



Flicka Friends



Spring 1996 Vol. 1 # 4

The Call of the Wild——Sail to Alaska

Note: Your editor does know that Jack London's novel doesn't take place in Alaska but rather in the Yukon. The following article was written by **Robert and Twila Robinson** of Juneau, Alaska.

Who needs twenty one feet?

Five years in the planning, nine months in the building, thirty days for rigging and *Maritime*, Flicka #426 was finally ours. Upon her arrival in Seattle, she received a special showing. Though we weren't able to attend we knew our dream had finally come true. As her home is Juneau, Alaska we had much to do before bringing her up Alaska's Inside Passage.

We began shipping boxes of gear, supplies and equipment. Finally, for Twila the big day arrived, her first sight of *Maritime*. Arriving at night, she waited until morning to see our vision of joy. With the help of Seacraft Yacht

This began a sea trial that instilled the greatest of confidence in the quality of our Flicka

Sales the loading process began. I finally arrived. Four more days of loading and sea trials and we were on our way through the Hirman M. Chittenden Locks, arriving late that night in Port Townsend, Washington. This was to become the way of the trip.



Pictured above is *Maritime* sailing off the Alaskan coast.

An early morning departure and late that evening we cleared customs at Bedwell Harbour, British Columbia. The next day began a series of dates with currents, whirlpools and rapids. That night, with the lights of Nanimo in sight, a full moon shining and a light breeze blowing we opted to continue across the Strait of Georgia. This began a sea trial that instilled the greatest confidence in the quality of our Flicka. The wind backed around, the seas picked up, clouds moved in, foul weather gear was donned and for the next sixteen hours the decks were awash as we beat into the seas, finally arriving at Pender Harbour, British Columbia. After a quick wash, *Maritime* had come through the ordeal no worse for the wear. The same could not have been said for those on board, especially Twila, for she wore varying shades of

green during the crossing.

After a night's rest, we were underway again as we still had dates with the strong currents ahead. At four knots the timing was everything, though her little diesel brought her through with no problems.

For the next week and a half, we had plenty of afternoon sun and warm weather. In Port McNeil, BC, high winds kept us at the dock for two days though we met many wonderful cruisers who we were to see time and time again on our way to Juneau. We left Port McNeil only to have fog set in to less than 1/8 mile visibility and with no radar we acquired an escort from one of our cruising friends. Since our hull speed was much slower than theirs, they were

see Alaska page 3

Think
spring

Fall haulout is a good time to buy new mooring lines. If you didn't, spring is next best. Check those seacocks. Since the bowsprit is such an integral part of the Flickas, and it is made of wood periodic inspection for rot or other failure is important.



Hot News

We are now seventy-nine strong & growing

Bill Strop of Missouri suggested that if we reached a membership list of 100 during the first year we would be doing quite well. I agree. That number seems within reach as there are members coming in through sources that I don't have and from places I didn't expect.

For example, there is a member in London who sails hull number 423. It is the only Flicka in the United Kingdom. Julian Vyner's boat was the subject of an excellent article in the July 1994 issue of *Classic Boat*, an English publication.

Both Bill Strop and Gill Outerbridge have sent in extra funds so that this issue can have some full color included.

Ted Trimmer of Hawaii regularly sends in information and helps recruit new members. Gary Keis, the editor of the Northwest Pacific Seacraft Owners' Association has given *Flicka Friends* a warm mention in his newsletter and has been influential in this publication having additional members.

My son Geoff recently bought hull #86 in Port Townsend, Washington. He is currently finishing his studies at the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding and plans to settle in the Puget Sound area. Of course that will give your editor chance to visit and sail a Flicka.

Pancakes and maple syrup, well we were aboard an American yacht

by Julian Vyner, London

"Shall we tie in a reef?", I asked Steve as I prepared to hoist the sails. Steve, who is generally a cautious fellow, casually replied,

"No, I wouldn't bother".

It wasn't long before *Caraway* was heeled over to forty degrees and we could hardly stop laughing. The water pouring in over the cockpit coamings should have alarmed us but she took it all in her stride. I tied a reef in and *Caraway* became more subdued. All in all our first impressions were good. If a boat is measured by the amount of enjoyment it gives; then the Flicka is a damn fine boat!

Some might say I was mad wanting to sail a twenty-foot boat 500 miles along the south coast of England. But Pacific Seacraft has made some bold claims about the Flicka. For example, and this is a direct quotation from the brochure: "Five knot averages are not uncommon" and "The long straight keel and balanced sail plan allow her to track beautifully and sail herself for hours at a time..." All this and numerous tales of hosts of intrepid voyages who have sailed all over the world in them. I wouldn't say I was cynical, but let's say I wanted to see for myself.

I actually had quite a hard time relating to the fact that I had been given a £50,000 worth of boat to play with. (Ed's note: £50,000 is about 75,000 US dollars) No this is not a misprint. I had been asked to sail *Caraway*- the only Flicka in Europe-from Falmouth to the Southampton Boat Show and then bring her back. (Ed's note: At the time there may have been no other Flickas in Europe, but there are currently two members with Flickas in Europe, one in Paris and one in Germany). It was early September when I set sail, destination: the Solent. (Another ed's note: The Solent is a strait in the English Channel between the mainland and the Isle of Wight.)

My crew on the way there was my friend Fliss who wanted some sailing experience. Our first excursion was from Falmouth to Plymouth, forty odd miles with a light following wind and calm seas. Cornwall is a magical place where you can imagine the smugglers and fisherman who plied that same uncharted coast centuries before. Even today the oysters are still caught by working boats under sail alone. As for the smuggling, well let's just say that the Cornish don't give up on tradition easily. By the time we had moored *Caraway*, we were quite exhausted; fresh Cornish air possesses a very sleepy quality. We both agreed that *Caraway* showed great promise. She was undoubtedly solidly built and that gave us a lot of confidence in her. She had traveled forty-five miles in exactly nine hours. A five knot average!

We slept well that night and woke with a healthy appetite that we pacified with an enormous breakfast of pancakes and maple syrup, well we were on an American yacht. The weather had changed some. Now the wind was blowing at about force five but still from the west. Confidently we headed out with a double reefed main and a half rolled genoa headed for Dartmouth. We were soon doing six knots and her motion in those ever growing seas was excellent. The wind rose to a six and as the waves increased, we started to surf down them. Our speed often went over seven knots. We could have put quite a few thirty-footers to shame. And here we were with only an eighteen foot waterline.

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Alaska

happily relieved by a Cruise-a Home (a type of houseboat common in Alaska) that had radar and became our escort as we headed for Port Hardy, British Columbia. Upon reaching Port Hardy, the weather cleared and we sailed onto God's Pocket to join our friends from Port McNeil for a birthday celebration.

Two days later found us in Prince Rupert, BC, and moored at the Prince Rupert Yacht Club. The PRYC had been recommended to us by passing cruisers, and we too found the club friendly and helpful. The location allowed us to catch up on our laundry, groceries and general boat stuff. After two days of rain we departed for Ketchikan, Alaska. With an uneventful crossing of Dixon Entrance we arrived Ketchikan and were able to spend a couple days with shore friends.

We departed Ketchikan with 35 knot winds behind us; this provided a great sail up the Clarence Strait. At the end of the day, we anchored near a bear observatory with no other boats around. The next evening brought us to Wrangell and set the stage for another 20 miles of strong currents. We hit the books hard and studied our tides and currents and then proceeded through the Wrangell Narrows. We saw a doe and her new fawn on the beach, providing us with another memorable experience. This was nature's way of making the Narrows a little easier to navigate.

With our evening arrival at Petersburg, fast water, currents and open water crossing all behind us we knew we were getting closer to home, but a bit sad that our trip was nearing its end. Another early morning departure and that evening we were rafted to a cruising boat at Entrance Island, only 60 miles from Juneau.

After a late start, our hearts dragging like an anchor, we arrived in Juneau at 10:00 p.m. With friends and champagne we

enjoyed the night; *Maritime* was home. Twenty-five days after leaving Seattle with nearly 1000 miles under her keel, we had completed a trip we would always remember. Thank you Pacific Seacraft and Seacraft yacht Sales for making our dreams come true.



Thoughts from your editor Dennis Pratt

As I sit here during our worst month of the year (February), I have just put down a recently received letter from Ted Trimmer in Hawaii. Ted speaks of perfect temperatures, of finding secluded coves from the cockpit of his DC-9 to visit later from the deck of his Flicka. He speaks of the best time of day to snorkel without encountering sharks. Sharks tend to feed at sunrise and sunset. He speaks of fish that are so unaccustomed to human visitors that they pay him no mind whatsoever.

I sure wish the weather got warmer here in Chicago sooner in the year and stayed warmer longer. While there are advantages sailing in fresh water such as no rust on stainless steel, no barnacles to scrape away, nothing in the water that views the crew as food and in a pinch being able to drink the water, I am not always convinced that I wouldn't rather be somewhere else.

For now there are the responsibilities

and joys of having two daughters still at home, one finishing high school this June and the other finishing elementary school. The girls have interests quite apart from the water and sailing. The little one cannot bear to be away from a horse for more than a day. The other is quite keen on her upcoming college life. As I may have mention, my son Geoff has developed a strong interest in the water and is living in Port Townsend Washington. He just bought Flicka hull #86 from Flicka Friend Mike Vernon-Cole. He bought it on Valentine's Day and says he's going to call it *Valentine*.

Hull #86 needs some cosmetic work but has a sound hull and a beautiful dodger made by The Artful Dodger in Port Townsend. They also remade the zippered ceiling cover, and it is a work of art. I would recommend this canvass shop to anyone interest in exceptionally high quality work.

One size, but Flickas come in many styles and colors

Right: The interior of Bill Strop's *Baby Grand*. According to Bill, Robin Bradshaw at Pacific Seacraft is looking at some of Bill's photos in hopes of putting out a traditional Maine layout for the Flickas. Bottom left: John Potter and Tod Alexander's Flicka sailing in Bermuda with Gill Outerbridge at the helm.



Bottom: Geoff Pratt, your editor's son, stands beside hull #86 shortly after he repainted the hull and launched her at the Boat Haven in Port Townsend, WA. The boat was purchased on Valentine's Day and is called *Valentine*. We may be the first two-Flicka family.





Top: For those of us who want to show photos of our Flickas that make them seem larger than they are, we might take a hint from Jerry Larch of Alameda, CA, the owner of hull # 424, *Moonshadow*. She sure looks enormous from this low angle. Below left: Terry McCauley's (of Leavenworth, WA) recently purchased *Wildgoose*. Terry's wife plans to call their dinghy *Chase*. Bottom right: A close-up of the dodger on *Valentine*. The dodger was made by those exceedingly artistic ladies at the Artful Dodger in Port Townsend, WA.



Pancakes

from page 2

As we neared Dartmouth, we were picked up by a huge wave and shot down the center side at a logged 8.91 knots. We stared at each other with jaws agape. We could hardly believe it but rather than being scared we were loving it and all the time this brave little boat was growing in my estimations. When I thought about it later, I reasoned that big wave and twenty-five knot winds is pretty much a gale to any twenty foot boat. At the time the thought never crossed my mind. *Caraway* was proving to be an excellent sea boat.

About five hours into the trip, we heard the updated forecast. Gale! We had no choice but to keep going.

The next outing was by far the most exciting part of the journey. The weather forecasts were predicting force 5 to force 6 still from the west which was good for us. We departed at midday and hoped to arrive at Poole at about 0300 hours. First we had to cross Lyme Bay, a fifty mile stretch of the coast that has no safe havens. On the east side lies Portland Bill, a piece of the coast that cuts deeply into the Bay, and with the help of the tide creates a dangerous and notorious mass of water.

At first the wind was as predicted, but the sea state was already rough. About five hours into the trip, we heard the updated forecast: Gale! We had no choice but to keep going. The wind was steadily increasing so I took the opportunity to take in the already double-reefed main. We sped on with only a fraction of the furling genoa showing; still we were making over five knots. The wind kept increasing and the waves reached mountainous proportions as they roared past us. As night fell, they began to take on a sinister appearance but all the time we knew we had a tough boat and she was doing fine.

For hours we sailed on. I always knew when a particularly large wave was rearing up behind us because the look on Fliss's face from the companionway said it all. I'd glance over my shoulder and be quite shocked to see the mother of all waves aiming straight at us. I was convinced that "this one" would engulf us for sure, yet every time *Caraway* lifted her stern politely to the water and the wave would pass harmlessly underneath.



Pictured above is *Caraway* sailing by Tower Bridge in London. Tower Bridge is a 19th century creation designed to blend in with an 11th century creation nearby, The Tower of London.

Fliss was feeling none too well, not surprisingly. The motion in those seas was a violent one. I was worried for I had been at the helm for over ten hours non-stop, and I knew we still had a long way to go. Suddenly without warning *Caraway* was flung on her side, and I was under water. Just as quickly she was upright again. So that's what a knockdown feels like. I glanced up to see what had hit us. All I saw was a massive line of hissing foam stretching beyond my sight. It must have been quite a wave because when I checked the maximum speed on the log later, it read 8.8 knots, and she managed that on her side!

I was soaked and getting colder by the minute. I had to change into some dry clothes. Bravely Fliss offered to take the helm. I made sure she was well tied in, and then I retired to the relative comfort of the cabin. I stood in the companionway to make sure she would be all right. I needn't have worried for it was soon obvious that my crew was an excellent helmswoman, a natural. For the next five hours, she steered our course, steady as a rock and not one knockdown.

We finally arrived at Poole Harbour. At any other time, we would have been glad to soak up the atmosphere, but now all we wanted was somewhere to drop the hook and to get some respite from the constant hell that is a small boat in a gale. We drank and ate, luxuries previously denied. We were both agreed that *Caraway* was brilliant, and we were very proud of her. We took time off to relax and left the following day on the final leg of our journey. There was no wind, no waves and plenty of sunshine, so we gently motored along. It was a lovely way to end the voyage. When Fliss joined me as crew, she hadn't done a lot of sailing and was quite nervous. But now she was a sailor and a good one at that. For weeks after she dreamt of our trip unable to shake off an amazing feeling of accomplishment.

Bristol Boats

by Bill Strop of hull #79 in Saint Joseph, Missouri

The punk rock guitarist finally finished rehearsing for the evening "gig" at the Radio City Music Hall. For ten hours he had blared through the sound system, cranked up the amps, twanged the reverb, keyed the strobe lights and belched smoke and pyrotechnics. Finally satisfied he hailed the ancient stage manager with a "Hey Dad, ever heard anything like that?"

The response was, "Nope sonny. Andre Segovia was here last year. He just walked on stage with his guitar, tuned it up for a minute, sat down on a stool and played to a packed house for three hours without any of this stuff".

The rocker shook his head disgustedly and replied, "Some folks just don't give a damn!"

The point being? "Bristol" is simple - traditional - honest and elegant. Not gaudy. Seamanlike in look and execution. The concept is attitudinal.

Consider:

- * Braided hemp boat fenders strung on three strand manila fixed with bronze brummel hooks
- * Teak cockpit floorboards
- * Scuba diver flashlight
- * Teak cabin top rack



- * Teak bottle racks and teak and brass bookshelves
- * Teak or brass line handlers
- * A bronze bollard
- * Non-rusting copper beryllium tools
- * Brass sink lift pump
- * Divers bag to stow lazarette gear
- * Bronze staghorn cleats and chocks
- * Spreader tip baggywrinkle
- * Shroud boots
- * Ship vise that fits into winch socket
- * Teak bumper adjusters
- * Teak pulpit bracket (s) to secure mast when trailering

It will be my joy to free share pics, design drawings and sources for these and more. They are all in use on a *Baby Grand*. Home (816) 279-5476 Work (816) 387-8767 Fax (816) 387-8064 E-mail: jstrop@smartnet.net. Pictured below left are some of the projects Bill has completed on his Flicka.

About our newsletter...

This is the fourth issue of *Flicka Friends*. With the completion and mailing of this issue, the funds collected from subscribers will have been exhausted even though several subscribers have sent in extra money. The color editions are expensive. It is time to send in the form on the back of this issue to update information and to send another \$10.00. I did not expect to have color editions nor did I expect each issue to reach eight pages.

Also at this time, the major articles and photos sent in have nearly been exhausted. I need more photos and articles. I know I have missed printing some materials sent in by subscribers. I will try to include those materials in future issues. Please send in a renewal subscription as soon as possible.

Please add my name to those Flicka owners and those who are interested in the boat. Your name will not be given to any other publication at any time. This publication is not for profit. Any fees collected will be used to produce and distribute the newsletter. After this issue *Flicka Friends* will have a bank account in the red. Please send \$10.00 to ~~renew~~ your subscription. Thank you all very much.

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Name _____

Address _____

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Do you own a Flicka _____ Hull # _____ Boat name _____

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