boat is one of the missing Falmouth Cutters I mentioned last Spring. Ogden called to tell me his boat is for sale. You can find Ogden's address in the **FC Ads** at the end of this newsletter. By the way I haven't heard from Mike Meier or Leo Oxberger lately about whether their Falmouth Cutters are still for sale; Jack and Sherry Lelah have sold *Hokje*, but I am still waiting to hear from the new owner.

Does your older Falmouth Cutter have a BMW diesel engine? Parts for your BMW diesel, or even an overhaul, may be obtained from:

Kevin Green
BMW Marine Services
2005 Clement Avenue, Bldg. #9
Alameda, CA 94501
Phone: (510) 522-8869
FAX: (510) 522-3078

This newsletter may look a little different from the previous issues because I am using different software. My old Mac can only write 800K floppies which the new Macs at Kinko's cannot read. So I now have to rent time on their computers to publish. Probably you will find a few more typos than usual, but I hope not.

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Mijita, FC # 5

Experience is what you get when you don't get what you want. -- Maureen O'Toole, U. S. water poloist at the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

I had an *experience* this summer that was very nearly a disaster. To begin, the Oakland Estuary is a narrow strip of water between the city of Oakland and the island city of Alameda on San Francisco Bay. On any day vessels ranging from kayaks to container ships navigate the Estuary. *Mijita's* berth is located in an Alameda yacht marina on the Oakland Estuary. On a Saturday in

August, I sailed out of the Oakland Estuary to San Francisco Bay. The winds were light and, as usual, on the bow; I had all the working sail up; and the sunshine was warm. It took about 2-1/2 hours to beat the 4 miles to San Francisco Bay and after all the short tacking, I proceeded into the Bay, with a little help from the engine. There I ate my lunch before reentering the Estuary for an expected, leisurely downwind sail home. That's *what I wanted*.

What I got came after I reentered the Oakland Estuary. I was on starboard tack, still with all sail up. First, I was caught up in the conclusion of a race on the Bay and found myself pressed to the starboard side of the channel by all the passing race boats. Not an unusual situation. Then, the wind began to freshen and cool. This was unusual that late in the day; after 1500. Still, the sky was clear and I didn't expect the winds to become unmanageable. But about a mile inside the Estuary the unexpected occurred, a very strong gust of wind. So strong that *Mijita* was broached. I had managed to gain a bit more sea room to starboard after the last race boats had passed me, but not enough, and I grounded *Mijita* on the side of the channel. As a result of the broach, it was all I could do to miss hitting an inconveniently located, ship channel marker that had blocked any possibility of falling-off back onto my course.

I can't describe the horror I felt the moment *Mijita* grounded. Fortunately, a quick inspection showed *Mijita* was not taking on any water. I immediately started my outboard motor and took down all the sails to attempt a back off. But I couldn't. After a few agonizing minutes, a good samaritan in a small boat with a big motor offered to pull me off if I could pass him a tow line. Which I could and I did. When his engine died my heart almost stopped, but he soon got it restarted as I anchored him off the shore using the tow line. He then pulled *Mijita* off and clear of that inconveniently located channel marker.

That wasn't the end of my problems. Shortly after getting under way again, my outboard motor overheated and quit; it would not restart. But again I was lucky as a marina neighbor happened by on his boat and assisted me as I made my way "home".

It had been an expensive day. *Mijita*'s keel had scratches and scrapes through the paint and gel coat along the very bottom of the port side. I had her "hailed out" to repair and repaint it. Only one 4 inch by 4 inch scrape required some fiberglass to fair, the rest of the scratches were just that and only required filler to fair. My outboard motor required a new water pump and ignition coils.

After getting *Mijita* back to her berth, another sailor told me of being "knocked down" twice in the Oakland Estuary at about the same time as I got driven aground? So, was the wind gust that broached *Mijita* from a squall that passed through? I don't know, but it appears that it was not just a localized event.

Since her repair, *Mijita* and I have been sailing several times. I am being a lot more cautious in the Oakland Estuary now, treating it with the caution I would any new port of call. But I have sailed past the same spot where I grounded.

Ron Walton

Coconutz, FC # 29

Hi from Berth 202, Wilmington, CA. *Coconutz* has been here for nearly 6 months. The people are wonderful, but the road leading in is shit, as is the air.

Recent gear purchases include a Teba Mini-Kitchen by Avanti, purchased on-line from <http://www.cagles.com>. It's AWESOME! Makes liveaboard life almost tolerable.

New electronics within the past year include Furuno GP-31 GPS and JRC 1000 radar. We bought a used and UNBLOCKED ICOM R-7000 receiver that gets everything including TV. Everything means analog cellular and cordless telephones too. God help the neighbors.

Telecommunications aboard include a Magellan GSC 100 satellite e-mailer, and a now-defunct Kyocera Iridium sat phone. \$1,600 down the crapper!

We've moun ted a Siemens SM-6 solar panel on the port side, front of the house, and will be adding 2 more on the sides between our nontraditional oval (elliptical?) ABI ports. These, together

with the flexible Uni-Solars mounted forward of the companionway hatch and atop the lazarette cover should power our 12 volt Igloo PlentiKool that's doing yeoman service keeping foodstuffs cold in the hell-like heat.

It doth appear that *Coconutz* may finally be going for a long trip in late 2001, by land or by sea. If anyone in Southern Florida has the name of a reputable boat hauler in that area, I'll be grateful for a name, phone/fax number, and e-mail address. The folks in SoCal quoted \$8,500 from LA to Miami, plus boat yard fees at both ends. Yikes!!!

We prefer e-mail communication and until further notice can be reached at minitug@pocketmail.com AND minitug@hotmail.com.

Capt. Alan Spears
S/V *Coconutz*
c/o CYM #86
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Wilmington, CA 90744
(714) 612-3080

Maid of Slapton, FC # 32

At last I am getting down to some sailing and learning a lot more about my boat. I guess you only learn from the mistakes. Last week, when out in a nice steady blow, I managed to pour boiling soup over my left hand. Newton was right -- gravity goes vertically down! One learns how stupid one can be.

Sacrilege, I know, but I have put the staysail on a roller. I was encouraged by Mary White's comments in one of the previous newsletters. The Nemo roller reefing/furling system fits over the existing inner forestay, so if going seriously off-shore, one can have another hanked staysail onboard.

Just great that "selective availability" of the GPS system has been switched *off*. We can thank your friend and mine, Bill Clinton, can't we? **Practical Boat Owner** did some very precise testing and showed that the "run of the mill" handhelds were accurate to ± 7 meters. The big benefit that I have seen is very steady over the ground indications. When SA was active the constant bouncing around of the position meant that the speed indication was constantly wandering over a large range. Now it's great. Would you believe that last week, the day of the boiling soup incident, I was clocking over 6 knots on a super reach with drifter and main set (15 kts wind). I guess that is about as fast as a Falmouth will go.

As my enthusiasm shows, I am still getting a great buzz from my Falmouth. Most of my sailing chums want larger boats or, with advancing years, want to change to motor boats. I'm jolly happy.

I have had a minor problem with wet patches on the base of the compression post, but only after a period of heavy sailing. The base of the compression post dries out after a few days on the dock. I thought maybe a small leak from the galley foot pump or from the log through-hull, but no, this doesn't seem to be the cause. Also, any leak from below the waterline would have meant the bottom of the compression post would always be wet. So what about the plate that supports the bottom end of the bobstay? When the boat is on the dock it's above the water, but when sailing it's not. I shall be back with my boat in a week and will look into this. A judicious treatment with sealant inboard can sort me out until late this year, when I can treat it more seriously. That is, of course, if I find the bobstay plate to be the culprit.

I think I always suggested that my boat was a long term project. Well, it must be, because it's only now that I have fitted a boom vang. Ferenc Mate suggests that a couple of padeyes on the rail can provide a good combination vang/preventer. However, even with a heavy rubber snubber over the boom, the riggers I have talked with are against this system. They would prefer a separate preventer rigged from the end of the boom to reduce the bending moment if excessive roll puts the

boom in the water. The vang/preventer with a quick release camcleat in the cockpit sounds convenient to me. On the other hand, I can see the logic for a separate preventer led forward then back.

Keith Smith

Regarding the wet compression post. Could the water be coming through your anchor chain pipe? When I am sailing in windy and choppy conditions, it is not unusual to see the tops of waves come over the stem of the boat onto the foredeck.

Ron Walton

FC Ads

For Sale: *Jolly Dolphin*, FC # 3. Still as described in the previous issue but price reduced to: \$50,000. Contact: Gray & Susan Multer. Address: 9855 Canaseraga, Arkport, NY, 14807. Telephone: (607) 295-7677. E-mail: multerg@infoblvd.net.

For Sale: *Wavewalker*, FC # 3*. A kit boat by Heritage Marine and seen in the June issue of **Latitude 38**. Located in Seattle. Contact: Will Lund. Address: P.O. 571, Redmond, WA, 98073. Telephone: (425) 485-6156.

For Sale: *Dazzler*, FC # 1*? A factory finished boat by Heritage Marine. Reported to be in nearly perfect condition. Asking \$43,000. Contact: Ogden Booke. Address: 5816 David Davis Place, Ocean Springs, MS. 39564-2600. Telephone: (228) 875-0457.