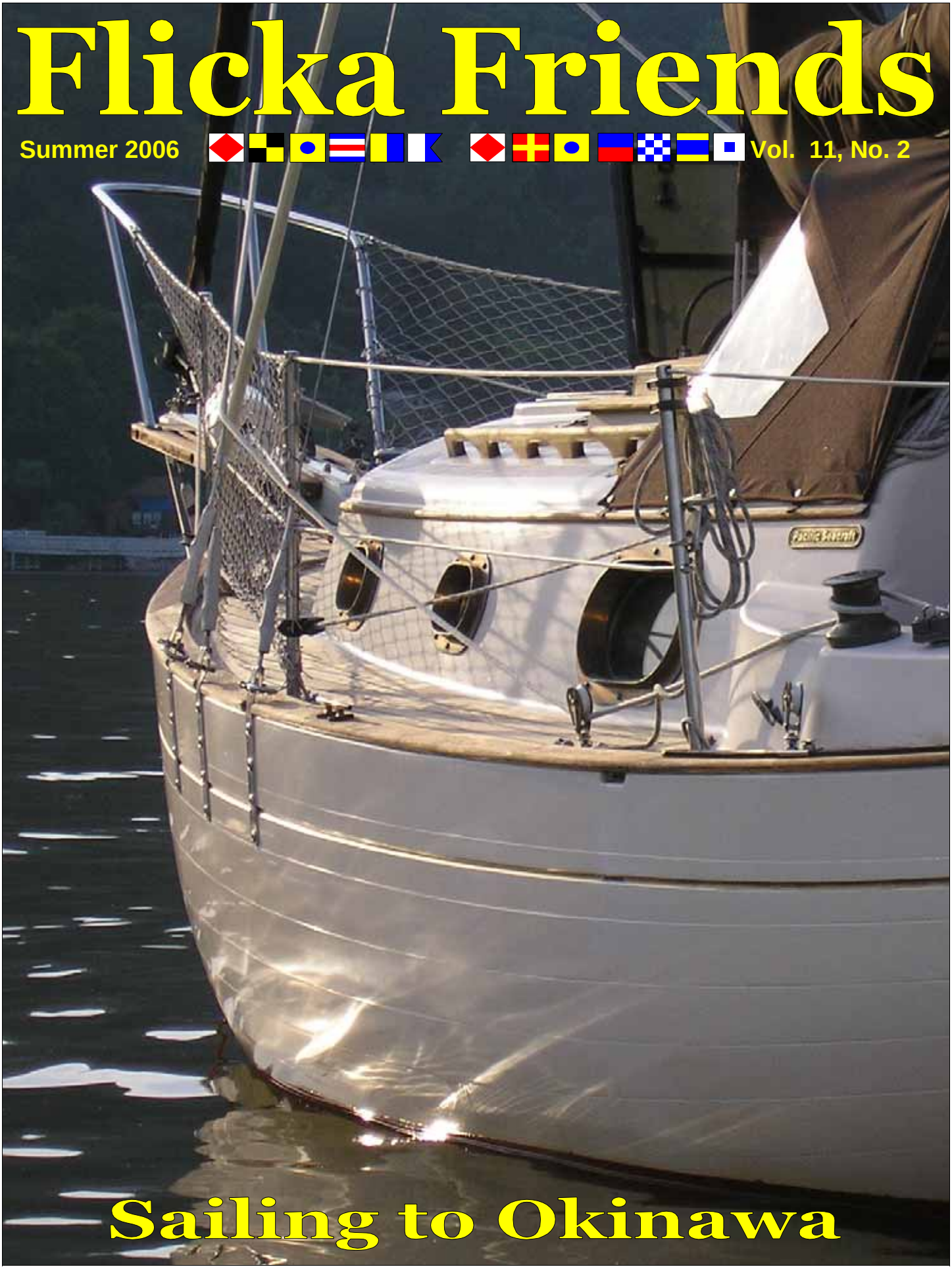
Flicka Friends

Summer 2006 Vol. 11, No. 2



Sailing to Okinawa

Contents

Next Issue...

- **Does anyone have another great Flicka story?**
- **How about something from a Flicka Rendezvous?**
- **A photo for the Flicka Photo Issue?**

Front Cover

Jeffrey J. Frederick's Flicka s/y **DESTINY** (PSC # 203 – 1982) moored in Piermont, NY.

Photo by Jeffrey J. Frederick © 2006

Back Cover

s/y **TANOMOSHI** (PSC # 104 – 1982) docked Inobe Okino Erabu, Japan. NY All jetties are massively built on the islands of Southern Japan to protect the small craft from typhoons. An old woman was digging for clams on a white sand beach behind this jetty.

Photo by Takashi Nishiyama © 2006

From the Editor

Takashi Nishiyama approaching Okinawa Hontoh. This is the main island of Okinawa where the final destination, Ginowan, lies.
Photo: Takashi Nishiyama © 2006

By Tom Davison

The last Flicka photo issue was published a few years ago. With the increased ownership of digital cameras, there should be more Flicka images available for this newsletter.

If you have an image of your Flicka that you would like to see published, please forward it to Flicka Friends by E-Mail. Thanks!

webcaptain@flicka20.com

Wing and Wing...

Angus Beare and s/y CARAWAY sailing wing and wing on the Med.
Photo: Angus Beare © 2006

About Flicka Friends

Flicka Friends is a newsletter written for the people who own, crew aboard or are interested in the Flicka, a 20 foot sailing vessel designed by Bruce P. Bingham.

Based on the Newport boats of Block Island Sound, this little ship has been built from various materials from the since the 1970's. This includes Flickas constructed from plans obtained directly from Bruce's California office. About 400 sets of plans were sold. According to Bruce Bingham, many Flickas can be found in New Zealand Australia and Sweden.

A number of hulls were built by Nor'star and some were completed by Westerly Marine. The manufacturer of the bulk of the class is Pacific Seacraft Corporation who built 434 hulls in California.

Flicka Friends is published on a quarterly basis, with issues being mailed in March, June, September and December. Articles, letters, comments and photos relating to the Flicka are welcomed and encouraged.

Dennis Pratt - Publisher
685 Spring Street, #191
Friday Harbor, WA 98250
(360) 370-5133

dennis@flicka20.com

Tom Davison - Editor
P.O. Box 462
Empire, MI 49630-0462
(231) 228-7044
tom@flicka20.com

www.flicka20.com

A Teak Instrument Panel

The new teak instrument panel aboard s/y CARAWAY includes the engine stop pull control.
Photo: Angus Beare © 2006

By Angus Beare

One thing that has always annoyed me about my Flicka is that the engine stop pull control was in the cockpit locker. To stop the engine, I'd have to open the locker and put my hand inside to get at the knob. It was even more inconvenient with three or four sailors in the cockpit. Everyone on the starboard side would have to stand up and hold the cockpit cushion out of the way while I groveled for the handle.

CARAWAY is a special boat and has always deserved a better arrangement. I decided I had to move the engine stop pull onto the instrument panel as a priority for this summers' cruise. Looking at the tired old plastic Yanmar control panel, I decided to replace that as well. Then I remembered the prices of Yanmar spares and began to consider the idea of something much nicer for a little work and less money. Something much more in keeping with the boat, something much more **CARAWAY**. The new panel would be varnished teak.

I had the ideal piece lying around in the quarter berth. I'd put it aside some time ago after bagging it from a friend who'd just finished the king planks on a teak deck. I started to look at ways of mounting the stop lever on the front of the instrument panel. There was not enough space behind the panel to bend the stiff steel cable, so a bracket would be needed. After inquiring at the local chandlers, I decided not to buy the 65 Euro bracket they had and instead make a wooden one with a couple of blocks of spare teak.

I first took photographs of the old panel and all the wires going into all the instruments at the back (thank goodness for digital!). I took notes of where everything went. then took it apart. Most of the fittings came off easily, except for the light switch that was stubborn with rust. Then I cut the new panel to size and planed and beveled the edges. After that I could play around for some time to decide where I wanted the instruments to go. I decided to leave the warning horn behind the panel and simply fix it to the transom. It was too loud as it was and I'd still hear it clearly from inside. I also decided to leave the light switch inside too and in the ON position.

I would only need three lights; ignition, oil warning and water temp warning. The rest were blanks, so I needed only three holes for the lights. The rev counter looked good in the middle so I decided to go for the lights, ignition and starter button on the port side with the power connector for the autopilot and the stop level on starboard. The instrument diameters were measured and holes drilled or cut with jigsaw in their respective positions. I cut two small wedge-shaped pieces of teak upon which to mount the pull lever and

for s/y CARAWAY

TOP: **The original control panel aboard s/y CARAWAY.**

CENTER: **Testing the fit of the new teak control panel.**

BOTTOM: **A Sunbrella cover protects the Epifanes varnish.**

All Photos: Angus Beare © 2006

glued them in place on the back and front of the panel. When the glue was dry, I chiseled them carefully so their backs were parallel for the nuts that hold the stop lever cable in place. I then drilled a 10 mm hole for the cable.

A new gasket would be made from neoprene and longer screws would be needed to hold the thicker panel in place. I bought the screws and some poppers to be held in position by the screws so that I could have a protective canvas cover to keep the varnish in good shape.

To save time, I used Epifanes Rapid Clear varnish, which can be re-coated, every 5 hours without sanding to build up five coats. I then sanded carefully with 220 grit, cleaned with a tack cloth, and applied a topcoat of high gloss Epifanes with a new brush. Finally, with the varnish dry, I could re-assemble.

My friend Celia is very good at canvas work and I managed to persuade her to make me a simple cover to protect the varnish and instruments from the elements. I had some Black Cherry Sunbrella canvas that I bought for just these kinds of jobs and in no time Celia was measuring up and deciding how it should be done. We agreed on a simple rectangle with an overlap to protect the edges and a slot for the pull stop. Celia produced this quicker than it takes her to drink a cup of tea and we were ready for the fitting. I'd bought a simple kit from the chandlers for creating canvas fixings and a popper in each corner and the job was done.

What an improvement! So much better to have glossy teak instead of nasty black plastic. And what a joy it is to just pull that stop lever and hear the engine fade! The only thing I'm not too keen about is the red plastic handle with STOP written on it that came with the new cable. I'll replace this at a later date with a nice wooden one.

3,200 Winds to Windward

Jeffrey Frederick's Flicka s/y DESTINY moored in Piermont, New York.
Photo: Jeffrey J. Frederick © 2006

By Jeffrey J. Frederick
© 2006

I hate to admit it, but the longest single voyage under the keel of my Flicka class sloop, "Destiny", took place on I-80 during the summer of 2005. July of that year saw my little sailboat travel from the cold, clear waters of the Columbia River, in Portland Oregon, to the warm, muddy waters of the Hudson River estuary, in Piermont, New York. The decision to move across the country was difficult, but the decision to trailer my little Flicka to my new home on the east coast was easier than you might imagine.

I've owned Destiny, my 1982 Pacific Seacraft Flicka (hull #203) for four summers, and prior to her purchase had been quietly coveting the Flicka class sailboats for several years. I'd read all there was to read, and had evaluated all of the options for my hypothetical little world cruiser. Among other things, the inboard diesel would serve my sense of economy and safety, not to mention the fact that I'd jerked one too many outboards to life while teaching sailing back in Oregon. No enclosed head for me, I liked the open plan and really like the KISS principal when it comes to handling human waste. And the Flicka in my dreams would have a reliable trailer, so I could launch and retrieve her with a minimum of fuss, hopping from Oregon mountain lakes to the Puget Sound with ease.

After years of reading, dreaming, saving, and more dreaming, I spied a

3,200 Winds to Windward

Jeffrey Frederick sailing s/y DESTINY near Piermont, New York.
Photo: Jeffrey J. Frederick © 2006

Flicka classified in a regional boating magazine. She was only 2 hours away on the Oregon coast, on her trailer, ready for inspection. She was the first Flicka I had seen in person, and it was love at first sight. First impressions: What a sheer line, gorgeous teak decks and cap rails, bronze everywhere, and a proud bluff bow. As stated in every boat review I'd read, she was impossibly huge for her length and beam. Reading about the Flicka is just not the same as experiencing it! I guess the smell of diesel, teak oil, and canvas added something to the experience. She had a brand new 12 hp inboard diesel engine (less than 5 hours), she had the open plan (porta-pottie), and she was seriously for sale! Did I mention wheel steering? I didn't see that one coming. Small boats should have tillers, but I must admit that this little feature is one of my favorites! Just goes to show that you can't imagine all the possibilities.

Two weeks later Destiny was docked on a freshwater reservoir just outside of Eugene, Oregon. Fern Ridge Reservoir is known for great wind, and is home to both beer can racer/cruisers and a competitive Santana racing scene. It was only 20 minutes from work and home.

I sailed as often as I could, and in my spare time I fixed, tweaked, polished, and improved her. I sailed on hot, puffy nights under stars and moon, and during spring storms that brought 35 knots of wind and square, choppy seas. **DESTINY** took it all, and I came to believe the old sailors adage…"She can

3,200 Winds to Windward

take a hell of a lot more pounding than you can".

After just two short years, the winds of change were blowing me to the east. There was no way I was going to part with this special little sailboat, so there was only one practical solution: an overland passage! This was no small leap for me. I used to get nervous trailing the 1.25 miles between the winter storage outfit and the marina. Like rum and hard work, boats and blacktop are natural enemies. I just don't like seeing the two passing so close to one another at very unnatural speeds! But in the absence of reasonable alternatives, the decision was made.

Her trailer is a double axle, 1981 EZ Loader, with surge brakes. In order to make the long journey, I had to have the trailer fitted with an equalization package. This ingenious little gizmo distributes the tongue weight of the trailer onto all four of your tires, using a pair of levers that hook into the heavy-weight hitch. The result is a smooth, stable ride while trailing your 7,000 lb sailboat. In addition, I had the guys inspect and grease the bearings, check the lights, and evaluate the trailer's surge brakes. The trailer got the green light, and was prepared for its cargo.

I prepared **DESTINY** for the windward journey by removing any moving part from the deck and mast. This included all shrouds, blocks, and pins. I've read accounts by folks who remove stanchions and lifelines, but this seemed like overkill. I think this is done to prevent breakage due to rough handling. Since I was going to be with her all the way, the stanchions and lifelines were left in place. The mast was secured to the bow and stern pulpits, and she was ready for 5 days of tropical storm force headwinds.

With **DESTINY**'s hatches battened down, I turned my eye to the road atlas.

Jeff and his Flicka s/y DESTINY ready for the windward passage.
Photo: Jeffrey J. Frederick © 2006

I certainly didn't want to climb up mountain passes just for the view, so I began seeking the flattest and shortest possible route across the mountain west. I settled on the I-80 corridor, which offered only two major mountain passes. As I made final preparations to move across country, my father offered to fly to Portland, Oregon from New York so he could join me for the cross country drive. Say what you will, I clearly come from a long line of gluttons for punishment.

What can I tell you about driving for five days, 14 hours a day, at 55 mph across this country of ours? First, mountain passes are to be respected. They were long, slow climbs, but my towing vehicle (2001 Chevy Tahoe Z71, rated to pull ~9,000 lbs) never missed a beat. The Z series comes with a towing option that includes a transmission damper, so the vehicle does not constantly up-shift in an attempt to accelerate. I'm sure this little feature saved my transmission some extra wear and tear as we wound through the Rocky Mountains. Second, other cars don't care that you require a great deal of space to come to a complete stop. I now have a whole new respect for truckers, and I am no longer willing to get right in front of a big rig and hit the

3,200 Winds to Windward

DESTINY in the slings at her new marina in Piermont, NY. This is a new ordeal for boat and owner. She is usually trailer launched and retrieved at a boat ramp.
Photo: Jeffrey J. Frederick © 2006

brakes. Last, never eat sausage gravy three days in a row. We also stopped frequently to check and grease bearings. It wasn't until day 4 that I noticed a rapid build-up of heat in one of the bearings.

My father naively asked, "What's the worst case scenario here?" I replied in a grave tone, similar to Quint in Jaws, "Wheels come off trailer, boat comes off trailer, boat hits pavement at 55 mph….our boat."

The bearings were hot, but they never got so hot that I couldn't touch them. I pulled into a tractor trailer service station to ask (foolishly) if they had the parts on hand to replace a trailer bearing. "Special order ya' say?" "Three days, maybe four?" This marked the beginning of the "grease 'em every 50 miles" portion of the trip. The generous application of bearing grease at frequent intervals kept the trailer rolling smoothly. Needless to say, we slid the last 750 miles on bearing grease, French fries, and coffee.

Now I sail **DESTINY** from her mooring in Piermont, New York. The trailer required four new bearings, new brakes, and new tires (blown bearings cause the tires to wear unevenly). All told, the trip across country cost me 5 days, $500 for the trailer equalizer, about $750 for gas, another $750 for food, lodging, and bearing grease, and about $1000 in trailer repairs upon reaching the east coast. However, I did spend 5 days with my father, chatting about the small stuff, without a schedule or appointment to distract either of us from the peace and simplicity of driving across the country.

Moving **DESTINY** from the west coast to the east coast cost five days and about $3000 bucks. Having my little Flicka to sail and explore these new waters….priceless.

A Wooden Cradle

By Tom Davison

After Tom Grimes purchased his Triad boat trailer, his boat cradle wasn't used. Recently, he went back to the marina where he had stored his Flicka to see if the cradle was still around. Admittedly, Tom forgot about the cradle since **BEN MAIN, Jr.** was on a trailer.

At the marina storage area, we found the cradle, or at least most of it. Unfortunately, the marina felt that it was junk and the cradle was cut it into roughly thirty pieces with a chain saw. Since we were curious about what would be required to support a Flicka, we picked up the parts and drove them back to his boat barn. After an hour, we matched the various cuts on the various pieces and placed them in the correct location.

We found that the cradle was 9' 6" long and 48" wide. The front support was 36" tall and the forward support was 30" tall.

There were four cross members for the cradle, all 56" long and constructed from 4" x 4" square beams.

The two primary side beams for the cradle are 9' 6" long and are 4" x 6" with the longer side placed vertically.

There are two upper side beams which are also 9' 6" long, but are 2" x 6" rather than the larger size used below.

The four 30" tall corner posts were built from 4" x 4" stock and connect the hull supports, upper and lower side beams, the fore and aft cross beams.

Two 8 foot 2" x 4" pieces connect the lower beams to the upper beams. These beams are bolted to the upper beam near the aft support and angle diagonally to the lower beam. Note that the cross beams are the lowest part of the cradle.

The cradle for s/y BEN MAIN Jr. was cut into pieces by the boatyard.
Photo: Tom Davison © 2006

For Your Flicka

The cradle looks more like firewood than a something that would support a 5,500 pound sailboat.
Photo: Tom Davison © 2006

Enough of the cradle remained to permit taking measurements and to determine the wood required for reconstruction.
Photo: Tom Davison © 2006

The side beams are placed on top of them and this provides a four inch clearance for the use of a loader or possibly a travel-lift.

I'd check with an experienced lift operator before attempting to lift your Flicka. It might be safer and easier to lift the Flicka, move it to the assigned storage area where the cradle is located, and to lower the sailboat directly onto the cradle.

All of the mechanical connections are galvanized nuts and bolts. Large washers are used throughout. Several local lumberyards were contacted and the cost of the cradle would be from $150 to $200. The quotes were for treated wood.

The wooden cradle does have some limitations. First of all, there is the potential for water damage. Even if it had been in one piece, this cradle was not serviceable without major repairs. Still, this cradle supported **BEN MAIN, Jr.** for nearly twenty years.

A flatbed or car trailer with a sufficient weight rating would allow you to move your Flicka without owning a specific trailer for a Flicka. The modest expense and effort required for fitting the cradle would allow moving your Flicka quickly. This should provide another option for owners without a Flicka trailer. The cost is minimal and the cradle can be transported in an open truck bed. Getting out of dodge may be the best option during hurricane season.

Another option would be the purchase of a JOWI cradle. Constructed from steel, the cradle folds flat for storage during the boating season. A Flicka trailer is really the best option since you can move the sailboat around. This should make indoor storage very easy. It would also allow your to bring the Flicka to your home for off-season maintenance.

Sailing a Flicka by Chance:

By Takashi Nishiyama
Translated & Edited by
Sam Yoshimura

I had just lost a bid to become a city councilman of Saeki, Oita Prefecture, Japan, and that was when my phone rang. The call was from my longtime sailing buddy Fumio Ohsuka. Fumio owns a boatyard and a dealership of used boats, both sail and power, in the nearby city of Beppu (pronounced bet-pooh). Beppu is a resort town, best known for its abundant hot spring spas that can be found everywhere from its bay front to mountain side.

I have been sailing for a little more than three decades of my life, primarily on this body of water called Bungo Suido (boongo sooido). It is the western end of Japan's scenic inland sea, Seto-Naikai. I don't know whether Fumio knew then that I had lost an election, but he was upbeat as usual. For a moment, I thought he was going to try to cheer me up by talking about getting my boat, a Yamaha 30S, ready for the upcoming sailing season, though it was still a few months down the line.

"I just got a nice little sailboat listed on my website," he told me, "It's a Flicka! And I need someone to bring her down to my yard from Aio."

"A Flicka? Is that the little sea-going yacht from Pacific Seacraft?" I mumbled.

"Where did you say she was?"

"Aio, Yamaguchi."

"Can you go pick her up for me?"

Aio is about 50 miles north of Beppu, a distance that may be covered by a day. Suddenly, I felt an urge to ride on the idea of sailing this little boat that I heard about many times. I took a deep breath and smelled a breeze from the salty sea, and like a fish released back into the water, I was back on my feet.

Sunrise just after leaving Aio.
Photo: Takashi Nishiyama © 2006

Takashi Nishiyama (left) and Masuhiro Yufu just before embarking. Hull #104 was re-christened TANOMOSHI. The red insignia is designed by the owners and symbolizes her name TANOMOSHI in Japanese, which means "dependable", "reliable" and "trust."
Photo: Takashi Nishiyama © 2006

Delivering s/y TANOMOSHI

The delivery route from Aio to Ginowan, Japan.
Credit: Yuriko Ando © 2006

Pacific Seacraft Hull #104 at Hime-jima.
Photo: Takashi Nishiyama © 2006

Aio to Beppu

In the early morning of January 11, 2006, I left Aio for Beppu. The Flicka, then-named Neri (PCS #104), had a Yamaha 9.9 longshaft. I had planned lots of motor sailing that day to cover the distance. When I embarked I had the main fuel tank and two reserve tanks, a 20-liter (5-gallon) and a 15-liter (3 & 3/4-gallon) portable ones, all filled. I also had two quarts of motor oil in reserve.

The weather was fine that morning, but there was no wind at all. At 5:30 a.m., the temperature was –3 Celsius and the deck was covered with frost. I bundled up and had a total of five heating pads placed all over my body. I then put on my foul weather gear and a PFD with harness. A little before 7:00 a.m., I hooked myself to a jack line, and started the outboard.

The Yamaha 9.9 was not quite stable while idling and died a couple of times. Fortunately it didn't give me a lot of trouble at my restart attempts, and at 7:20 a.m., I shifted the engine into forward. I saw a beautiful sunrise over the calm water.

The Yamaha gave her the speed of about a 5.3 knot average at 80% throttle. At full throttle, the Flicka trotted at 5.7 to 5.8 knots. That's quite impressive for a heavy displacement boat of that size. The ride was very smooth. She sailed with a gentle motion, hard to believe that she was a 20-footer.

About an hour later, I finally got some light air from NE. I hoisted the main and set the Flicka for running. The wind shifted to and from NW a little later which caused a few controllable jibes along the way. Thanks to her full keel, she held the course well, but I wished that she had come with an autopilot, for I was single handing all the way that day.

I had to avoid several freight ships and a few patches of commercial fishing grounds before making a stopover at a

Sailing a Flicka by Chance:

A sleet-wetted deck off the coastline of Kyushu.
Photo: Takashi Nishiyama © 2006

small island, Hime-jima (hee-may jeema), for a quick lunch and a fuel-refill. Usually, these islands don't have a marina or a dock for pleasure boats, but fortunately local fisher folks are kind to point us sailors where to moor our boats as soon as they see us. This stop was not an exception.

At 1:30 p.m., I left the island. I continued motor sailing before the wind with only the main sail up. When the breeze from N, dead astern, built up to 5 – 10 knots, she started to roll significantly, heeling up to about 30 degrees both ways. After 3:30 p.m., the sea got choppy, with the waves standing a little over three feet tall. The cockpit, however, was well protected and amazingly dry. Even when the large ships left us in their wakes, Flicka's heavy displacement hull and sturdy construction not only made me feel secure but she had not lost her speed at all.

Soon, I could see a change in the tide, and the speed dropped to about 4 knots with the motor running at half-throttle. When I revved it up to 80%, the speed increased by just $3/10^{th}$ of a knot. Clearly, I was going against the tide. Around 4:30 PM, I cleared the head of Kunisaki (koo-knee-sah-kee) Peninsula and changed the course to W. After hoisting the storm jib, I killed the motor to see how she would go - she made only a little over 3 knots, so I kicked in the outboard again. It would take just four more hours of beam reaching to Beppu from there. As sundown neared, I checked the voltage of two batteries and turned the navigation lights on. The temperature dropped abruptly after the sunset at about 5 PM. When I saw Fumio's big smile, it was only minutes to 9 PM. He was out there on his 26-footer and waited for me just outside the Kitahama Yacht Harbor of Beppu to guide me in. That day aboard Pacific Seacraft Flicka hull number 104 only validated what I had heard or read

Delivering s/y TANOMOSHI

A strong breeze brought s/y TANOMOSHI to a near broach.
Photo: Takashi Nishiyama © 2006

about Flickas – the pleasure of seeing one and sailing one. I was glad that I finally had my day on a Flicka and I thought I had understood why so many people, sailors and non-sailors alike, were attracted to this boat.

For a couple of days afterwards, however, my arms stayed as stiff as a bamboo stick, a result of steering by hand on the tiller for more than 12 hours. Anyway, I guess I didn't know how much I really liked this vessel that time.

Going Deep South

The hull #104 went through a refitting at Fumio's yard and was re-christened "s/y **TANOMOSHI**" ("dependable / reliable / trust") by Yuichiro and Naomi Tsuruta, her new owners.

How could I turn it down when Fumio asked me to meet the Tsurutas, who asked me to deliver Tanomoshi to her new homeport on Okinawa Island? Okinawa Prefecture, that lies far southwest of mainland Japan, consists of 161 islands and they span about 625 miles from east to west, and 250 miles from north to south between latitudes 27 and 24, a paradise in Japan. The combination of Okinawa and Flicka was truly appealing.

The Tsurutas, avid wind-surfers themselves, were new to keelboat sailing. They put their trust on me after only one meeting that day. And myself? I was confident that I had a skill to make the safe delivery over the 500 mile course. I had sailed in many areas in Japan over the years in various weather conditions. I also completed a 308-mile Brisbane to Gladstone (Saeki's sister city) Race in Australia. Upon accepting the offer from the Tsurutas, I set up a plan for the delivery. It would be mostly island hopping along the archipelago of Kagoshima Prefecture, just north of Okinawa, after leaving Kyushu, the southern-most mainland Japan.

Sailing a Flicka by Chance:

Pacific Seacraft Flicka # 104 near Tokuno-shima.
Photo: Takashi Nishiyama © 2006

The timing was crucial. If I didn't leave early enough the prevailing Northwesterly along the archipelago would change to Southerly. This would make the passage extremely difficult because of the head wind, and the Kuroshio (Black) Current that also come up from south. I couldn't afford to miss the Northwesterly. If I departed right away, and if all went well, I could be at Ginowan Marina in Okinawa in less than three weeks where the Tsurutas would see me.

Leaving Winter Behind

A friend of mine, Masuhiro Yufu, decided to join me for the first legs until I would leave Kyushu. We sailed out of Beppu on February 4, at 8:20 AM. It was a cold day with five to twelve knots of breeze from the north. Again, we were motor sailing with the main and the storm jib.

Throughout the voyage, I motor sailed and avoided using an expensive genoa I had on board. After all, this was a delivery, not a cruise. Also, since I was single handing for the most part, I had reefed the main when I was still at the dock everyday to avoid hassles underway. Safety was my concern. Tanomoshi reached a steady five knots for a few hours before the sleet started hitting us from behind. Later on, the wind built up and drove us to a near broach. We pulled into the port of a small fishing village at 3:30 PM. We covered 40 nm on the first day. We left the village the following morning just before 1:00 a.m., and steadily sailed at about 5 knots. At one time, GPS recorded an astounding 9.3 knots! We sailed into Miyazaki Marina at 5:35 PM, and bought 40 gallons of gas. Yamaha 9.9 burns about a gallon every hour. It was a fine day. Covered distance of the day: about 80 nm. It was raining the next morning. We left the marina at 7 a.m. Soon, it was raining harder, much harder. Visibility dropped to less than

Delivering s/y TANOMOSHI

Pacific Seacraft # 104 docked at a well protected quay in Kametoku, Tokuno-shima.
Photo: Takashi Nishiyama © 2006

350 feet. The wind from SE exceeded 20 knots. We kept our course to dead S. As we needed to steer to SW for tonight's port of call, Aburatsu, the wind shifted to S, but the waves, about 10 feet tall, started pushing us from SE, which made me very nervous since the land on our starboard now appeared closer and closer.

The rain and the sprays got both of us wet. We cheered ourselves up by constantly calling out to each other. We double-reefed the main, and by slowing down to 3 knots, carefully steered into the narrow channel that leads to the port's entrance.

For Masuhiro, this was the end of his adventure. He took a bus to the nearby railway station.

For me, it was the beginning of a real challenge to sail alone the rest of the way over the stretches between the islands, going against the Kuroshio. I checked with a fisherman and made sure the spot where we moored Tanomoshi was fine with them before hitting the hay for a deep sleep.

Foul Weather and Getting Out of It

As afore-mentioned, it was crucial for me to catch the Northwesterly to overcome the Kuroshio along the archipelago just north of Okinawa, known as Seinan Shoto. The weather at Southern Kyushu was, however, not so cooperative. I had to spend two days and three nights at Aburatsu because of the never-welting gale winds that swept all fishing fleets back to the harbors. On the third morning I was awakened at 4:20 AM by the hiss from the standing rigging. It was still blowing hard and I had no hope getting out of Aburatsu that day either. I was still in my sleeping bag when my cell phone rang. It was the regular 5:30 AM morning call from my wife, Kayoko. Amazingly, when I got off the phone with her, I

s/y TANOMOSHI Gallery

s/y TANOMOSHI Gallery

ABOVE:
Volcanic Mt. Kaimon-dake is at the tip of Satsuma Peninsula in Southern Kyushu. The area is full of active volcanoes.
Photo: Takashi Nishiyama © 2006

RIGHT:
Owners Yuichiro and Naomi Tsuruta enjoying time aboard their Flicka s/y TANOMOSHI (#104) with their friend in Okinawa.
Photo: Tadashi Watanabe © 2006

BELOW:
Sunrise near Aio on the first morning of the trip.
Photo: Takashi Nishiyama © 2006

OPPOSITE / UPPER:
The new captain and crew enjoy sailing a recently delivered Flicka near Okinawa.
Photo: Tadashi Watanabe © 2006

OPPOSITE / LOWER:
Nakano-shima of Tokara Islands, a half waypoint of the 170 nm non-stop leg from Ohdomari in Kyushu to Naze on Amami Oshima.
Photo: Takashi Nishiyama © 2006

Sailing a Flicka by Chance:

realized that there were almost no winds at all. I hurried up to deck. Hurray, this was the day to leave.

At 6:30 a.m., just outside the port of Aburatsu, the breeze from NW built up quickly from 5 – 6 knots to 10 – 12 knots. Not bad. Some freighters and commercial fishing boats happily passed by me. After nearly three hours heading S, I rounded the cape of Toi at 9:15 a.m., and set the new course to SE. Out the shadow of Cape Toi, Tanomoshi was immediately subjected to 7-foot swells and 25+ knots of wind that blew across the Shibushi Bay onto our starboard. The sea gave us pretty good rolling, but again, Tanomoshi held the course very well.

One thing we had added at Beppu was an Autohelm, along with its backup Autopilot from Fuso, and that kept me from getting my arms stiffened, so far. At about the half waypoint of the day's leg, however, the Autohelm started acting strangely. I switched the batteries from #1 to #2, and it came back to normal. But then, within half an hour, it went totally out of order, and I was forced to steer by hand the rest of the way. It was around 5:00 PM that we arrived at small harbor of Ohdomari.

As I told earlier, small harbors in Japan do not have docks that are dedicated to pleasure boats, but all in all, the local fishermen are very friendly and helpful. They always guide us to the right places as soon as they see us sailors. At Ohdomari, a fisherman picked up the docking lines for me, and when I told him that I needed to buy some gas, he even offered to go buy it for me from the town's only gas station, which I happily accepted. He would then make a round trip to the gas station, driving his own pickup truck.

I took a hot shower and soaked my body in a spa with a panoramic view of the sea beyond the southern tip of Kyushu, where the archipelago lies all the

Skipper Takashi's POV aboard Tanomoshi.
Photo: Takashi Nishiyama © 2006

way to Okinawa, but it was night time, so I actually couldn't see anything. Anyway, the next morning, I would be leaving this southern-most harbor on mainland Japan. Later that night, I made the backup Autopilot ready, with the help from Fumio on the phone, for possibly the longest leg of this delivery, 170 nm from Ohdomari to the port of Naze at Amami Oshima.

Leaving the Mainland

At 6:30 a.m. on February 10, I left Ohdomari and headed SW along the Cape of Sata, the southern tip of mainland. There were almost no winds and the sea was calm. When I passed the cape, the sight of volcanic mountain Kaimondake at the tip of Satsuma-hanto peninsula, standing magnificently off to our starboard quarter, caught me. Turning my head forward, I recognized an island volcano, Iwo-jima. This Iwo-jima should not to be confused with another Iwo-jima that was a horrific battleground in WWII. Setting the compass course to 220 degrees took me toward the island, and it worked well to circumvent the Kuroshio Current.

I then headed south to go through the sea between Yaku-shima and Kuchino-Erabu-jima. When I reached the north end of the waterway, it started raining and the wind had built up abruptly. The sea started to roll Tanomoshi at will. A thought of making refuge at Yaku-shima's Miyanoura harbor crossed my mind, but I pressed her on for about an hour. Then, just when I passed through there, I found that the Autopilot stopped working. Could that be the battery again? I switched to #2, but it didn't bring back life to Autopilot.

At this point, I had covered barely a quarter of the 170 nm leg. I didn't have a choice but to go the rest of the way with my hand on the tiller. I didn't have a doubt that Tanomoshi could take it, but the constant rolling was hard on my body. My bottom and lower back started complaining, and my arm got stiff. I kept an eye on the bulkhead-

Delivering s/y TANOMOSHI

TANOMOSHI with the friendly neighbors upon her arrival.
Photo: Tadashi Watanabe © 2006

mounted compass and on the GPS, not to wander away too much from the course, SSW. Mercifully, as the day progressed, the wind and rain subsided, and close to sundown, I saw Nakanoshima of Tokara Islands, which was about the half waypoint of the leg. That night saw a near-full moon.

I tried not to fall asleep, but around 2 AM, after nearly 20 hours into the non-stop sailing, I could no longer sustain it. I picked up a line and lashed the tiller amidships. I didn't know for how long I slept below, but I was awakened by the sound of waves hitting Tanomoshi's hull. They sounded a little different from what I was hearing before. I listened and realized that the sails were also making a noise. I jumped up and rushed to the cockpit, and realized that we were off to SE. I took the helm again and put her back on course.

Then, at about 3 a.m., the motor died. It was out of gas. I needed to refill the main from a spare, but I decided not to, for I wanted to keep the fuel in the reserve tanks for the access to port of Naze.

Around 4 a.m., I had to go below again to take a nap. When I woke up, however, it was close to dawn, about 6AM, and soon I realized that Tanomoshi had been pushed back for about 2 nm! Fortunately I was nowhere close to land or a shoal.

At dawn, I saw Takara-jima off to the starboard. The name of the island literally means Treasure Island in Japanese. It has a legend of Capt. Kidd's treasure, still hidden somewhere in one of those deep natural caves on the island. The end of the leg, Amami Ohshima, was about 50 nm down to SW, and was not visible yet. The sea was calm. Tanomoshi kept going at the pace of 2 – 3 knots with less than 10 knots of breeze under the reefed main and a storm jib only, with no help from the outboard. When GPS displayed 36 nm to Naze, I finally caught the sight of Ohshima. And at 33.2 nm, Tanomoshi was well in the cell phone range. I immediately called Kayoko and Fumio.

Knowing that I now had enough fuel to cover the remaining distance, I started Yamaha 9.9 and kept it at a half throttle. Tanomoshi made steady 5 knots. At 6:00 PM, I saw the beacon turned on at Kasarizaki Lighthouse on Ohshima. I double-checked the chart and made sure where the access was to the port of Naze.

Soon after the nightfall, the wind picked up and Tanomoshi's speed surged to 7+ knots. That was good, but the swell built up as well and forced Tanomoshi to roll vibrantly again. Some big splashes wetted the cockpit. A series of lighthouses, Kasarizaki, Imaizaki, and finally the two smaller lighthouses ones on the jetties, helped me into the port. But the access way up to the jetties was meandering, and because of the heavy rolling, and later the large following sea, it was nerve wracking to get there.

Past a couple of inner jetties, I finally found a dock at the farthest corner where fishing vessels are moored. At 11:00 PM, I secured Tanomoshi. Lucky me, that was just in front of a gas station, a convenience store and some restaurants and bars. I cannot say enough about how much I was relieved when I stepped onto the dock, after completing this leg.

After a deep sleep, I woke up in the morning to find the gale-force wind zipping through the port. That made me glad that I had made a beeline to Naze without stopping at Yaku-shima's Miyanoura harbor. At Naze, I bought 80 gallons of gas and some provisions, did laundry, went to a spa, and spent the day resting.

Island Hopping

On the 10th day, February 13, 2006, I left Naze at 6:30 AM for Tokuno-

Sailing a Flicka by Chance:

shima, about 45 nm to SW. Outside the port, there were 5+ foot swells. Fortunately they came from N, the direction off the starboard quarter. Basically I hugged the western shore of Ohshima south till I passed this largest island in the chain. I saw a shark fin cutting through the water between the waves. When I reached off Kakeroma, the neighboring island that forms a picturesque sub-tropical inland sea with Ohshima's south shore, the swells got larger, but, for a mercy, longer as well. Soon, Tokuno-shima came into view.

Originally, I planned to go to the port of Kametoku on the eastern shore of the island, but to avoid sailing after dark, I opted for Hetono harbor on the western shore. That cut the distance to cover by 2 nm, and still gave me a good point to embark the next day. I entered the harbor at 6:00 PM. A local guy who was fishing on the jetty guided me to a spot where we could stay, a well-protected quay. I walked to a gas station nearby, and the attendant let me use his pickup truck to transport the tanks full of gas back to Tanomoshi. The proprietor of a small eatery shook my hands when he heard that it was a 20-footer I was sailing from Beppu to Okinawa. Back aboard Tanomoshi, I talked on the phone with Yuichiro, the Flicka's owner, who wanted to come aboard at Yoron, the southernmost island in Kagoshima Prefecture.

After Tokuno-shima, there were only three more stops to make on the way to the final destination, Ginowan on Okinawa's main island, and the distance of each leg was just about 25 nm. For this part going south, however, I had to face the head wind, instead of the northeasterly I enjoyed all the way up to this point after leaving Kyushu.

Taking advice from a local fisherman at Hetono, I decided to head for Inobe, one of the three harbors on Okino-Erabu-jima, which is famous for its production of sugar cane, pineapples,

Flicka s/y TANOMOSHI arriving in Okinawa.
Photo: Tadashi Watanabe © 2006

TANOMOSHI zipping past Tadashi's Ulysses.
Photo: Tadashi Watanabe © 2006

Delivering s/y TANOMOSHI

Owner Yuichiro (left) and Delivery Captain Takashi celebrate the completion of 500 nautical mile delivery from Aio to Okinawa.
Photo: Naomi Tsuruta © 2006

Owners Yuichiro and Naomi Tsuruta enjoying time aboard their Flicka s/y TANOMOSHI (#104) with their friend in Okinawa, Japan. Yuichiro at the helm, Naomi with her thumb up.
Photo: Tadashi Watanabe © 2006

and cut flowers, especially white lilies. I left Hetono at 8:20 AM. As expected, the wind blew head on, and the waves hit us from the same direction. Tanomoshi made her way at 3.5 knots with a half throttle.

At noon, I revved it up to the max to gain an extra half knot. Although the sprays soaked me wet, it felt warm on my body in the balmy climate of latitude 27. From the distance, Okino-Erabu-jima appeared fully surrounded by white sandy beaches and coral reefs that were constantly washed sparkling white by the oncoming waves. I arrived at the low tide. The access to Inobe harbor was only 15-ft wide and meandering. The water was so transparent and hid nothing from me. It was scary to see the edgy reefs just below on both sides so close. If it were not a Flicka that I was sailing, I probably would have thought twice about going in there. I moored at a quay at 3:40 PM. The next stop was Yoron, and the day's coverage was about the same as yesterday's, 25 nm.

I hoisted only the storm jib that day, to use it as a steadying sail. Tetsuya Matsumura, one of my sailing buddies, who had frequently visited Okinawa on his sailboat suggested on the phone that I should go north from Inobe, which is on the western shore of Okino-Erabu, round the island's north end, then resume the south-bound by sailing along its eastern shoreline for safety. Going back to north for a short distance was no problem. As I started rounding the island's northern end, I saw white-capped waters ahead. A series of reefs? No, there were no reefs shown around there in the chart, and it turned out to be the edge of Kuroshio Current. Tanomoshi had been motoring at a pleasant speed of 6 knots up to that point, but it was quickly diminished to 3.5.

With Okino-Erabu behind us, the swells dead ahead grew ever larger, and the hobby horsing got me all wet with

Sailing a Flicka by Chance:

very heavy sprays. The GPS dropped to the cockpit sole and got soaked up in the seawater. Below deck, I dried the battery chamber, wiped the terminals clean, and placed new batteries. Phew. It came back to life.

I could see the island of Yoron from 10 nm out, and within a few hours, I recognized Yuichiro waving his hands at me at the end of a jetty. Just as in Okino-Erabu, the water was crystal clear – it was scary because I could see everything in the water and they all appeared to be so close to Tanomoshi's bottom, though in fact there was enough space for the hull. At this port of Yoron a local sailor, Naoya Ikeda, rushed out of his office and guided us to where we could cleat the lines.

After a hot shower ashore, we found in Tanomoshi's cockpit a bottle of Shochu (show-chew, local liquor, say, an equivalent of rum) along with Tanomoshi's nicely framed picture! The gifts were from Naoya. Later, we had a great dinner and conversation with his family, relatives and friends, but that's another story.

On To Okinawa!

On the 13th day, February 16, 2006, at 8:20 AM, Yuichiro and I left Yoron for Okinawa. The head wind from south was in the 4 –5 knot range. When we covered about 10 nm of the leg, with Yuichiro at the helm, we saw Okinawa Hontoh, Okinawa's main island.

We figured that we could go as far as Tokuchi harbor on the island's western shore before sundown. As we got closer to Iye-jima, which is located 10 nm NW of Tokuchi, ominous clouds developed above the island. The entrance channel to Tokuchi was narrow and sandwiched by coral reefs as well. We were fortunate to motor into the harbor before the storm hit.

Yuichiro's wife, Naomi, with their son, Yusuke, in her arms welcomed our arrival. A fisherman quickly advised us to moor Tanomoshi with her bow facing windward to prepare for the storm – that put her there at the quay European style. At 5:30 p.m., we were all set. Nothing beats a hot shower after sailing. Naomi had arranged the use of a shower for us at the nearby facility for commercial divers. The Tsurutas then treated me with a feast at a steakhouse, a la Benihana. They also arranged a room for me to stay at a bed-and-breakfast that was close to where Tanomoshi was moored. That night was the first time in two weeks that I slept in a bed. The following morning, the near gale force wind was too much to make a final leg to Ginowan Marina, Tano-

Naomi, Yuichiro with Yusuke in his arm, neighbors, and Takashi upon s/y TANOMOSHI's arrival.
Photo: Tadashi Watanabe © 2006

Delivering s/y TANOMOSHI

The new owners and crew sailing at Okinawa.
Photo: Tadashi Watanabe © 2006

Takashi aboard s/y TANOMOSHI.
Photo: Naomi Tsuruta © 2006

moshi's new homeport. I did some laundry and gathered my belongings aboard Tanomoshi. Then, I had a surprising, but pleasant visitor, Tadashi Watanabe. Tadashi had been following my progress at Fumio's website. It turned out that his slip at Ginowan Marina was right next to Tanomoshi's. He told me that he would be out there for me at Ginowan aboard his Yamaha 30C to welcome his neighbor's arrival. That boosted my morale.

Ginowan – The Final Day

I left Tokuchi at 8:30 a.m. After about three hours, the wind picked up, and the swells exceeded ten feet. Fortunately it was a following sea. The waves were crashing over the coral reefs along the shoreline. Guided by the buoys, I steered Tanomoshi to port, toward the Ginowan Convention Center and soon saw a couple of boats, Ms. Ishida's Geshi-Nanpoo with the Tsurutas aboard, and Tadashi's Ulysses.

Here is the scene of Tanomoshi arriving at Ginowan described by Tadashi:

When I got to the marina, the Tsurutas were ready to go, aboard Geshi-Nanpoo. I followed her hastily. When I got out of the marina and continued on toward Buoy #2, Tanomoshi was already there, not too far to Buoy #2, coming down right toward us. Were we too late to welcome her? The next moment, I was grabbing my camera and stepping forward. I barely had time to take a few shots from the bow of my boat as the lively Flicka literally zipped past before me.

Wow, now I needed to catch up. But it was hard, because I hadn't got my sails hoisted. I revved up the motor to the max, and finally past Tanomoshi in the marina. I went into the slip before her, and showed her the way to the slip next to mine. I had a wonderful dinner that night with the Tsurutas, Ms. Ishida and Takashi, listening to the story of his voyage.