

FC News

Editor: Ron Walton

Autumn 1999

The 1999 Lyle Hess Rendezvous took place in Long Beach on the weekend of July 16 to 18. By my count over a dozen Lyle Hess boats showed up: one Falmouth Cutter, six Bristol Channel Cutters, one Lyle Hess 30, four Nor'Sea 27s, one Balboa 20, and one Montgomery 17. In addition, several other boats also showed up. The one Falmouth Cutter to come was *Kastoria*, FC # 35, owned by Jeff Elias. Time and weather worked against me bringing *Mijita*, FC # 5, so I drove down with Mike Latta of *Narwhal*, FC # 1, navigating. Larry Schmidt of *Mon Desir*, FC # 2, and Brian Wooton-Wooley and his wife, former owners of *Puffin*, FC # 23, also came. So the Falmouth Cutter fleet was represented. Roger Olson, who brought his new BCC *Nereus* over from the nearby dock where he lives aboard, did a good job of bringing this rendezvous off. Boats arrived on both Friday afternoon and Saturday. Then, after looking at and gabbing about boats all day, late Saturday afternoon we had a picnic on the dock followed by a round of sea stories from participants, with prizes for the best stories. On Sunday, after breakfast and more gabbing about boats and things it was time to depart. Several of the boats departed for Santa Catalina together. It was a lot of fun.

By the way, I hope you all saw Mary White's article in the August issue of **Cruising World**, magazine about the beginning of her ongoing cruise in *Sapo*, FC # 10. Mike Latta, owner of FC # 1 *Narwhal*, has just sent me a letter he received from Mary in July. That letter is reprinted in this issue at Mike's request. Also, in this issue there are letters from *Mijita*, *Mariko*, *Further*, *Ginnywake III*, *Ferial*, and *Calculated Risk*. The *Mariko* letter contains more of Mike Meier's cruising tips from his **48° North** article.

Roger Olson has informed me that Jason Feeny, owner of *Zarpé* FC # 36, is planning to depart for Costa Rica in November. Good luck Jason, and how about sending us a letter or two.

Finally, enclosed is a flyer by which you can receive a free copy of **Good Old Boat** magazine, a new sailing magazine dedicated to keeping our boats afloat for years to come.

As always, please keep your letters coming. Thank you.

Ron Walton
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Mijita, FC # 5

When summer officially began, I was busy crossing things off my to-do list in order to get *Mijita* ready; I still had hopes of sailing down to Long Beach for the Lyle Hess Rendezvous. But, ultimately time and weather conspired against me as my earliest possible start date was July 6. On that day the winds just outside the Golden Gate exceeded 20 knots in the morning and the seas were 8 feet and breaking. Very unpleasant, and since the forecast for the next several days was the same I decided to postpone my cruising plans until after the rendezvous which I would now drive to.

The postponement allowed me to fix a few problems that turned up in those breaking seas

outside the gate. Forward hatches will leak without a proper gasket! And feet will get very wet quickly without sea boots!

After I returned from the rendezvous a friend and I took *Mijita* up the Napa River. Winds allowed us to sail 12 miles up the river and anchor. Unfortunately, with the wind on our nose, the river was too narrow to sail back down. According to my friend, cruising the Napa River is like cruising the "Sacramento delta", but without the mosquitoes.

In mid August I left *Mijita* in Alameda to help another friend take his sailboat, an Ericson C36, to San Diego. Again, it was windy at the gate, but with lesser seas. Still, once we turned south we did not find much wind so we ended up motoring most of the way. There was a lot of fog and a couple of system failures, including both the electric and manual bilge pumps and the autopilot. During the 14 day passage made stops in Half Moon Bay, Santa Cruz, Monterey, Santa Barbara, Oxnard, Marina Del Rey, Long Beach, and Ocean Side. We passed Point Conception just after noon in gale force winds, gusting to over 40 knots, and 10+ foot breaking seas. The wind and the seas there were directly behind us so we had some spectacular surfs down waves with white water all around the boat. My first gale at sea. Too bad the visibility was so low that we never saw Point Conception. But, the seas I saw off Point Conception were very much like the seas that made me decide to drive down to the rendezvous.

Ron Walton

Mariko, FC # 9

As I promised in the previous issue, here are a few more hints for cruising in a Falmouth Cutter taken from the article Mike Meier published in the September 1998 issue of 48° North.
Ron Walton

The cruising grounds are changing fast, don't wait too long! Prices have increased since we departed and returned, and the anchorages are getting crowded. Thirty years ago, when a small cruising boat arrived at a destination, they were greeted with open arms. Today, it may be different. Many of the big boats ahead of you have flavored the opinions of the locals; another case for the smaller vessel. But when you arrive in a truly small boat like ours, you still get some positive reaction from the locals.

If you buy as small as you're comfortable with, you will have a lot more money, which computes to staying out longer.

Hint #4: We had every convenience you could ask for using smaller, cheaper models.

Those who think we went without are very wrong. Many larger boats travelled with less, at much greater expense. Not only did they pay more for the boat initially, but costs for everything increased.

Going small enabled us to prepare our boat with some of the best stuff available. Before leaving we added a new suit of sails from Schattaer Sails, designed extra heavy for the severe weather we hoped not to encounter. We repowered with a 2-GM Yanmar. We riggered with Stalok terminals. We installed a PUR-35 watermaker that supplies all our water. We installed good wet cell, deep cycle batteries, a Siemens M-55 solar panel, and a Suntronics charger regulator. All of our systems worked, all the time, giving us the maximum amount of fun time without the associated problems that plagued so many boats.

Hint #7: Nothing buggers up a cruise faster than messing up the finances.

We recommend putting your budget behind steel locked doors and never, never breaking the rules. Put your monthly cash in an envelope, hide it in the boat. If you have some left over at the end of the month consider yourself wealthy, and carry it over to the next month. With luck your

wealth will continue to grow month by month. You're living within your budget, how sweet it is. The worse thing you can do is to dip into next month's funds. Where in the heck are you going to find the money tree to replenish your dwindling monthly envelope.

Cruising will cost you much more than you expect. Prices in Mexico run equal to Stateside in the tourist areas. You can find some bargains if you're off the beaten path, but what happens is you start spending more because you think you're getting such a good deal. Remember the envelope and the money.

The desire to tie up to a dock sometimes becomes overwhelming and expensive. Areas such as La Paz are a test of your patience when anchoring day by day. Those of you who have not experienced the La Paz Waltz should find a returning cruiser and ask them to explain the waltz. If you have company coming from the States, or a regular need to go ashore you end up at the dock in La Paz, the first dock since you left San Diego. Almost everyone spends some time at the dock sooner or later and its expensive. US rates with cockroaches to boot. There goes the money in the envelope.

Hint #8: Keep the boat organized, clean, and shipshape.

How many of you have tried to find the 12 volt electrical pigtail you bought last year to use with your GPS or spotlight but couldn't find it? Now take everything in your dock box, garage, house, car, and desk, throw it in the boat and try to find the damn pigtail. Get the picture.

We had an inventory of each locker. The admiral kept the list updated with tenacity and wouldn't even let me have any "stuff". No, nothing could be called stuff. Miscellaneous did not live on our boat either. Every time I needed something, the admiral pulled out the list and advised me where it may be if I had been honest in updating the list. Not only does this make it easier to find things, but it is also much safer. You store things better and more secure when you know you can find it again with the list.

Hint #10: Before you go, try living for one month as you will on the boat.

When was the last time you turned off your refrigerator, lived out of your canned and dried goods, used a pressure cooker, baked bread and used the solar shower every day? We did not use any type of refrigeration or cooling for the entire trip. We learned to survive the old fashioned way and didn't suffer a bit.

When the admiral first started looking at pressure cookers, and heard the comments about its ability to replace the microwave, save fuel, cook faster, cleaner and more nutritious meals, she gave it a try. To her surprise it became the most used utensil in her galley. I could write a book about pressure cookers and all the galley stuff so just to keep it short let me say it works, learn to use the new ones, get some cookbooks, and try them at home before you go.

Living without the refrigerator was a little tough on the cold beer appetite, but you get used to it. In fact, it makes that frosty, ice cold cerveza wonderful. Carry some Ball or Kerr jars and rings that fit into your pressure cooker, get a canning book and have fun. Canned Dorado is wonderful.

The biggest mistake made by all cruisers going to Mexico is taking gobs of supplies. You can provision everywhere anymore. But, to this day, neither man nor God has replaced the chocolate chip, and making cookies without them is a worthless endeavor. That's the one item we could not find in Mexico.

Sapo, FC # 10

Mike Latta, owner of Narwhal FC # 1, received the following letter from Mary White, owner of Sapo. During our drive down to Long Beach and the Lyle Hess Rendezvous in July, Mike told me he had written to Mary. He was very interested in learning more about her experiences in the Solomon Islands and thereabouts, places where Mike's father had commanded a submarine also named Narwhal during World War II.

April 17. I had to laugh; your letter reached me on April 14 at Salomon Islands Atoll in the Chagos Archipelago (in the Indian Ocean near 05 South / 072 East. A “big” enough map will have a few dots out there in the middle of lots of water). I loaded *Sapo* with as much food and fuel as possible in Malaysia / Thailand and came out here about 2000 miles to spend 5 or 6 months unconnected to any services or supplies. The entire archipelago is uninhabited (except for Diego Garcia which is a military installation that is strictly off-limits to yachts or anyone else, though who else might possibly be wandering around out here is hard to imagine; oh, yeah, fishing factories who know to keep away).

Silly me, I thought it would be unspoiled island wilderness. Too many cruisers (like me) have spent too much time out here “improving” the islands for my particular taste, which seems to be a minority taste, but I am enjoying it nevertheless. I’m anchored where I cannot see the “development” very much and I rarely go ashore where it is. The surf crashing on the reef is continuous musical background and there is plenty of deserted beach to walk and coconuts to gather and fish to catch. The lagoon has many, many obstructing coral heads that are treacherous to boats; one must only move about with good sunlight and keep a sharp lookout and weave among them. At this time the coral in the lagoon is not very attractive; the theory is that recent too warm water has killed it. The euphemism, if you happen to encounter it is “coral bleaching”. It doesn’t look “bleached” to me, it looks dead. When the coral polyps die, so does the algae that is symbiotically living with it and is responsible for the colors that are one of the glories of coral gardens. These gardens are all a dreary beige “color”, with an occasional flash of bright blue, sulphur yellow, or scarlet of small regenerating spots. I don’t think any blame can be assigned, it is one of those cyclic things??? Part of the *el nino* phenomenon??? An evolutionary blunder???

About gear: 1) Wind vane self-steering is the most “valuable” piece of gear on *Sapo*. I have a Monitor that works great, but any wind vane self-steering that worked would be fine. An autopilot can work, too (especially under power) but it doesn’t understand the wind and goofs up more than the vane when sailing, which I try to do no-matter-how-slow.

2) I am very glad I put on roller furling for the jib. During the 3 years I was in the Sea of Cortez I did not have the roller furler and it was o.k., but there have been a couple of times at sea when dealing with the jib on deck (in the water) would have been life threatening. Also, I have gotten lazier and lazier; I am thinking about buying a furling system for the staysail, too. I have a Profurl and have had no problems, but the same would probably be true for any other brand. I did not add a winch and cleat for the furling line and often wished I had. If only the jib is up, no problem, I just use the winch and cleat on the cabin that is for the staysail sheet. But, if both headsails are up and I want to reef a little bit or roll the whole jib up, I need the winch if there is a lot of wind.

3) I have all chain on my main anchor and have never been sorry. I started with 300 feet of 5/16 inch chain. Recently, I bought 100 feet of 3/8 inch chain that I put first and then 150 feet of 5/16 inch chain. Both of them work fine on my windlass gypsy. I like the 3/8 inch chain better; it is heavier and I think that is good; frequently I do not even need the anchor because the pull hardly ever gets out to where the anchor is. In a blow, of course, my CQR disappears right down into the sand and does its duty. (Being a small boat, so small windage, is an advantage in situations like strong winds blowing into lee shores.)

4) Long passages as well as “freedom” from civilization requires a watermaker. I have a Survivor 35 which I hand pump for an hour and obtain about 1-1/2 gallons of good water. I have gotten so I really like tasteless water, but, if it rains I catch the rainwater instead!

5) There are steps up my mast and I have climbed it quite a few times. I’m very glad they are there; but there are other ways to get up the mast, I suppose... But be assured, you WILL need to go up there and maybe at inconvenient times.

6) I ran a high life line from the top of the boom gallows thru a clamp-on cleat on the shroud and then down to near the bow. I am glad it is there; I do not know if it has ever saved my life, but

it is good for drying laundry. I do know that my harness and tether have saved my life; at least they kept me on board the boat in an incredible rough blow, and I think staying aboard is the best way to stay alive. It is Rule # 1: Stay Aboard. Rule # 2 is: Keep the boat from hitting anything (rocks, land, other boats). I only have those two rules. As long as you're on the boat and not hitting anything you can just thrash around trying different things until something works!

"Thoughts on Solomon Islands and beyond".....I zoomed (relatively) right past the Solomon Islands; I went from the Banks in Vanuatu up to Kosrae in the Carolines (Federated States of Micronesia), partly (only partly) because everyone I knew who went to the Solomons contracted malaria. Also, the conditions at the moment of decision favored getting across the ITCZ, a not inconsiderable factor. Vanuatu had been one of my favorite cruising grounds, Kosrae and Pohnpei were quite interesting and pleasant. Guam is good for mail service (it is the USA) and finding SAE parts (the rest of the world is on the metric system) and it feels good when you leave. The Philippines were quite good for me; I had been briefed with horror stories but found only friendly people. The Palawan was the most pleasing scenically; I felt as if I was sailing in Yosemite. East Malaysia was a surprise; suddenly (Kota Kinabalu) I felt I had returned to western civilization (a contrast to the South Pacific and Philippines). Singapore / Malacca Straight were a single sailor's nightmare. Someone said "it is like crossing an L.A. freeway on a tricycle". So, Langkawi (last island in Malaysia) was HEAVEN. The cruising between and near Langkawi and Phuket, Thailand has a lot in its favor. I spent almost two years in that area. I just counted up the anchorages I "visited" in those 23 months: 142. Lots of repeat visits, of course, but many places still to explore just in case I go back there from here rather than on into the unknown.

Oh, I just thought; I have a fabric dodger over the companionway. I have modified it several times and I once took it off completely because I liked how much light got into the interior and I liked the enhanced visibility. But, I put it back on because it does keep out rain and splashing waves; *Sapo* gets too wet if it is raining, etc. It even keeps me drier and warmer just poking my head up to peer around for lights in the night or ships in the day. Having tried it both ways, I vote for the dodger.

Last, but not least, I have an All Band Transceiver. Actually, it is a HAM radio modified to transmit on all the marine frequencies, too. And I studied the damned code and got my HAM radio license. So I can listen to the news (VOA and BBC mostly). And, of course many of your fellow yachties will "keep you company" long after you have parted ways and they are hundreds or thousands of miles away. Or, you meet new people that weeks, months, years later you finally find in the same anchorage; you only know them by voice and call sign up to then. They sometimes actually turn out to look like you thought they would, but usually not. I have had much pleasure and lots of good information from the radio. To a great extent it is my main social connection / outlet??? Sometimes I only listen to all the other cruisers, sometimes I add my two cents worth; but even when I just listen, I feel connected and it banishes any incipient loneliness or even makes me very happy to not have anyone else around that I can't turn off with the press of a button!

June 30. Here I am back in Langkawi, planning on going to the P. O. tomorrow and even plan to rent a Post Office Box!!! The passage from Chagos was basically uneventful, but endlessly GREY (some rain, a few squalls) and roly. Downwind for three weeks can really get to a person! At the moment I do not want to EVER make another long passage. The islands here in Malaysia look like pure heaven.

Chances are you have already made all your choices, but I am going to post this off to you anyway, and maybe you will have some questions???

I just reread your letter and am now thinking that --- oh, I'm really incapable of thinking at all at the moment.

Hope all is well with you. And, I would like to hear how your plans are at the moment. They are bound to change, but what the heck.

Mary White

P.S. I tentatively changed *Sapo's* name to *Agatha's Ark*. Agatha is the cat who is trapped in this

boat with me for more than seven years now. I was feeling a little guilty about the entrapment, so I just up and gave her the boat. All it took was a felt tip pen to accomplish the deed!

Mary, in your list of essential gear you do not mention a life raft. Do you have a liferaft on board? If not, why not? Since you have been out there, doing it for a long time, I would like to know your opinion on life rafts.

Ron Walton

Further, FC # 15

Thought I should update you with our new phone number and e-mail address. The mailing address is the same. However, I was recently married so I'm adding Coni's name to the list.

Doug and Coni Hodgson
further@transport.com
503-755-2011

We bought a Trailrite trailer last year and trailered *Further* to Port Townsend and spent a wonderful 6 weeks there and in the San Juans. *Further* is currently on the trailer in our driveway where we live in Mist, OR, a rural area about one hour west of Portland. She will probably stay out of the water this summer so we can work on her. Then maybe a repeat trip like last fall.

Doug & Coni Hodgson

Your editor wishes to apologize for not publishing this letter in the previous issue

Ron Walton

Ginnywake III, FC # 16

Had to sell the *Ginnywake*. Medical reason. We got a keen sailor.

George C. Pasarell
P. O. Box 5025-114
Costa Mesa, CA
92626
949-929-1647

I am sure he'd like to be on your mailing list. So would I, will send some stamp money soon.

Ginny Morrison

I'm very sorry to hear that you had to sell Ginnywake III.

Ron Walton

Ferial, FC # 25

Sorry for the delay in responding to your letter informing me of potential FC buyers. I am in Iowa doing my annual 3 months of senior judge work. Next summer I plan to cruise the New York

Canal System.

My debate with myself is whether I want to sell *Ferial* or take her to the Canals for 3 months of motor cruising. I have decided I will give a try at selling her and if I don't I will take her to the Canals. Perhaps I will do senior judge work next fall or may just completely retire. Either way I will continue to live the winter months in the Abacos, Bahamas.

Leo Oxberger

For Sale

In November 1990 I purchased a partially completed Falmouth Cutter and, together with Leo Kennedy, we built a one of a kind beauty I call *Ferial*. We launched her in June 1993 and sailed her to Marsh Harbour, Abaco, Bahamas in February 1994.

Her interior is all Port Orford cedar wood. She has 23 separate cabinet doors with cane. Even the ceiling is finished with tongue and groove strips. She has considerable exterior teak wood, with bulwarks, turtle over the cabin hatch, the Bristol Channel Cutter front hatch (*skylight--Ed.*), 2 dorades, 2 deck boxes, and boom gallows. She has 4 brass winches, brass bollard, and a brass windlass. She has a Yanmar 1GM10 diesel engine. Her sails are: Yankee jib (roller furling), main sail, staysail, and cruising spinnaker. She has a compressed natural gas 2 burner stove with oven. Her ice chest has four inches of insulation. There are four anchors. Included is the trailer, a 9 foot Tinker dinghy with sails, oars, and a 3.3 Johnson outboard motor. She has been licensed in Iowa and currently is licensed in the Bahamas with duty paid.

From November to May, contact Leo Oxberger at P.O. Box 20825 Marsh Harbour, Abaco, Bahamas. Phone or fax # 242-367-4835. E-mail: jd1leo@batelnet.bs.

From May to November, contact Leo Oxberger at 3013 Woodland #215, Des Moines, IA, 50312. Phone or fax # 1-515-255-2907. E-mail: jd1leo@aol.com. Cell phone # 1-515-491-1619.

Pictures of *Ferial* are available by e-mail or postal mail.

Calculated Risk, FC # 31

Calculated Risk is on the hard in Annapolis. It took me all winter to try to carefully remove all the old, unsalvageable teak and to patch and fair extra thru-hulls. I also got a boomkin and bowsprit made last fall by a friend of Larry Pardey's. He also made some custom patterns and I had a local foundry pour custom hardware, including chainplates, crane, gammon, various smaller tangs for the whisker stays and water stays, and backstay fittings.

Currently, I'm trying to find a carpenter to do the bulwarks. After destroying half a forest, I've realized it can't be done with a tablesaw, plane, and what little I know.

I was hoping to have her sailing by now, but it looks like next season. Who'd ever think that it'd be so difficult to locate a good marine carpenter in Annapolis, America's sailing capitol. After I get her sailing, then I'll start again on the interior renovations.

Kudos to Roger for his patience and assistance so far.

Robert Young