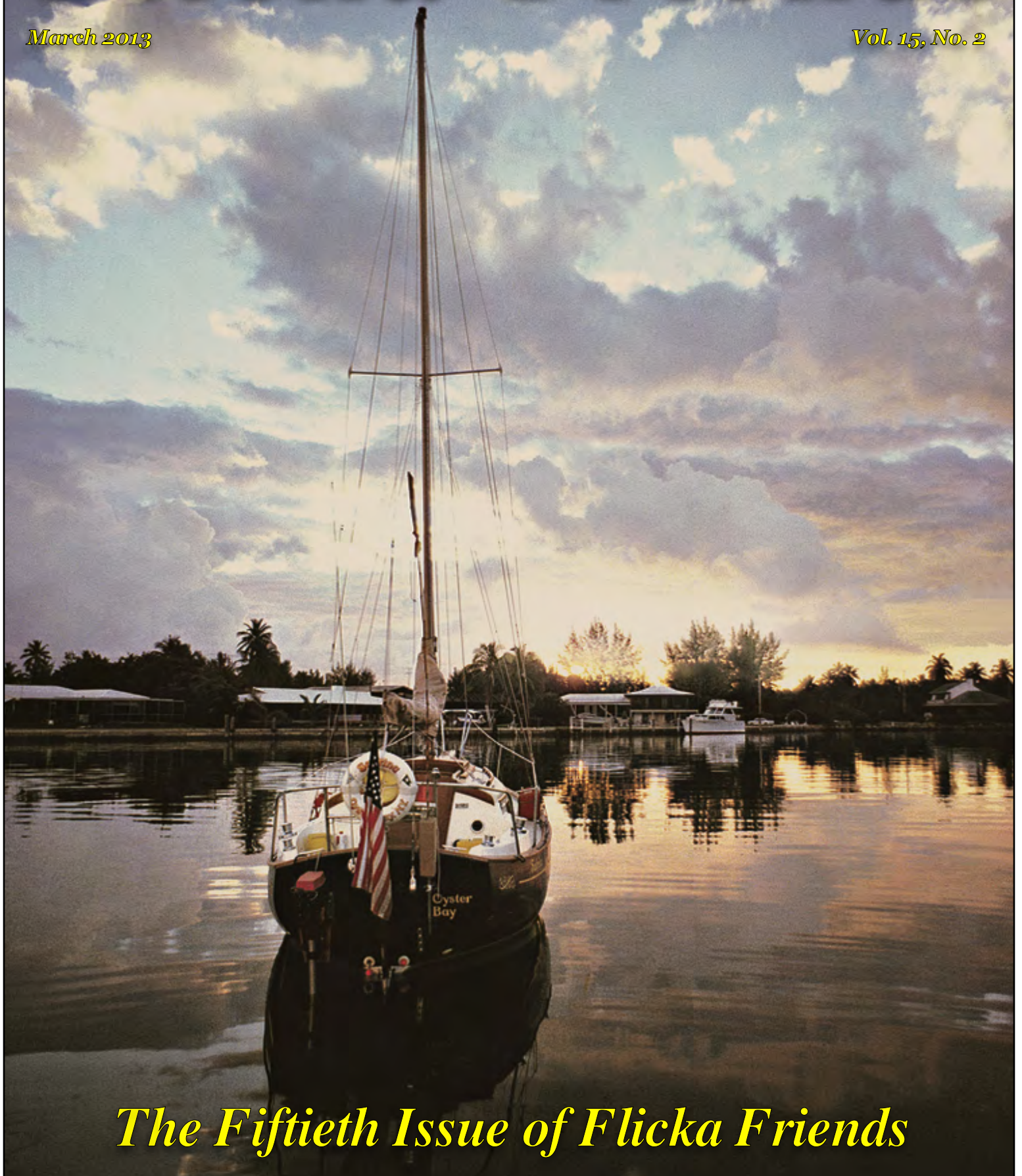


# Flicka Friends

*March 2013*

*Vol. 15, No. 2*



*The Fiftieth Issue of Flicka Friends*



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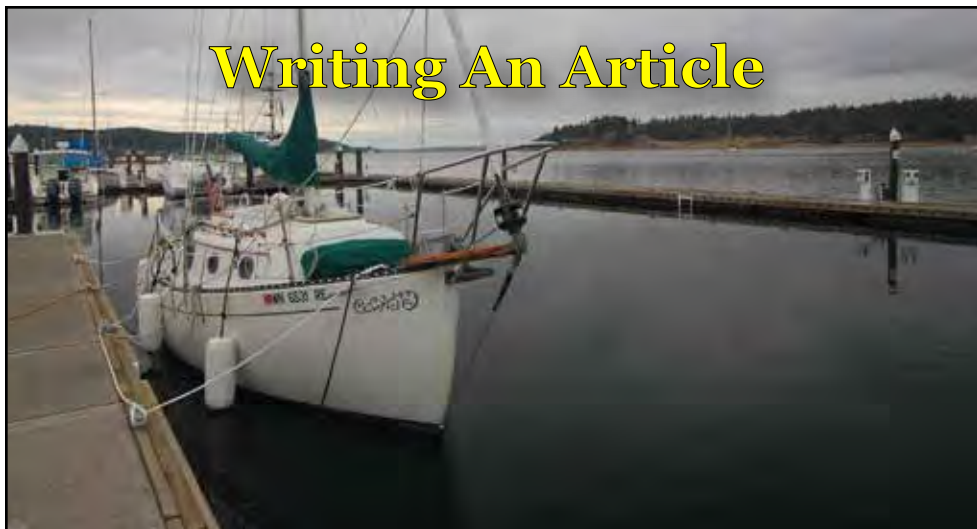
# COVER

**SABRINA** anchored in Hurricane Harbor. This is about two-thirds south of the length of the western side of Key Biscayne, which is at the northern end of Biscayne Bay, Florida.

**Photo: Bruce P. Bingham © 2013**  
 25°41' 13" North, 80° 10' 25" West  
 Near Mile 1,095 on the I.C.W.

**Bruce P. Bingham** - At the time this photo was taken at sunrise, the perimeter of the harbor was lined with large homes and mansions. The Toni Twins each had homes there as did David Eisenhower and Tricia Nixon. The Nixon Florida White House was a scant 1/3 mile to the north of Hurricane Harbor, and Dinner Key and Coconut Grove just south of Miami were one mile to the west. **SABRINA** was at rest in this pleasant harbor after her 1,400 mile trek from Oyster Bay, NY on the north shore of Long Island. The year was 1979.

ISSUE 50, VERSION 15.2.D



# Writing An Article

Waiting for a gale aboard s/y **BLUE SKIES** on the dock at Lopez Island, WA.

Photo: Tom Davison © 2013

**By Tom Davison**  
 s/y **BLUE SKIES**

With three issues published in the last four months, Flicka Friends is beginning to settle into a regular schedule again.

The April newsletter will be a Flicka Friends Photo Galley Issue. The June Issue already has an article from Jerry Ragland about galley improvements including Corian countertop, a new sink and a compass inlay on the galley table. There are two other projects articles in the files as well. And there are a few Flicka Dining articles too.

While publishing a thirty-four page issue on a quarterly basis could be difficult, if every issue contained one of the articles shown below, we would have one great newsletter.

**Flicka Cover Photo** - A great photo of your Flicka in a vertical format and sufficient room around the Flicka for the masthead and text at the bottom of the page.

**Flicka Anchorage** - A story about your favorite place to get away and drop the hook.

**Flicka Dining** - An article about a great restaurant found during a Flicka Trip. This issue contains an article about a restaurant in San Jose Del Cabo, Baja California Sur.

**Flicka Harbors** - Your favorite harbor in your local cruising area or one from your last trip across the bay or an ocean.

**Flicka Maintenance** - Information about working on your Flicka. How to replace the bow pulpit, reseating the through-hulls, installing a new tiller, bleeding the diesel fuel lines after a repair, or.....

**Flicka Passages** - Any longer Flicka trip that will spread across many pages of the

newsletter. Any length of article can be accommodated, from a few pages to an entire issue about your trip. Photos? As many as you like!

**Flicka Photo Gallery** - Any photo of your Flicka. Please include a caption, the name of the photographer, where the photo was taken, and include the hull number.

**Flicka Profile** - A story about an individual Flicka. This can be anything from a single image and a caption to a number of pages talking about the Flicka and the travels of the owner.

**Flicka Projects** - Any project about the upgrading the Flicka. While the maintenance column is about upkeep, projects is about updating or upgrading the systems aboard your Flicka.

**Flicka Rendezvous** - A story about any Flicka gathering, formal or not. Even two Flickas meeting somewhere would be a great story.

**Flicka Trips** - Compared to the longer articles that often appear, a Flicka trip are much shorter, even an afternoon on the bay.

My request for every Flicka captain is to send in a photo and a caption, or an article once. Either one of these efforts will help the newsletter keep flowing. You would be surprised on how easy it is to turn a simple letter or e-mail about a trip or project into an article. Add a few photos and others will be reading about your Flicka.

If anyone is interested in sending an article and photos for an issue of Flicka Friends or a photo and captions for a Flicka Friends Photo Gallery Issue, please let me know. Your help is greatly appreciated!

## Fifty Issues of Flicka Friends!



Katy Burke preparing s/y **SABRINA** for a storm.  
*Photo: Bruce P. Bingham © 2013*

**By Tom Davison**  
*s/y BLUE SKIES*

While reviewing the issues of Flicka Friends last November, I noticed that the newsletter was about to reach the fiftieth issue. This milestone seemed to be noteworthy and the decision was made to create the largest issue of Flicka Friends published so far.

The previous “high-water mark” for Flicka Friends was thirty pages in the Spring 2008 issue. That was a single story issue about a trip aboard Tom Grimes’ Flicka s/y **BEN MAIN, Jr.** on Lake Michigan and Lake Charlevoix.

A notice was put on the Flicka 20 Yahoo Group web page asking for articles and photographs. A number of Flicka captains responded and offered to write articles for this issue. The result was a thirty-four page issue.

The fifty Flicka Friends newsletters contain a considerable amount of information. Finding an article or a photo would take a considerable amount of time and effort without something to assist you. An index for Flicka Friends is needed and one will be created to help you locate articles and information. Expect to see the Flicka Friends Index in the summer.

This issue of Flicka Friends is a great example of what can be accomplished with the support of the Flicka community. This newsletter (magazine?) has grown considerably over the years.

Dennis Pratt’s idea to create a newsletter to share information about the Flicka was and continues to be a great idea!

Thank you Dennis!

## ABOUT FLICKA FRIENDS

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

Based on the Newport Boats of Block Island Sound, this little yacht has been built from various materials from the 1970’s until 2002. 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. Flickas continue to be built from plans to this day.

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 who built 434 hulls in California.

**Flicka Friends** is published on a quarterly basis with issues being posted to the internet in March, June, September and December. Photo gallery issues of Flicka Friends are also published January, May, August, and November. With enough support, there will be eight issues of Flicka Friends each year.

You can download the current issue as well as the back issues of Flicka Friends from the Flicka Home Page:

[www.flicka20.com](http://www.flicka20.com)

Flicka Friends is always in need of articles and photographs for publication. Please consider sending something to me for the next issue of the newsletter.

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# A Day With Bruce Bingham



The First Flicka, drawn by Bruce P. Bingham in coffee.

*Drawing: Bruce P. Bingham © 2012*

**By Bob Collier**  
s/y **RED RASCAL**

I thought you might be interested in a recent meeting I had with Bruce Bingham. I have been friends with Bruce since the day I received my plans to build a Flicka. However, this was a long distance friendship via emails, phone calls, and Christmas cards with photos of my yearly progress over 10 plus years of construction.

On December 11<sup>th</sup>, I had the honor of meeting and spending the day “chewing the fat” with Bruce P. Bingham, the naval architect who designed the Flicka. My wife and I ended a cruise through the Panama Canal to Ft. Lauderdale and then a short flight over to Tampa and the Gulfport area.

Here, at the Boca Ciega Yacht Club, is where Bruce lives on his boat (a Cape Dory 28, shown in the second photo). He had planned a

meeting during that time of Flicka sailors in the area and any others that wanted to join in. However, there were torrential rains the first day and only about a dozen interested sailors braved the rains.

The next day the skies were clear and Bruce gave a power point presentation of the development of the Flicka. He saw the fishing boats beached near where he was stationed in the Navy (probably Newport, RI, for he showed the area of the U.S. Naval base on a map where he was stationed, but didn't mention the name).

These boats went out in every kind of weather including the Grand Banks area of the Atlantic Ocean and returned safely. Even though these boats were open without a cabin and the fishing grounds were in the “perfect storm” area, they still brought their fishermen safely home. So Bruce sketched them and then took

“lines measurements.” This involved taking a tape measure and obtaining all the essential dimensions. The navy captain, his superior, was also a small boat sailor so he was sympathetic with Bruce's efforts to capture the essence of these tough little boats. As an aside, Bruce also built a small day-sailer while in the Navy. Bruce first drew a sketch of the Grand Banks fishing boat, but with a cabin. I have included a copy of Bruce's first sketch of the Flicka. You might call it the prototype, but many ideas and subsequent sketches were to follow before his boat became a reality, the Flicka as we know it today. This shot is in the “Sailor's Sketchbook” but I hadn't realized that this was the first attempt to capture the little Grand Banks boats as a compact cruiser until this recent gathering of Flicka sailors.

After completing his tour in the Navy, Bruce began work in earnest designing the Flicka (about 1970's with my plans showing a 1972





Bruce Bingham and Bob Collier on s/y **NIKKI** in Boca Ciega Marina.  
*Photo: Bob Collier © 2012*



Two Flicka captains next to s/y **NIKKI** in Gulfport, Florida.  
*Photo: Bob Collier © 2012*

and 1974 dates). He, with the assistance of Katie Burke, built the “plug” for the first Flicka. A “plug” is a perfect replica of the finished boat, usually just the hull. The plug serves as the male mold from which a female mold is created.

Once this is accomplished, many boats are made from this one female mold. In order to give the plug and the finished boat a traditional wooden boat look, Bruce used a Dremel circular sanding disc to scribe lines resembling the joints of a carvel-planked boat, he was so adept at this that a professional boat builder stopped by one day and commented as to how neat the “wooden” planking was on the boat, not knowing that this was a plug soon to be a fiberglass boat without a single real plank! As much as Bruce liked the carvel-planked look of the boat, the scribed lines turned out to be a builders’ headache.

The early Flickas were difficult to remove from the mold due to the resin and fiberglass adhering to the scribed planking interstices. Bruce didn’t mention how this problem was solved, but probably by reducing the depth of the scribing. After several fiberglass Flickas were manufactured, Bruce decided to have one of his own. Thus was born #25, the **SABRINA**. This was named after his dog, Sabrina (and not from the cat or mouse that often appears in his drawings as well as his boat plans).

Originally the plans included information concerning building the Flicka in ferro-cement, but the plans I have, and apparently later plans, have the ferro-cement aspects blocked out (covered over). This might have been due to the fading interest in this method of boatbuilding. At any rate, the plans are very complete even including at least two pages of general information with Bruce’s excellent drawings as illustrations. One example is how to build a gimballed table. Also, there were illustrations as to making your own wooden blocks, just beautiful!

Shortly before the gathering, a Flicka owner called Bruce and said that he had an old Flicka that was in pretty bad shape but that he was in the process of refurbishing it back to Bristol condition. In a pause in the conversation, Bruce asked him his name and the caller said “just call me Conrad”. Bruce asked if that was his first or last name? The caller said it’s my last name but I don’t like my first name so everyone just calls me “Conrad.” After numerous questions by the caller and about to hang up, Bruce asked about the point of this call and the caller said I own your original Flicka, the **SABRINA**. Bruce was so excited to know its location and that the owner was going to restore the boat that I heard him tell several people at the gathering about this unusual phone call. The caller promised to keep him informed as to his progress.

Then Lyda, a friend of Bruce’s and also a live-aboard sailor, prepared a very tasty Italian dinner of spaghetti, meat balls and bread late in the afternoon so it was called “Linner” or “Dinch,” whatever, it was delicious along with several glasses of wine. At the end of the day, the sailors began to disperse and we ended the day with a nautical saying that I paraphrased from the cruise ship. “There are wooden ships and glass ships, and many ships at sea, but the best ships are the friendships between you and me!” Thus ended a delightful and informative day with the creator of the Flicka, Bruce Bingham.

# Sea of Cortez Cruising



My Flicka s/y **MISTY** in my favorite anchorage: Honeymoon Cove on Isla Danzante, Sea of Cortez, Baja California Sur.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*

**By Steve Smith**  
*s/y MISTY*

The Sea of Cortez is a great body of water for small boat cruising, provided that careful weather planning is always observed. Located between the Baja Peninsula to the west and the mainland Mexican coast to the east, it is roughly 700 miles in length and varies between 50 and 150 miles in width. Sea life here is magnificent and diverse, and the area is often referred to as “the world’s largest aquarium.” Snorkeling here can be awesome and it is not unusual to be engulfed in huge schools of exotically colored tropical fish while in the water.

**A Disclaimer:** I am a novice sailor and truly not an expert on anything nautical. Take everything with a grain of sea salt, and use your own best judgment!

## Part One: General Considerations

### Weather Considerations

Weather planning in this area is critical for safe, and enjoyable, sailing and revolves around three factors: Seasonal wind patterns, air temperatures and sea temperatures. From my own personal perspective, the ideal situation for cruising here includes winds that





Sunset in San Carlos, Sonora, Mexico  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Entering the Sea of Cortez from San Carlos, Sonora, Mexico.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Looking back toward San Carlos from the Vermilion Sea.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*

provide good sailing, sea temperatures that provide good swimming and snorkeling without a wetsuit, and air temperatures that are moderate and will not be too uncomfortably hot.

In regards to the seasonal wind patterns: from late October through March there is a phenomenon known as the “Northers” which can affect the Sea with variable frequency. These are winds from the N or NNW which blow constantly for 3-5 days and can average 20-35 knots. These winds often create a very steep and short period wave form which can be potentially quite dangerous, and always best avoided. During a typical Norther, one can see steep 6-8 foot waves (or greater) at 3-5 seconds. All small boats, and even the larger recreational vessels, avoid being exposed to these conditions and hunker down in a safe cove or harbor. Fortunately, these Northers are usually very easy to predict, and there is good warning about when they will occur and when they will abate. They are generally observed when there is a giant high-pressure system over the Great Basin and this will cause both Santa Ana winds in California, as well as Northers to develop in the Sea of Cortez (both being due to the clockwise flow of air around the Great Basin high).

In between these Northers, one will often experience several days of either calm winds and almost flat sea conditions, or very pleasant sailing conditions with light north or NW winds. The key, as always, is to keep a close eye on the weather and act accordingly. Do not find yourself out voyaging at the height of a Norther or you will, at the very least, get “beat up” severely, and at the very worst, get swamped, overpowered and risk life and limb.

Of note, is that many sailors will wait until a Norther is steadily decreasing in wind strength and then plan to sail on this decreasing wind. This appears to be a pretty safe practice from what I have observed. The only problem with this strategy is that the sea state might still be rather uncomfortable, even as the winds are slowing dying down.

As always, it is good to have a “Plan B” up your sleeve if weather conditions change and to not be afraid to alter course to stay safe. Trying to adhere to a rigid course or time schedule is a recipe for disaster. Be flexible and if forced to “wait it out” in port, enjoy the time exploring the local area, and culture, by land!

At rare times, during the winter months, the wind can come from the South and cause difficulty in two respects. Those sailing to the south, the normal winter routine, will find themselves sailing against some truly steep and short period waves, and this can make for a very uncomfortable ride. I found this out personally during my first Sea of Cortez crossing (see below). The second problem revolves around the issue of safe anchoring. If the winds are switching unpredictably between the North and the South, one can find themselves in an uncomfortable lee shore while anchored at night. This is a fairly rare scenario, but I have seen this type of pattern on one occasion, and it made the issue of where to anchor safely a real guessing game.

The summer months typically experience light to moderate southerly winds, but this is also the period for potential hurricanes. Hurricane season is generally considered to be from June 1<sup>st</sup> through November 1<sup>st</sup>. I have no personal experience sailing in the Sea of Cortez in the summer months as I am not a fan of extremely hot weather and also wish to avoid the potential hurricane season.

The air temperatures are pleasant and tolerable, for most people, approximately between the last two weeks in October through April or May, depending on the year. From May through mid October, air temps can be miserably hot, often reaching beyond 100 degrees. If you combine this with a no wind evening, and little night time cooling, it

can be a stiffling hot and comfortable sleep often requires a good fan, or even better yet, some form of air conditioning.

The sea temperatures are, of course, hottest in the summer months, but often stay warm enough to swim without a wetsuit through mid-November (about 75-85 degrees). After this, they cool considerably (less then 75 degrees) and do not get back to a good swimming temperature until about May. With a light wet suit, one can swim and snorkel comfortably throughout the winter months, in most places.

So, when one takes into consideration all the data above, it seems clear that the ideal cruising is between mid-October and May. My personal favorite time to cruise the Sea of Cortez is the six weeks from about Mid October through November because the air temperatures are moderating, and not too hot, the water temperatures are still quite warm (75-85 degrees) and the Northers may not yet be quite as frequent as seen later in the winter months.

Of course, the last two weeks of October **ARE** still in Hurricane season, and so this must be watched carefully. This worry about October hurricanes is not just theoretical, as evidenced by Hurricane Paul which struck the Baja area on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012 and wreaked significant havoc in the Sea.

It is clear that knowing the weather forecast is the one single most important factor for sailing the Sea of Cortez in small boats.

The cruising community in the Sea of Cortez monitors the weather in several ways. First, in main harbors like San Carlos (near Guaymas on the mainland), Puerto Escondido and La Paz there is a morning cruising net on the VHF radio (often this will be on Channel 22). This VHF cruising net will always have the weather forecast, and often includes interesting local news and assorted other items of local interest. It is usually worth listening to and can be quite entertaining.

A second way to get excellent weather forecasts when in port, or anytime wireless connectivity is available, is via several good weather websites.

These include:

**BuoyWeather** - BuoyWeather gives a free two day forecast, but charges a small fee for a monthly subscription service to get the 6 day forecasts. I used this service extensively when I was cruising in the Sea of Cortez and found it quite helpful. Generally speaking, they were “spot on” about the timing of a given wind event (like a Norther), but often under-estimated the actual wind speeds. Conventional wisdom by many experienced Sea of Cortez sailors was to multiply the BuoyWeather wind speed predictions by 1.5 or 2 in order to get realistic figures.

Another useful web based weather site for Sea of Cortez includes:

**PassageWeather** - This site gives great GRIB files and requires no special GRIB file reader to view these charts.

Finally, one of my favorite and most useful weather tools is:

**Sailflow** - This site gives a truly accurate animated wind prediction map in vivid colors and is often spot on in regards to the timing and wind speeds in the Sea.



My trusted GPS on the crossing of the Gulf of California.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Under sail on the crossing to the Baja California Peninsula.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Sunrise over over Isla Carmen to the east.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*





Safe and sound in Puerto Escondido.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Sport fishing fleet docked in Puerto Escondido.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Marine service at Marina de Puerto Escondido.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*

There are many other sources of Web based weather for this area available, but I have found that the above three sites are generally adequate to give a sailor a reasonable idea of what weather is coming down the pike.

A third method of obtaining weather information (besides the morning harbor based VHF nets and the Web based information), is the Baja SSB shortwave nets (Single Side Band nets). These can be easily accessed using either a small, inexpensive portable short wave SSB radio, or via a professional grade panel mounted SSB transceiver (like the Icom line of transceivers). The great thing about the SSB nets is that one can access them nearly anywhere; even tucked into remote coves beyond VHF and wireless range. Here is a site that gives the times and frequencies of these nets:

<http://www.baja-haha.com/Guide/Nets.html>

The Nets that I listened to the most were the Amigo Net and the Sonrisa Net. Good weather forecasts can be found on both these nets and probably the Sonrisa Net had the most detailed and useful information. I was able to bring in these nets clearly using a small portable Sangean ATS-909X SSB radio and the portable long wire antenna that came with this unit. This unit costs about \$225 at Amazon.com and was worth its weight in gold. Of course, I could not transmit on this radio, but it really pulled in a clear signal and allowed me to get excellent weather forecasts while hunkered down in some remote cove waiting for a 30 knot Norther to blow itself out.

It is even possible to download the GRIB weather data, and limited low bandwidth email from SSB radio to one's laptop computer when in remote locations, if one has a high quality SSB radio with a modem. Also, a Sat Phone can be used in a similar way to download low bandwidth email and weather data. The Sat Phone, in this case can act as both an Internet connection and a modem, when using the right software. I have an Iridium Sat Phone (9505a) that I have carried with me while sailing since 2007 (mainly for emergency calls) and was able to hook this up to my laptop computer. This allowed me to receive text emails and the BuoyWeather data with ease while sitting tight in remote coves. See Part 4, Communications for the details of the Iridium Sat Phone-Laptop setup if interested.

## Part Two: Trailering Considerations

There are three ways to get to the Sea of Cortez with a trailerable Boat:

First, you can sail her down on her own keel from California, which is probably the most exciting and requires the best offshore preparations. Numerous Flickas have done this trip, including s/y **NOMAD**, s/y **MOTU**, and s/y **DULCINEA**.

Second, you can trailer the boat down the Baja Peninsula for launch on the east Baja coast (San Felipe, Bahia de Los Angeles or Puerto Escondido). This would appear to be the simplest way, however this is a very treacherous road with no shoulders and steep drop-offs most of the way. It *can* be done and is often done successfully, but most who attempt this say that it is very nerve wracking at best, and dangerous at worst.

The third way, and the way I prefer to get my boat down south, is to trailer to San Carlos on the mainland side (near Guaymas) and then cross the Sea of Cortez when the weather window is right. The road from Nogales, MX to San Carlos, MX is mostly a very nice 4 lane toll road with plenty of room, wide shoulders and no steep drop-offs. It is a very safe road when taken in the daytime and is about 260 miles from the border to San Carlos.

The best way to enter Mexico, on this route, is at Nogales taking the Truck Border Crossing just to the west of the city. The truck route bypasses the narrow and somewhat problematic area of downtown Nogales. Once past this border, do not linger near the border area as most of the Narco related violence occurs fairly close to the border towns. Stay on the main road to San Carlos (Mexico 15D) and do not stray into small towns or back roads near the border areas. It takes me about 6 hours to trailer from Nogales to San Carlos, MX and this includes all the necessary border stops.

Make sure to have all your paperwork in order including passports for all persons traveling, Temporary 10 year Import Permit (or TIP) for the boat, as well as truck, trailer and boat registration. Make sure, also to have the required Mexico Liability Insurance, issued by a Mexican company, on all your vehicles. I have found that the Baja travel club called [Vagabundos](#) has excellent insurance prices and can answer all your Baja/Mexico travel related questions.

One final note on trailering: Obviously it is important to have your tow vehicle and trailer in great shape **BEFORE** entering Mexico. I usually have the trailer bearings repacked and brakes inspected, and serviced if needed, prior to making this trip.

Additionally, I will often get my Titan pickup serviced with a fresh oil change and obtain a good safety inspection at this time, with emphasis on the braking system. One certainly does not want to breakdown on the road in Mexico if this can be avoided.

Finally, when planning your route to Mexico, try and avoid the big urban areas in the USA, like the LA basin, whenever possible. It is not much fun to be stuck in frantic rush hour with cars and trucks zipping across all lanes at high speed while you are pulling a heavy trailer.

**Launching the Flicka from San Carlos** - There are a couple of ways to get the boat from the trailer into the water after arriving at San Carlos. There is a nice launch ramp at Marina San Carlos. I have never launched from a ramp as I am trying to preserve the trailer bearings, brakes and frame as much as possible from salt water corrosion.

Fortunately, they also have a nice hoist on a fixed base which swings into the water. The boat, on the trailer, is driven under the hoist, straps are placed under the boat and the boat is then lifted off the trailer and swung over the water, and then gently lowered. This method works great and is not very expensive. Putting up the mast can be done either prior to launch via your own system, or a light crane found in nearby Marina Seca.

Alternatively, the Marina San Carlos folks can put up your mast with the same swinging hoist which launched the boat, once it is in the water. This can be a bit tricky to perform, and I think the simplest, safest and easiest method for mast raising is to use the light duty crane in nearby Marina Seca. The whole thing is very fast and fairly inexpensive. See the [Marina San Carlos](#) site for up to date information and prices.

Additionally, there is another really nice marina just north of San Carlos called [Marina Real](#). This is a quieter marina, with less urban buzz, and also less amenities. They do have a ramp here but no travel lift or hoist. If you are seeking more solitude and do not mind launching yourself via a ramp, then Marina Real is a fine choice.



A young Army Guard keeping us safe in Santa Rosalia.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



At the gas dock in Santa Rosalia.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Santa Rosalia Harbor.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*





The Resort at Punta Chivato.  
 Photo: Steve Smith © 2013



MISTY in the distance from the Resort at Punta Chivato.  
 Photo: Steve Smith © 2013



Sunset at Punta Chivato.  
 Photo: Steve Smith © 2013

## Part Three: Sailing in the Sea of Cortez:

**Crossing the Sea of Cortez from San Carlos** - OK, this is the start of the exciting part. The first thing is to decide where you are going to cross to. There are several good options.

The closest crossings are to either Santa Rosalia, (about 76 nm) or Punta Chivato (about 74 nm), slightly to the South.

Then, even further to the South one finds the beautiful and relatively isolated San Juanico Bay (about 96 nm).

Going even further South, Puerto Escondido (about 130 nm).

The main consideration when crossing is timing the weather and going when it is safe. Do not get in a hurry here. If there is an intense Norther blowing, do not attempt to cross. Often people will simply wait for light and variable winds and motor across in smooth seas. Sailing purists might scoff at this idea, but I think that whatever is fun and safe is just fine.

The ideal crossing can be had when there have been relatively settled conditions for a few days so that the sea state is relatively comfortable, and there are light to moderate North or Northwest winds of 10-15 knots for great sailing. One rarely gets these ideal conditions and usually ends up with some challenging aspect to the crossing as illustrated below.

Some tales and observations from my two Flicka trips to Baja:

**Flicka Trip #1:** November 21, 2011 to March 1, 2012  
 Round trip from San Carlos to La Paz and Back

**Flicka Trip #2:** October 20, 2012 to November 17 2012  
 One way from San Carlos to La Paz

**Sea Crossings** - I am certainly no expert on this topic but have crossed the Sea of Cortez on three occasions, and each time there has been greatly differing conditions, and experiences. Here is a short synopsis of these three crossings and the lessons I learned from each.

The first time I crossed the Sea I made a few major mistakes. It was November 2011 and the evening before my crossing the forecast was for light and variable winds for 36 hours, then for an intense Norther to start blowing. Being a real cautious novice, I reasoned that I wanted to get into a safe, well protected spot and decided to go the 130 NM to Puerto Escondido. This is essentially a hurricane hole and I thought that I was playing it extra safe. I felt that when the Norther arrived, I did not want to be in just any sheltered cove, but preferred the safety of a "hurricane hole".

Well, the very morning of the day of my departure, the forecast suddenly changed to that of a freakish South winds at 15-19 knots to start about 9pm. Being basically a lake sailor and thinking that 15-19 knot winds were going to be OK, even though my heading was directly into them, I decided to forge ahead. (This was not a smart assumption in retrospect).

I left San Carlos at 8:00 am, bound for Puerto Escondido 130 NM distant and expected to arrive there at about 10 am the next day. I was sailing solo, as my wife had flown home that day. I had a beautiful motor sail, with light and variable winds, until about 8:00 pm when I noted the start of a gentle south wind.

The winds gradually increased over the next 4 hours, so that by midnight I was looking at 15-20 knots of wind on my nose with steep 3-4 foot seas at 3-5 seconds. I was getting totally drenched with green water coming over the bow and into the cockpit with regularity.

The moon had gone down, it was pitch black. Having never sailed solo in pitch black conditions with somewhat challenging seas, I started to become a little concerned about my personal safety and clipped my inflatable life jacket onto a jack line previously rigged from bow to stern.

I was motor sailing with the main up and sheeted tight, the bow was dipping deeply into the wave troughs enough to bury the navigation lights, and the outboard now was starting to cavitate on occasion. I decided to try and sail without the motor but this would either put me at a course directly into shore, in the pitch black, or further out to Sea. I was at a loss as to the best course of action and decided to simply restart the outboard, accept the occasional cavitation, and continue a direct course into Puerto Escondido.

I got thoroughly soaked, scared and exhausted that night, and finally made it into Puerto Escondido at about 12 noon the next day. So, I survived this first crossing (barely) and made the entire 130 nm trip in reasonable time and with no major damage done.

This was a great learning experience and I think that the two main lessons I would have to take away are:

- 1) **CONDITIONS:** Wait for ideal or near ideal conditions, to make the crossing! Do not assume that a 15-19 knot wind forecast is trivial, especially if you are heading into this wind.
- 2) **BE FLEXIBLE:** Do not be afraid to alter course if the conditions warrant. I could have simply slowed the boat down, "heaved to", and later in the light of day, altered course toward the west and arrived at Punta Chivato or San Juanico. This did not occur to me because I was too fixated on getting to Puerto Escondido before the next Norther struck. In reality, however, San Juanico is a fine and comfortable place to weather a Norther. (more information on San Juanico as a good place to anchor below).

Since this initial crossing, I have two more crossings under my belt and continue to learn something from each one. The second crossing was from Santa Rosalia to San Carlos, and this was again solo and again miserable, but for a different reason. The winds were light but the seas were very choppy at about 3 feet, and on the beam from a recent wind event. Light winds and choppy beam seas do not make for a comfortable crossing. It forces one to motor to keep the boat from excessive rocking.

The other mistake I made this crossing (besides attempting it in light winds and a beam sea) was that of leaving *too early* from Santa Rosalia. I was trying to nap for the overnight trip in the afternoon in Santa Rosalia, but was too excited to sleep. Because of this, I left a couple of hours earlier than I had planned and arrived at the mainland coast 2 hours prior to sunrise.

So, I had to slow way down about 10 miles off the Sonora Coast as I approached San Carlos and spent this time dodging ferries and shrimpers in the dark. This was not a lot of fun after being up all night.

Lessons learned on this crossing: Avoid light winds and choppy beam seas when possible.....this is a bad combination. Also, avoid leaving too early, on an all night crossing, so that you most definitely arrive in the daylight. Some sailors are comfortable arriving in a port at night, but I think that for me, this is not at all a good option.

My third crossing was extremely pleasant. It was with my wife and we cruised from San Carlos to San Juanico (a 96 mile SSW course). We had a real nice consistent 10-16 knot north winds most of the way. We were able to sail 65 miles of this 96 miles without the engine, and then



**MISTY** in San Juanico Anchorage.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



San Juanico shoreline.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Western sunset view from San Juanico Anchorage.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*





Sunrise from San Juanico Anchorage.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Looking north into the San Juanico Anchorage  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*

motor sailed the rest of the way in the morning as the wind had become light then.

It was a magical night complete with falling stars, bioluminescent seas and playful dolphins. We did have a slight beam roll type sea on the direct course line, so I headed up about 10 degrees and the motion of the boat became very comfortable with little roll.

We arrived in the semi-wilderness anchorage of San Juanico after 22 hours enroute and anchored at the head of this very protected bay in 15 feet of water and in front of about 7 other larger boats. That is the beauty of the small Flicka.

I knew that there was a big Norther coming in the next 24-36 hours, and when it hit, I was in flat protected water. This was actually way calmer then being in a Norther in Puerto Escondido which allows much of the wind to enter through low spots!

I let out my Delta anchor with 100 feet of chain (and 10 feet of rope to absorb the shock loads) in 15 feet of water. We snorkeled on that anchor every day, and despite 20-35 knot winds in the open sea, we were in flat and calm water, and the anchor never moved an inch. From where we were anchored, if one looked east to the open Sea of Cortez, there appeared to be a "herd of white buffalo galloping by" with the steep, short period waves.

Lessons learned on this crossing: First, cross with good company. Being up all night alone, sailing solo might sound a bit romantic and fun, *but it really is not*. It is way safer and more enjoyable to have company on this long crossing.

Watches can be divided up throughout the night to allow one person to sleep while the other keeps watch. We divided these watches up into about 3 hour periods and it seemed to work well. Second lesson learned: one can weather a strong Norther in a protected cove with ease and comfort. You do need to be in a "hurricane hole," or tied to a secure dock, to survive a Norther.



## Part Four: The Destinations

Below is a brief synopsis of Baja Anchorages and Harbors and they are listed from North to South.

**NOTE:** The actual passages between these anchorages and harbors are generally omitted as they were done uneventfully and with good weather, unless otherwise noted. They were sailed if there was enough wind and motor-sailed in the event of light winds. There was one passage which on two occasions provided exciting conditions and it is addressed below.

**Santa Rosalia:** This is a small, friendly working man's town. There is some French influence here which is left over from the earlier days when the French ran copper mining operations. This influence can be seen in many structures including a church designed by Eiffel.

The town has a nice little enclosed breakwater which provides anchoring in the NE corner and 2 different small marinas. Once secure in the breakwater (anchored or tied to a dock), it is a short walk into the town where provisions can be had and there are many good restaurants to enjoy. The folks who live here are quite friendly and the local kids can be seen skate boarding over jump ramps in the small central park, like kids everywhere.

**Punta Chivato:** This is a nice little anchorage with not a lot surrounding it except for one small resort and a few vacation homes. There is also a small airstrip nearby. I found it quite fun to anchor here and then row my little kayak to shore to enjoy the excellent food and libations offered up at the local small resort. It is a beautiful setting and has a long crescent shaped sandy beach to enjoy.

**San Juanico:** This is one of my favorite anchorages on the entire Baja peninsula. It has great north wind protection, excellent snorkeling and nice hiking. There are usually five to seven boats tucked in here and there is a sense of "shared cruiser community" when anchored in this remote area. Often spontaneous beach parties and shared fish dinners will be organized here. In addition, to the South are four or five outstanding, totally isolated, beautiful sand beaches to explore and relax on. The water temperature here, when we arrived on October 22<sup>nd</sup> was 84 degrees, which makes snorkeling a relaxing sport. Miss this anchorage at your own peril!

**Coronado Island:** This is beautiful island located a few miles NE of Loreto. The snorkeling is excellent, the hiking trails are extensive and the holding in sand is secure. A bonus is that one can get 3G cell phone coverage in this anchorage. This is a great stop for a few nights of relaxation.

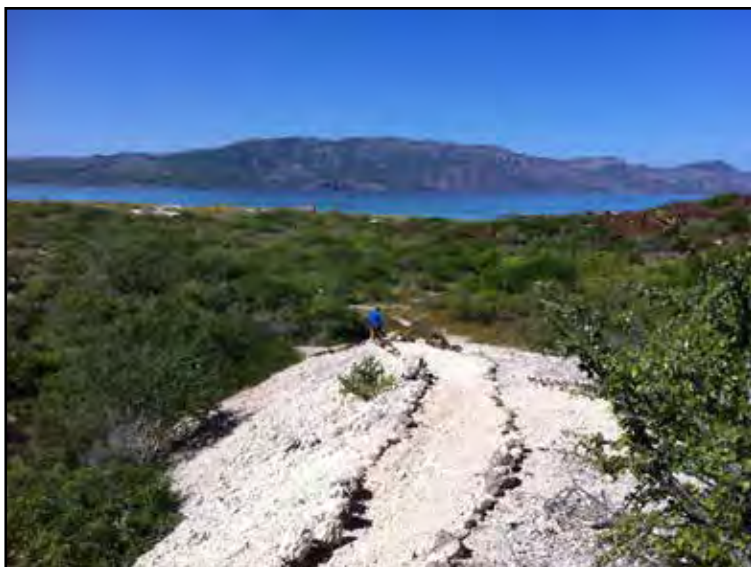
**Puerto Escondido:** This little harbor is a natural hurricane hole and is formed by a low lying ring of hills that opens to the South with a small 200 foot channel. In a strong Norther, the wind can sometimes get through in great strength, but the seas inside stay in the 1-2 foot range due to the short fetch. There is a small dock here, a separate fuel dock, and multiple mooring balls.

One can also anchor out inside this area. This is known as the "inner harbor" and there is a Marina Fonatur charge for using the dock, mooring balls and anchoring. Outside this area is the "waiting room", also well protected from Northers, and the fee here is a reasonable \$1/day, but there is not a lot of room for transient boats.

This "waiting room" area is very popular with the folks who live here long term, due to the low fees and good protection. Puerto Escondido has a small, good restaurant and two nearby small tiendas for restocking. There are clean bathroom facilities here as well as showers.



Desolate views on Isle Coronado.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Hiking trail on Isla Coronado.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Looking north from the hiking trail on Isla Coronado.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*





**MISTY** in Honeymoon Cove on Isla Danzante.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



**MISTY** anchored in Honeymoon Cove.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



An inflatable kayak is used to reach the beach.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*

**Isla Danzante and Isla Carmen:** These are fun islands to explore with a kayak, and on foot, with excellent snorkeling and many nice coves. My favorite anchorage is called Honeymoon Cove and is at the north end of Isla Danzante. It is a tiny, one boat cove with excellent North wind protection and incredible snorkeling. In the morning here, when the water is still, one can look over the side of the boat and see thousands of fish swimming around. The water is a beautiful light turquoise blue and the head of the cove is white sand. This is truly paradise on earth.

**Ensenada Blanca:** This is a small bay south of Isla Danzante that opens to the north. It is really only a good anchorage in either settled weather or southerly winds. Recently, a 5 star resort called Villa de Palmar was constructed here which destroys the isolated wilderness qualities it once had, but does provide good wireless internet and an excellent buffet. Also, for a small fee, cruisers are allowed to access the resorts amenities including the 4 swimming pools. I would have rather seen this remain an unspoiled, undeveloped bay, but since the damage is done, go enjoy the spoils of civilization in this lap of luxury.

**Caleta Candelerero Chico:** This is a tiny wilderness cove with great snorkeling and an isolated feeling. It is big enough only for one boat to swing at anchor, or 2 boats if they both are willing to stern tie. I was at anchor here, swinging freely in this tight spot when, at sunset, a large (40 foot) sailboat came in and tried to anchor nearby with no stern tie. It was clear that this would present a danger to both of our boats and I suggested we both stern tie to avoid a collision in the night. The captain of this vessel decided that he did not want to do this and he left in a huff. This was the only time in Baja that I had to “stand my ground” in a tight anchoring situation. Normally, there is plenty of room for everyone without conflict.

**Bahia Aqua Verde:** This is a small classic fishing village with friendly residents, a small store and a small restaurant to enjoy. This is a very isolated little village and is connected to the outside by a tenuous 26 mile crumbling dirt road that hangs on steep cliffs as it passes through the Sierra Giganta mountains. This has become a “must stop” cruisers anchorage and many people stay here enjoying the isolated fishing village ambience for weeks at a time. There seems to be a sense of shared enjoyment between the cruisers and the village people here, and it would seem that both communities are the better for this.

**San Marte:** This is a beautiful wilderness anchorage, well protected from the normal prevailing NNW winds and can be used in a Norther, but with some swell that wraps around the point which can become uncomfortable. This anchorage is very near several “close-in” reefs located to the east and northeast and requires careful navigation when coming in from the north to avoid these reefs. Once tucked in behind this point, one is left in a serene, quiet, undeveloped paradise with no less than three great beaches and the best snorkeling around.

**Passage Note: San Marte to San Evaristo, the San Jose Channel:** This is a relatively long 42 mile passage that I made from north to south on 2 occasions and it was exciting both times. The first time, I was in San Marte, above, and my SSB radio was not pulling in the weather reports very well. It became progressively more roly in the anchorage overnight and when I awoke, there were 2 foot swells really rocking the boat from a building Norther.

I decided that it was time to go find a safer, more comfortable anchorage. So, I pulled the anchor and headed to the South towards San Evaristo with partially furled jib and reefed main which was sheeted in tight and used mainly for roll stability. Well, the wind continued to build and probably reached 25-30 knots with following seas of 4-6 feet. These conditions were way too powerful for my autopilot to handle so I hand steered this entire 42 miles.



I was solo and the boat was literally surfing to the south, riding the waves at greater than hull speed for the entire trip. It was both quite scary and exhilarating. The winds and seas get really big here because they are being funneled into the San Jose Channel, a body of water constricted between the Baja mainland and the long Isla San Jose.

One has the feeling that if they broach in these conditions that things could get real ugly, real fast. In any event, after 8½ hours of this type of sailing, one then has to turn a hard 90 degrees right to get into the safe San Evaristo anchorage. It is really tricky, I found, to try and reduce sail, get the anchor ready to deploy and then deploy it in a safe position, all the while getting blown around. I made the hard right toward safety, and despite much reduced sail, the boat heeled well over toward the waterline with the high winds on her beam. I continued to fully reduce sail and got the anchor ready to deploy while trying to judge the best place to drop it in this new and unfamiliar anchorage.

I found the ideal spot, deployed the anchor, but by this time the wind had drifted the boat a few hundred feet to port putting me closer to the one other boat that was anchored here. The trusty old Honda 9.9 was put in reverse and I was able to drag backwards and to starboard, set the hook, and avoid the nearness to this other vessel.

By the time all this was accomplished, I was pretty exhausted and felt like I had survived a real adventure. It must have looked quite comical to any observer, but at least everyone survived and there was no damage done.

The other vessel in the anchorage turned out to have a pleasant and helpful sailing couple aboard and they briefed me on the best places to explore and where I could get local food, water and fuel. I have run into this couple several times now and they are like old friends. This is one of the best parts of cruising, in my humble opinion: meeting other cruisers and exchanging information and enjoying each other's company.

Anyway, the second time I did this passage from San Marte to San Evaristo, it was again blowing from the North. The winds started out light, but picked up to 20-25 knots in the San Jose Channel. My wife was with me this trip and this made things a bit easier, especially, when coming into anchor. Still, I did not reduce sail fast enough as the winds built too quickly, and we did have a few minutes of "excitement" and less than total control of the boat before I figured out what to do (reduce sail!).

Going north, up the San Jose Channel was always done in very light or no wind conditions and was mainly a pleasant motoring trip.

**Isla San Francisco, Isla Partida, and Isla Espiritu Santo:** These islands are 25-50 nm north of La Paz and are great places to hang out, hike, kayak, explore and snorkel. They are fully undeveloped and with no commercial amenities.

There are several isolated, beautiful spots to explore and they are relatively uncrowded, especially considering their proximity to La Paz. These islands are part of a protected marine sanctuary and remain mostly wilderness.

One day we were hiking on Isla Partida with another cruising couple and they showed us the hidden location of a very old gravesite from the early 1800's, complete with a large and elaborate granite engraving. This was hidden under a large tree, but the surrounding bushes were partially cleared, and some recent flowers had been placed, indicating that someone locally was still maintaining and honoring this site.

**La Paz:** The city name means "the Peace" and this is truly a tranquil and mellow urban place with a lot to do and see. There is a great



Anchored in Honeymoon Cove, Isla Danzante.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Sharing the Honeymoon Cove area with two other sailboats.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



MISTY from the shore of Honeymoon Cove.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*





Exploring the beach of Isla Coronado with s/y **MISTY** on the hook.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Moonrise over Isla Coronado and s/y **MISTY**.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*

Malecon (walkway by the water) which is used by the city residents as both a social place to hang out as well as a place to exercise.

Here, you will find young families strolling leisurely, teens skateboarding and cruisers and residents jogging or biking for fitness and transportation. The Malecon has many very cool metallic sculptures which depict maritime themes.

There are "big box" stores to the South of town, very similar to Sam's Club and Costco for stocking up on food and supplies. There are also several marine stores for outfitting the boat, although prices are steeper than the US for parts.

In addition, there are three main Marinas in Las Paz, each with its' own unique ambience. The farthest North is the Marina Costa Baja which is quite fancy and expensive with great restaurants and large motor yachts.

To the South of this is Marina Palmira, my favorite marina. This is a beautiful and relatively quiet marina on the outskirts of the main town and is reasonably priced. The people who run this marina are great to work with, honest and fair. One can walk to the downtown area in about 20-30 minutes on the Malecon.

The third major La Paz marina is the Marina de La Paz and this is the one preferred by many hard core cruisers who want to stay downtown where the action is and the parts are near. This marina is quite busy and is in the City Center. I am a person who likes my quiet and space and thus have not stayed here, but I have heard that it is great if you want the true urban experience of a big city.



Isla San Francisco with s/y **MISTY** in the distance.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Southwestern anchorage at Isla San Francisco.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*





Neptune sculpture on the Malecon and the Sea of Cortez in La Paz, Baja California Sur.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



The Old Man and the Sea sculpture on the Malecon in La Paz, Baja California Sur.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



## Part Five: Communication

Iridium Sat Phone to Laptop Setup to get Email and Weather:

For those interested, here is the information for obtaining data from your Iridium Sat Phone and transferring this data to your laptop computer. You will need three items:

First, a "data adaptor" for the Iridium Sat Phone is required. This plugs into the large data port at the bottom of the sat Phone and provides a 9 pin serial port.

Second, a 9 pin Serial Port to USB adaptor is needed so that the data adaptor can plug into the USB port on your computer.

Third, you will need an inexpensive low bandwidth email server that uses data compression, so that you can get the requested data (weather and email) with the minimum Sat Phone Airtime charges. Below are links and information that cover these three items:

Data adapter:

<http://www.bluecosmo.com/iridium-9505-data-adapters-232/?gclid=CL7X8sLCwLQCFcaiPAodGT8Aow>

9 Pin Serial to USB Adaptor:

Digi-Edgeport/1 USB-to-Serial Adapter

<http://www.amazon.com/Digi-Edgeport-Serial-Adapter-EDGEPORT/dp/Boo5VGMDoS>

I was told that this brand of Serial port to USB connector worked the best and that other, less expensive, converters seemed to be unreliable and often will cause the system to malfunction. I had really good luck with this particular item.

Inexpensive Low Bandwidth Email Server that uses Compression Software:

<http://www.satellitephonestore.com/spsmail/info>



Anchored in Honeymoon Cove, Isla Danzante.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*



Honeymoon Cove, did I say this was my favorite anchorage?  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*





San Evaristo Bay.  
Photo: Steve Smith © 2013



San Evaristo Village.  
Photo: Steve Smith © 2013



La Paz, Baja California Sur: the smallest yacht in the marina!  
Photo: Steve Smith © 2013

## Part Six: Sea of Cortez References

There are many great cruising guides for the Sea of Cortez. Below you will find a partial list of the most popular ones:

### Sea of Cortez: A Cruiser's Guide

#### Shawn Breeding and Heather Bansmer

This book is certainly the most up to date, and probably the most helpful, single cruising guide out there. The maps are great, the text is very helpful and the GPS waypoints are "spot on." If you could only bring one book, this one would be the one.

### Baja Boater's Guide Vol. 2: Sea of Cortez

#### Jack Williams

This is an excellent guidebook, somewhat dated but still with much good information.

### Gerry Cunningham Guides and Charts

#### Gerry Cunningham

Gerry Cunningham was a true pioneer and avid sailor who built his own boat and then fearlessly explored every nook and cranny of the Baja Peninsula for several years. He wrote detailed and excellent guidebooks and provided hand drawn local charts that were quite useful. Unfortunately, Gerry passed away in 2010 of heart failure and his materials, though very useful are getting harder to find. His granddaughter, Heather, has taken over the family business, and I believe is still making available his charts and guidebooks. He will be sorely missed.

(Note: A recent e-mail to them was not answered)

### CHARLIE'S CHARTS Western Coast of Mexico including Baja-12th Edition

#### Charles and Margo Wood

This book is chock full of useful information about passage making in Mexico and *does* include Baja. There are great hand drawings of anchorages and landmarks, as well as good practical general advice.

### SPANISH for CRUISERS - The Boater's Complete Language Guide for Spanish-speaking Destinations

#### Kathy Parson

Now in a second edition, this book is **THE** reference for anyone traveling into Mexico and the Sea of Cortez. While there is plenty of information directed toward solving boat related problems, there is a vast amount of information that covers non-boating topics, including basic Spanish, emergencies, navigation, shopping, services, weather, and much more. Going to the Sea of Cortez without this particular reference will make any repair much more difficult.

There are many other great sailing resources for this area, many being several years or decades old, but still useful. I carried the above guides and felt that they provided all the information I needed to safely travel this area. It is often fun to read all of the guides on a particular anchorage or area, and see how the different authors view things. Usually there is good agreement, but some-times there are sharply differing views.

# Water Tank Cover



Setting quite a few new stainless steel screws.  
*Photo: Dick Behan © 2013*



Placing the new gasket material into the edge of the tank.  
*Photo: Dick Behan © 2013*



The new water tank cover is a great upgrade over the plywood.  
*Photo: Dick Behan © 2013*

By Dick Behan  
s/y ROWDY

Armed with good advice from other Flicka sailors, I undertook the removal of the plywood water tank cover in order to clean the tank. When Pacific Seacraft installed my tank top, silicone was apparently smeared across the full width of the rim, and then it squished up around the edge of the plywood as well.

The seam between the fiberglass and the plywood was carefully cut with a two inch circular saw mounted in my cordless drill, but that was only the vertical side of the right angle. Of course, I couldn't reach the horizontal side of silicone beneath the plywood. When I tried prying the plywood panel it simply cracked and buckled. I'd be amazed if anyone could complete this project and keep the cover intact.

The tank cover was so thoroughly glued down with silicone I finally resorted to a small crowbar, a saber saw, and not a little bit of purple language. I utterly trashed the old tank cover, but now the tank could be cleaned. And what a mess it was: black slime and goo, but it washed up nicely.

I thought long and hard about how and what to use to replace the old tank cover. To make it easier to clean the tank next time, I wanted a cover that would be easy to remove, and so rejected anything that would have to be bedded in any sort of sealant. So I fashioned a new tank cover with 1/2" StarBoard, a high density plastic commonly used to make cutting boards. It was heavy, stable, stiff, and easy to shape.

After most of a day spent cleaning the old silicone from the rim of the tank, I filled the old screw holes with thickened epoxy. I fitted the new cover--with a lot of filing and smoothing--and then drilled new screw holes through it and the tank rim. Setting the cover aside, I installed foam rubber gasket material around the rim. It was "D" shaped in cross section, about 1/2" wide, and had an adhesive strip along the flat side of the D. I found the stuff at our local boatyard.

The StarBoard tank cover was heavy enough to compress the gasket quite a bit even without the screws. I poked an awl down through each screw hole to puncture small holes into the gasket material, and installed the screws. The original screws were slotted flatheads; I replaced them with 1-1/2" x 10 Phillips head ovals which were far easier to install with a cordless drill.

Next I filled the tank to the very top, rolled the Flicka back and forth as vigorously as I could. Not a drop of water appeared anywhere around the top of the tank cover. When it's time to clean the tank, I'll just remove the screws and lift off the cover.

I'm pleased with the way the project worked out. I didn't reinforce the StarBoard, because the fore-and-aft dimension of the tank's baffle is about three to four inches, and its top surface is level with the tank's rim. The StarBoard, then, rests on top of the baffle, so it can't flex. Your tank could have a different baffle.

The hoses were fairly clean. The vent hose, of course, you can reach in the storage locker aft of the water tank. The feed hose to the galley sink is not so accessible, so I ran a small bottle brush into it from both ends. I would have liked to replace it, and I'm thinking about cutting an access port into the bottom of the bottom locker under the range to get at it.

What would you think of that? Well, as a friend of mine says in the midst of such tedious projects, "It's all boating!"



# DC Control Bracket

By **Randy Richardson**  
s/y ZANZIBAR

The only thing I didn't like about my new Flicka was the location of the fuel shut off lever which was mounted under the starboard cockpit seat.

Last summer, I was on a friend's Dana and noticed its fuel cut-off lever was mounted in a heavy duty bracket on the cockpit wall. I thought "Now that's what **ZANZIBAR** needs." I'm pretty neurotic about wanting my Flicka to be as "factory original" as possible but I felt this was a worthy deviation and, if Pacific Seacraft thought it was good enough for their Dana, that was good enough for me.

So, step one was to find the mounting bracket. I contacted Seacraft Yachts for information and didn't think Seacraft would take the time to respond to my trivial request. Within a day or two, I got a nice email from them letting me know Fisheries Supplies was the mounting bracket's supplier. Once on Fisheries site, I found the bracket using "control cables" in their search window. The item is Morse DC Control mounting bracket and the price is \$33.06.

<http://www.fisheriessupply.com/>

With the mounting bracket in hand, I was ready to begin the modification. I chose a location just below the Yanmar instrument panel to install the bracket. I removed the panel and examined the space between the cockpit wall and the outer hull to see if there was enough room to route the cable through. It looked good so I disconnected the cable from its' mounting under the seat and trial-routed it to the proposed location. To my surprise the existing cable was long enough.

Now for the really hard part: drilling a hole in my beautiful boat! I measured several times, wiped the perspiration from my brow, took a deep breath, and drilled a clearance hole for the cable- rocking the drill up and down to elongate the hole vertically to match the angle of the bracket.

Next, I drilled the four small bracket mounting holes, filled them with life caulk, and installed the bracket. Finally, I routed cable through the new bracket, tightened the jamb nuts, and reinstalled the "T" handle.

As hard as it was to drill a hole in my boat, I am glad I did the modification. It fixed my one complaint about the Flicka: needing to open the cockpit seat to shut down the engine. I think it looks good, works great, and matches the Flicka's high quality level.

The fuel shut-off lever was relocated into the cockpit of s/y ZANZIBAR.  
*Photo: Tom Davison © 2013*

# Finding Motu in Santa Barbara



Nor'Star Flicka # 20, s/y **MOTU** at the docks in Santa Barbara, California.

*Photo: Clint Lewis © 2013*

**By Clint Lewis**  
*s/y MOTU*

This is the story of how a Colorado resident ended up with a Flicka, permanently berthed in a 20 foot slip located in Santa Barbara, California.

## Finding MOTU

I was familiar and fond of Santa Barbara since attending commercial diving school there in the late 1970s. The school overlooks the marina and we students spent much time inspecting the boats and enjoying the Pacific seacoast lifestyle. After leaving school I returned often to visit old friends, take sailing lessons, and unthaw in the temperate coastal city. A chain of eight islands known as the Channel Islands of California beckon the sailor; four of them are located 20 nautical miles directly off the Santa Barbara coast.

Knowledge of the Flicka started when I entered a 20 foot slip lottery (the City of Santa Barbara owns the marina) on advice of a friend who had a boat in the harbor. Getting a 20 foot slip assignment from the city saves four to eight thousand dollars over buying an existing slip at a premium from an existing slip holder. Typically you must also buy, at a premium, the slip holder's boat, a boat you may not care for only to have to get rid of it to put in your desired boat. But the monthly cost of the slip is a reasonable \$180.

Blue water sailing was part of my experience when I entered the lottery (2008), and my friend pointed out several Flickas in the marina as seaworthy vessels. In early 2012, I was number three on the lottery list when two 20 foot slips became available for lottery assignment. My friend, who knew the number

two person on the list, called to let me know that person was going to decline in favor of a larger slip. Uh Oh! It was time to locate a boat as the city only allows three months to occupy an assigned slip.

I'd looked at **MOTU**, Nor'star hull number 20 in the marina six months earlier, but thought the asking price too high at the time. I posted on the Flicka Yahoo group that I was looking for a Flicka and received quite a few replies. All were nice boats. Once I started looking into shipping a Flicka however, I found the cost and the time factor to be prohibitive.

When I discovered **MOTU** was still for sale through a broker, I made an offer from my home base in Colorado that was accepted. Total cost for the boat, slip assignment fee, and taxes was \$20,000. **MOTU** only had to move a single row into my newly assigned slip.





The first three week visit was spent triaging, cleaning, and inspecting my Flicka s/y **MOTU**.

*Photo: Clint Lewis © 2013*



Heading out to the oil rigs near Santa Barbara, California aboard s/y **MOTU**.

*Photo: Clint Lewis © 2013*

A bonus was that she already had a hinged bowsprit, a requirement to fit her within the allowed 22 foot maximum length rule for 20 foot slips.

#### **Getting to know MOTU**

**MOTU** was the last Flicka hull produced by Nor'star, a Santa Barbara company at the time, not to be confused with Norstar Boats in Bellingham Washington. **MOTU's** HIN, NSB200201276, suggests she was finished in December 1976. Many Nor'star hulls were finished out by the owners, and some by Westerly Marine, a company still in business in Santa Ana. **MOTU** is owner finished and I am the fifth owner.

I spent my first three week visit with **MOTU** triaging, cleaning, and inspecting. From the [Flicka20.com website](http://Flicka20.com), I learned much about **MOTU** and the adventures she enjoyed with Bill Barnes down in Mexico. Looking at the website pictures provided by Mr. Barnes, it appears most of the original gear, both interior and electronics, is what is currently aboard **MOTU**.

Other than tuning the outboard, replacing the battery, obtaining a dingy and adding safety gear required by the Coast Guard, I've had to do little to prepare her for light sailing. I've since taken a couple two week trips to visit **MOTU**. I installed a Victron battery monitor and new interior LED lights. Her biggest issues are mostly cosmetic. With no thru-hulls below the water line I feel fairly comfortable leaving her in the water for long periods, though an automatic bilge pump is on my list. Nearby live-aboard friends keep an eye on her as well.

I've done many single-handed day sailing trips during my visits and my first multiple day island trip is scheduled for October 2013. I hope to provide a report for Flicka Friends.



# Two Flickas on Grand Traverse Bay



Flicka # 387, s/y **ZANZIBAR** and Flicka # 315, s/y **BEN MAIN, Jr.** docked in Suttons Bay Marina, MI in July 2012.  
*Photo: Tom Davison © 2012*

**By Tom Davison**  
 s/y **BLUE SKIES**

The idea of sailing with another Flicka is always appealing. Until recently, this wasn't possible on Grand Traverse Bay. That changed two years ago when Randy Richardson purchased Pacific Seacraft Flicka # 387 and brought her to Michigan from Maine. He named his Flicka s/y **ZANZIBAR**.

Last summer, Randy and I joined Tom Grimes and his Flicka s/y **BEN MAIN, Jr.** for an overnight trip. It was the first time that the two Flicka captains had the chance to sail together. The July trip was planned with Northport Marina as the destination.

The trip would be made with a bit of musical boats. Randy and I'd sail to Suttons Bay aboard **ZANZIBAR**. From Suttons Bay to Northport, Randy would join Tom Grimes aboard **BEN MAIN, Jr.** and I'd sail alone on **ZANZIBAR**. On the return trip, I'd sail aboard **BEN MAIN, Jr.** with Tom to Suttons Bay.

The goal was to allow Randy to sail aboard a gaff-rigged Flicka and to double-hand **BEN MAIN, Jr.** the way north. The next day, Randy would head straight back to his marina rather than detour into Suttons Bay.

The first part of the trip was aboard **ZANZIBAR** where Randy Richardson and I motored north in very clam conditions. The trip began at his marina in Elmwood Township. After turning north at Red Num Buoy Eight, we settled in for a long leg with the autopilot steering. It was a lazy, but direct way to get from one marina to the next.

**Suttons Bay** - Lunch was planned and we walked into town to eat. The restaurant was formerly a fire house and offered fairly standard offerings for lunch. Back at the marina, we headed out in the Flickas. Leaving the marina, both Flickas motored out into the bay before setting the sails. I stopped about one hundred yards short of the other Flicka to take a series of telephoto images. After raising the sails, we both tacked up the bay toward the

open waters of Grand Traverse Bay. Initially, this distance didn't seem like very much. That would change considerably later in the day.

After working up the bay, little progress was being made to close the distance. The different starting point also meant we were sailing in slightly different areas of the bay. In several places I ran out of water as I approached the side of the bay and had to tack away. The other Flicka was far enough ahead to clear a point that I could not and it cost me a couple of extra tacks.

As we entered the open bay from Suttons Bay, I set my course a bit lower. Lower and slightly faster was my plan and I was moving past the other Flicka slowly but making ground none the less. They were a couple of hundred yards to the north, but I was moving slightly faster. This extra distance was something that would make all the difference in another hour. Turning north, we both tracked very close to the twenty-five foot line trying to shorten the distance to the marina as much as we could.





Motoring on the way north to Suttons Bay aboard s/y **ZANZIBAR**.  
*Photo: Tom Davison © 2012*



**ZANZIBAR** motoring south toward Traverse City from Northport.  
*Photo: Tom Davison © 2012*

Since the two sailboats were nearly identical, it was difficult to make up additional ground that I created by stopping to take photos after clearing the harbor. Taking photos along the way wasted a little more time and added a bit to the gap. At least Tom has a great photo for his wall of Flicka photos. It is the same image that was on the Flicka 20 Home Page.

Then an unwelcome wind shift moved the wind around to the west and it left me without any wind. Looking forward, I noticed that their sails were on the opposite side of the Flicka. We were both against a tree lined shore with several hills. **BEN MAIN, Jr.** was just far enough ahead to be beyond higher terrain and to stay in some wind. Conditions were real light, but they continued on nearly the same compass heading. Then, the wind died. Sitting becalmed allowed them to sail away while I didn't have enough wind to even point in the right direction. After ten minutes, the wind finally returned and there was enough to turn back to the north and continue on.

The wind direction had changed enough to require a tack away from shore, something that pointed me away from the destination as well. There wasn't much I could do about this short of motoring. The gray Flicka was well away from me and there were few options. After tacking back, I continued north in pursuit of the other Flicka. It was slow going and the gap was considerable. While I initially refused to motor, the typical dying winds of this bay were upon me.

The lower and faster course appeared to take a second seat to the point as high as you can game plan. I wonder how well I would have done if the wind direction remained constant throughout the afternoon. This is a perfect excuse to get these two Flickas together again with a closer start next time.

It felt like a country mile separated us by the time I reached the marina. I had been thoroughly skunked by the wind and the other Flicka. They would be the recipients of the "Flicka Cup" and I was only the distant second place finisher. We crawled into Northport once before in the late afternoon on our way to Charlevoix in 2008. The winds dropped steadily to allow only a knot or two of movement under sail. Today was only a little better. Sailing in the lower bay or even in the middle latitudes of the bay appear to offer better winds.

Finally, I gave up and cranked the iron genoa and made it into Northport Marina. They were just done with tying up and helped with my lines. After docking next to the "faster" Flicka, we headed into town for dinner. Tom's experience with small boat racing was put to good use. As a cruiser, I've never really sailed with another identical sailboat. It was obvious how important the start can be in sailboat racing.

Leaving Northport the following morning found us in light winds again. Tom and I opted to sail the entire way to Suttons Bay. Randy had nearly twice the distance to cover and he hauled in the sails and motored south.

Aboard **BEN MAIN, Jr.**, we continued to search for more wind. It was a slow trip back, but one made completely under sail. Much of the way was done with speeds around three to four knots, but this dropped below three as we entered Suttons Bay. We poled out the genoa in an effort to find some more speed and it worked well enough. We were not in a hurry and were doing the "going nowhere slowly" thing. As we approached the docks, the wind increased and we did some fine sailing, but only over the last half-mile or so. Despite the wind conditions, it was another great day of Flicka sailing.





**BEN MAIN, Jr.** turning north near Omena Point, Grand Traverse Bay, Michigan.  
*Photo: Tom Davison © 2012*



Flickas s/y **BEN MAIN, Jr.** and s/y **ZANZIBAR** along the south wall of the marina in Northport, Michigan.  
*Photo: Tom Davison © 2012*





Flicka # 315, a gaffed rigged cutter, s/y **BEN MAIN, Jr.** near Northport, Michigan on the way to Suttons Bay.  
*Photo: Tom Davison © 2012*



Flicka # 387, s/y **ZANZIBAR** headed south toward Traverse City from Northport, Michigan.  
*Photo: Tom Davison © 2012*



# G. Marsten Dame Marina

## Northport, Michigan

45° 07' 48" North , 85° 36' 38" West



Located at the north end of Grand Traverse Bay, Northport Marina is the jumping off point for other ports on Lake Michigan.

*Photo: Tom Davison © 2012*

**By Tom Davison**  
s/y *BLUE SKIES*

On a number of occasions, Northport Marina has been a destination and a few times it has been a stop over point for a longer trips that have appeared in earlier issues of this newsletter. The marina is the closest to the Great Circle Route on Grand Traverse Bay. Charlevoix is the next marina to the east and Leland is the next marina to the west. Some venture south into the bay, but many "loopers" continue along the route knocking off mile after mile in quest of the grand circuit.

Most of the marina has been rebuilt recently. The dock office was completed in 2011, and over the winter of 2011-2012, the other buildings were replaced. The fixed docks are about the only thing that could be improved. The decreasing levels of Lake Michigan make getting in and out of your sailboat a little more difficult than some of the other marinas on the bay that have upgraded to floating docks.

These new buildings have white walls and red roofs, something that makes them stand out from the other structures on the shore. This was helpful that last time we entered the

harbor while looking into the setting sun. Just keep in mind the the harbor entrance is on the north end of the breakwall and the channel, while accommodating large ships is shallow along the starboard side when entering

The small town of Northport has many of the services that a cruising sailboat would need. Besides the post office, grocery store, and restaurants, there are a number of full service marinas just north of the harbor. This includes one of the few travel-lifts on the bay. As a destination or stop-over, Northport is a great place to spend some time.





A new boardwalk was installed in 2012.  
*Photo: Tom Davison © 2013*



The marina office was replaced in 2011, the rest of the buildings in 2012.  
*Photo: Tom Davison © 2013*



Google Earth image of G. Marsten Dame Marina during reconstruction.  
*Photo: Google earth © 2013*

Services / Information	
Location	Michigan
Latitude	45° 07' 48"
Longitude	85° 36' 38"
Boat Ramp	Yes
Boat Slips / Transients	100 / 67
Boat Draft	10' - 8'
Boat Slip Length	
Boat Storage	Nearby
Brokerage	No
Cable TV	No
Carts for Marina Use	Yes
Concession / Vending	No
Customs	No
Diesel	Yes
Electrical 30/50/Smart Plug	Yes/Yes/No
Fish Cleaning Station	Yes
Garbage / Waste	Yes
Gasoline	Yes
Ice / Groceries	0.25 Mile
Internet / Wi-Fi	Yes
Laundry	Yes
Launch Fee	Yes
Lodging	Yes
Mooring / Dinghy Dock	No / Yes
Post Office	Yes
Pump-Out	Yes
Repairs	1.0 Mile
Restrooms	Yes
Restaurant	Yes - 0.5 Mile
Safe Harbor	Yes
Security / Gated Access	No
Ship's Store	No
Showers	Yes
Telephone	Yes
Towing	No
Trailer Storage	Limited
Travel-Lift	1.0 Mile
Water Hookup	Yes

# Traveler Upgrade



The stock mainsheet traveler of the Flicka on s/y **ZANZIBAR**.  
*Photo: Tom Davison © 2013*



The bronze tubular jam cleats aboard s/y **BLUE SKIES**.  
*Photo: Tom Davison © 2013*

*By Tom Davison*  
*s/y BLUE SKIES*

Last fall, I purchased Pacific Seacraft Flicka # 314. While putting together a trip to see my new sailboat, I got to thinking about various systems. One of the things that I would suspect many Flicka captains and crew members find annoying is the traveler setup. While serviceable, many find that it takes two hands to keep the ropes from jamming while moving the traveler from port to starboard and back.

While doing some research on my pending trip to Washington, I noticed a refitting company that specialized in rails for boat. This got me to thinking about how to attach a traveler rail to the stern pulpit of the Flicka. The initial e-mail to them resulted in a response with considerable interest in assisting me. My reply

detailed a number of possible solutions. They were quite willing to take on my project.

**Option A** - One was drilling holes into the rail and then lining the holes with stainless steel to seal them. These lined holes would be used to connect bolts to the standard slots in a traveler rail. This would be strong and seal the drilled holes. The downside would be the damage to the chrome during the installation.

**Option B** - Another course would be the design of fittings or brackets that would connect the stern rail to a standard traveler system offered by Harken and others. The best thing about this design would be the bolt on nature of installation rather than the drill, weld, and chrome option above.

**Option C** - As it turned out, there was another option and it was already installed on my

“new” Flicka. The two v-cleats found on nearly every Flicka out there had been replaced with bronze tube cams. The installation was easy and required only two screws into the stainless steel stern rail.

After sailing a couple of times with them, I found them to be a big improvement. The only downside of having them is that they are bronze. While the patina matches the rest of my bronze, if I ever get back to freshwater, they will be another thing to polish.

The part is called a tubular jam cleat and are from by Davey & Company. They manufacture right-hand and left-hand tubular jam-cleats to allow installation at either end of the Flicka stern rail. This will require drilling holes to retain the cleat and using # 8 fasteners. Cost is roughly \$34.00 each from the Wooden Boat Chandlery in Port Townsend, WA.



# Mariscos El Toro Guero

*Great Food in San Jose del Cabo, Baja California Sur*

*23° 07' 43.95" North, 109° 42' 38.38" West*



While not very close to the marina in San Jose del Cabo, the trip to Mariscos El Toro Guero is worth the trouble.

*Photo: Tom Davison © 2012*

**By Tom Davison**  
s/y **BLUE SKIES**

In the spring of 2012, Betsy and I decided to get out of the cold weather and travel south to somewhere warm. That ended up being San Jose del Cabo in Baja California Sur.

Shortly before leaving, we discovered a TV show hosted by Rick Bayless on a cooking channel titled "How to eat like a local in Cabo San Lucas." He had plenty of tips and mentioned a number of different places to eat. We wrote them down and decided to look them up while there.

On the second day, we drove north from the Sea of Cortez on Highway One and located Mariscos El Toro Guero near the airport. It was on the right (south) side of the road on a hill with a dirt road access. After turning off and parking, we found that the building was a simple open air structure with a palm roof and

a low cinder block wall. There were a bunch of tables and lots of plastic chairs which seem to be common for restaurants here.

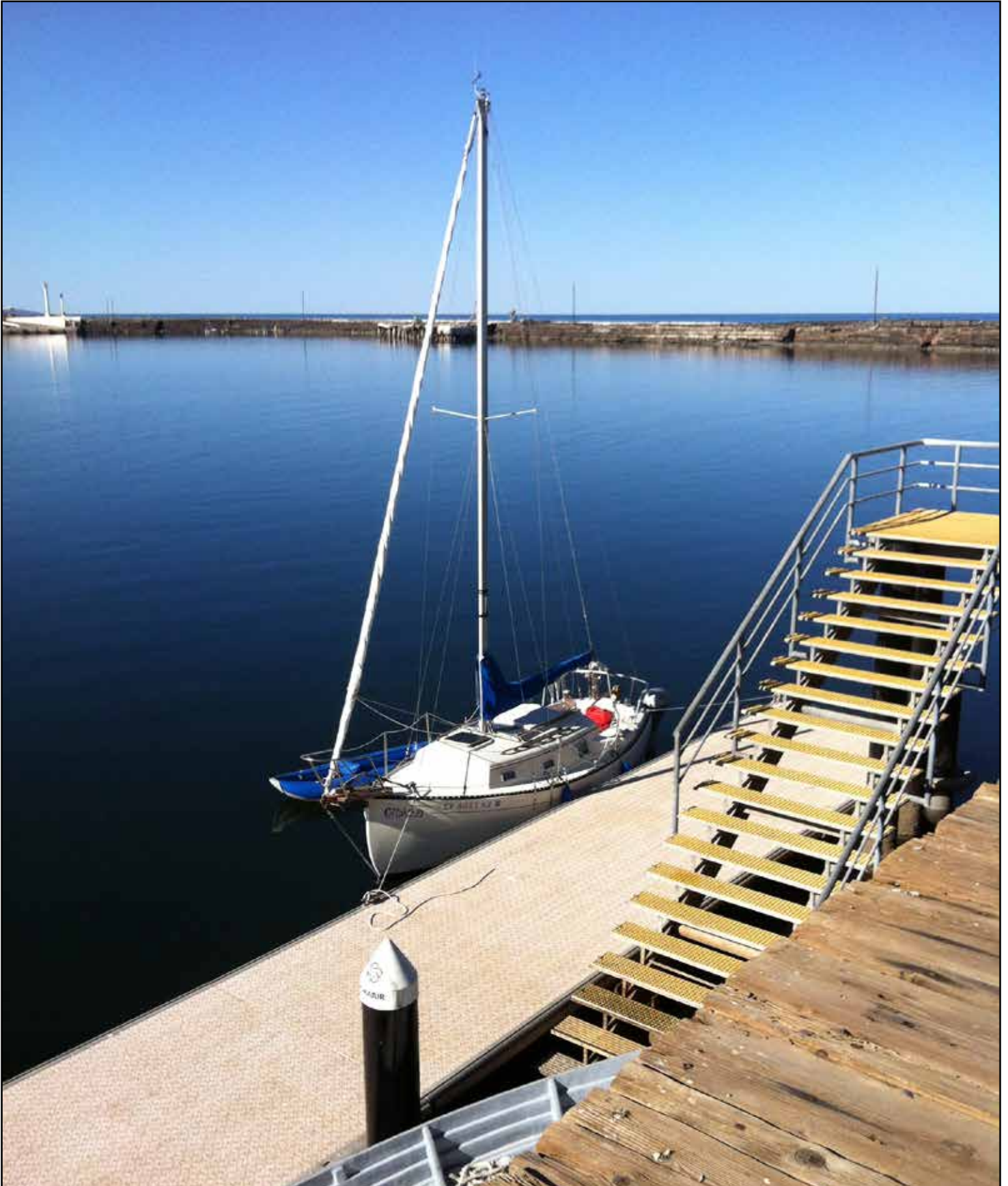
We walked in and were seated by a waiter who turned out to be the only English speaking person on their staff. He welcomed us and quickly asked how we found his restaurant. We told him about the TV show and joked that we had flown all the way from Michigan to eat here. We booked the vacation for the Cabo area and really had planned on looking for Mariscos El Toro Guero as a bonus to being in Baja's warm climate.

We ordered tostadas and were served three separate ones: crab, shrimp, and marlin. To say that it was good was an understatement. It was likely all of the seafood was in the Sea of Cortez only yesterday. We enjoyed the modest accommodations and the fine local food. When we were done, our bill totaled 220

Pesos, a real deal at thirteen Mexican Pesos to the one United States dollar! Over the last year, the exchange rate has fluctuated between twelve and fourteen pesos per dollar.

During our stay along the Corridor (the area between San Jose del Cabo and Cabo San Lucas, we managed to drive over two more times for lunch. It was roughly eight miles from our hotel and six miles from the marina in San Jose del Cabo. The driving was a bit slow through town, but the great food made the trip worth our time. It would also be worth the trouble to travel from the marina as well.

Since the only English speaking waiter was on his day off, we struggled a bit with ordering on the last visit. The menus don't include English translations, and phrase books didn't help. We wished for a basic English-Spanish dictionary. Often the meaning of a single word will help you get you order your meal.



**MISTY** at the dock at Santa Rosalia, Baja California Sur, Mexico.  
*Photo: Steve Smith © 2013*