

Flicka Friends

Summer 2003



Vol. 8, No. 2



Pacific Seacraft Flicka No. 1



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- Lowering the Mast
- Setting up a Flicka Trailer
- Buying a Trailer for your Flicka

Cover Photos

FRONT COVER:
**First day on the water for
 Pacific Seacraft Flicka No. 1.**
*Photo: © Bruce P. Bingham
 1978, 2003.*

BACK COVER:
**Flicka No. 1 in the launch
 way of Pacific Seacraft.**
*Photo: © Bruce P. Bingham
 1978, 2003.*

From the Editor



THE NEXT ISSUE...

Above is Tom Grimes' Flicka s/y BEN MAIN Jr. at the Northport Bay Boatyard in Northport, Michigan. There is a new trailer not more than 100 yards away. The next issue will contain a series of articles about trailering Flickas. There is still room for additional articles and/or photos relating to trailering a Flicka; please let me know.

© Tom Davison 2003

By Tom Davison

The Summer issue of Flicka Friends is a little late. With 26 pages, I hope that the wait was worth it.

For the last five months, I've been spending a little too much time standing in a river fly fishing. Through the summer, I gradually found that many of the fish in the river only require a three weight line, rod, and reel. The fish included Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, and in the fall; Coho. The weather is now getting colder and the leaves are gone from the trees. The temperatures are making it more difficult to stand in the middle of a river with a fly rod.

This issue of Flicka Friends contains two new articles from Bruce P. Bingham about the Flicka. The first is about sailing s/y **SABRINA** around Long Island in 1978. The second is about

launching the first Pacific Seacraft Flicka. Thanks to Bruce for providing the articles and photographs of the early Flicka years.

Recently, I helped Flicka owner Tom Grimes (**BEN MAIN, Jr.—# 315**) with setting his Flicka on a new trailer. This was an interesting process and there are a number of recommendations in the next issue. The Fall issue of Flicka Friends will be dedicated to Flickas and trailering. If you have an article and/or image to contribute, please do so.

Finally, it is my honor to thank Bruce P. Bingham for sending two new Flicka stories. His words and images fill many of the pages within this issue. I'm quite sure that anyone interested in his fine little yacht will read them at one sitting.

Thanks, Bruce!





Shroud Modification



Mast Lower Modification aboard s/y HOTSPUR.
© Eric Jungemann 2003

By Eric Jungemann
s/y *HOTSPUR*

This project is about an upper shroud modification for mast lowering. It is sort of an improvement on the Bruce Bingham drawings in his Sketchbook that also works very well but are not as rugged and ready for action (befitting a Flicka).

Essentially, the upper has been cut and reassembled with two Norseman fittings sandwiching the new pivot fitting. The pivot point on the uppers is in a plane with the tabernacle as measured from the Norseman fitting at the top of the triangle.

The pivot hardware piece form a triangle of stainless steel with four holes. D-shackles and plastic washers act as fillers and reducing wear securing each corner hole. The triangle is formed with two standard split backstay fittings put together for strength and thickness.

The uppermost D-shackle (in the picture, aft is to the right) is used for Spectra lines with small stainless clips on each side that go back to the boom aft end bail both port and starboard for stabilizing the side loads

when the mast is lowered. The lower D-shackles on the fitting have some Spectra on them that goes down to the base of the lowers (forward and aft . . . mine are secured with D-shackles instead of pins for this reason) on each side to hold the pivot point in place and prevent bending of the hardware pieces that aren't designed to move. So, this set up has the advantages of the Bingham system but the only pieces that are added for mast lowering are the clip on lines that stabilize the boom.

Otherwise, it is ready to lower the mast at any time. All you do is clip on the boom stabilization lines, release the two backstays, release the aft lowers, detach the headstay or furler, and lower away from the mainsheet. This was designed for me by Bruce Schwab who is currently skippering Ocean Planet on the Around Alone race:

<http://www.oceanplanet.org>
<http://www.aroundalone.com>

This was one of the improvements we made during re-rigging the boat after a dozen years of use on the original factory rig. We went to an all Norseman approach but this setup can be retrofitted to any Flicka.

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 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.

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 4340 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.

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Dennis Pratt/Flicka Friends

Dennis Pratt - Publisher
685 Spring Street, #191
Friday Harbor, WA 98250
(360) 370-5133
scamper@rockisland.com

Tom Davison - Editor
P.O. Box 462
Empire, MI 49630-0462
(231) 326-6011
flickafriends@coslink.com

<http://www.coslink/personal/flickafriends/mainpage/index.html>





Sabrina's Round Long Island Race

by Bruce Bingham
s/y *SABRINA*

I'd lived aboard my schooner, *At Last*, for two years (1977, 1978) in Oyster Bay, New York, on the north shore of Long Island. I'd become totally exhausted and discouraged from the extensive and non-stop reconstruction from keel to truck, and was really obsessing on the need to go sailing. Pacific Seacraft had been in full production of the Flicka, and I thought about how nice it would be to have a boat with live-aboard capability but didn't require so much work. Spring was coming and the ice was showing signs of breaking up in the bay. I didn't relish another summer of endless toil while everyone else seemed to be slipping their moorings.

I called Henry at Pacific Seacraft and made a deal to convert some of my royalties into a Flicka. He was anxious for me to have one, and was willing to make some changes and add features that I wanted on my own boat. I also offered to take my Flicka to the fall east-coast boat shows. It was a win-win for everyone. I mentioned that I would be interested in taking a shot at the 'Round Long Island Race if the boat could be delivered in time. He liked the idea because it might provide Pacific Seacraft with some publicity, especially if the Flicka could finish respectively. I gave him my specifications and sketches and we shook hands over lunch at a Newport Beach crab house.

Initial Preparations

Before *Sabrina* was finished at the PS plant, I asked that the stanchions and pulpits be specially fabricated to a height of 24 inches to conform to the International Offshore Racing Conference safety rules. Pacific Seacraft reluctantly complied. I hadn't been pleased with the quality or cut of sails that were standard equipment, and I



Katy Burke swings the Champaign as Jack Hanson, Pacific Seacraft Sales Manager, prepares to hoist the owner's flag.

© Bruce P. Bingham 1978 & 2003.

didn't want them, so I was given a modest credit for the main and jib. I went to Bill Shore (Shore Sails) in Newport, RI for all of my sails which included a mains'l with double reefs, and a stretchy foot pocket (the lower horizontal panel was nylon so the foot of the sail could be stretched to flatten the sail or retracted to belly the sail) and longer than standard battens (IORC maximum).

Shore also built horizontal-paneled 135% and 110% Genoas with leach lines, horizontal-cut 100% working jib, a light reaching stays'l, storm tris'l, storm jib, and a very light 150% radial reacher/drifter. The Shore loft also removed a single foot panel from a used Shields Class spinnaker, making the sail measure-in almost perfectly. The mains'l, Genoas, jib, reaching stays'l, and reacher/drifter were designed on a computer that allowed you to actually watch the air flow at any height, any point of sail, and in any velocity of

wind. It was fascinating to watch this design process. This program also helped to accurately locate the transverse and longitudinal coordinates for all sheet leads for a wide range of wind speeds and points of sail. All of my sails were made with maximum allowable foot roaches and luff lengths which Pacific Seacraft had refused to provide.

While the sails were being made, I began to assemble special hardware that would be installed as soon as *Sabrina* arrived in Oyster Bay, Long Island. I had the help of Jim Miller, an international multi-sailing champion (Thistles, Stars, IODs, S Boats, I-14s, Shields, and Penguins) and owner of the Oyster Bay Boat Shop, a great little place that specialized in high-tech rigging systems and racing hardware. I gathered the necessary gear to internalize all mast and boom systems (main top'n'lift, main out haul, reefing lines, and all halyards) to reduce air turbu-





lence and eliminate a lot of exposed lines. Spinnaker pole parts, inboard stays'l sheet blocks and track, extra Genoa sheet snatch blocks, main sheet traveler system, boom vang and necessary bales, spinnaker pole mast track, extra small sheet and halyard winches were all laid out, labeled, bagged with the required fastenings, and set aside to await the arrival of my boat. Twin bulkhead compasses, hand bearing compass, ADF, VHF, CB (with associated antennae), hull speed/distance log and depth sounder were also inventoried.

To reduce some underbody drag, I laminated several layers of Kevlar and cut them into 5-inch strips that would be sheet-metal screwed to the keel trailing edge to cover the gap between keel and rudder. Another V-shaped laminate would be attached to the trailing edge of the rudder to sharpen its otherwise blunt shape.

I was able to borrow the required offshore survival raft that would be stowed in the cockpit. All other safety equipment, galley utensils, navigation tools, charts, etc, would be transferred from *At Last* (which I still owned). The five-horse Seagull outboard and outboard bracket had arrived and were



SABRINA close reaches in light air.
© Bruce P. Bingham 1978 & 2003.

ready to be installed. Heads'l sheets were made up and coiled, and the ground tackle flaked in preparation to being lowered through the chain pipe.

I'd ordered red vinyl bottom paint to be applied to *Sabrina* at the plant. I specified that the paint be brushed on, not rolled, to avoid the typical high-drag orange-peel finish. Jack Hanson, one of Pacific Seacraft's first Sales Managers, was flown to Oyster Bay to give me a extra hand with the commissioning. The race entry forms along with a PHRF rating certificate and safety compliance affidavit had already been sent to the Port Washington Race Committee. Now we waited for *Sabrina* to roll into The Oyster Bay Yacht Service.



Jan, John, Ray enjoy a nice breeze on the weather side.
© Bruce P. Bingham 1978 & 2003.

Arrival and Panic

Sabrina showed up ten days late. There was less than two weeks to install all of the new hardware; try out sails; stow food, safety gear, and cloths; get in a couple of practices with my crew; and have the official Christening ceremony before heading to New York and Coney Island where the race was to start late on Friday afternoon.

To my horror, *Sabrina's* bottom had been painted with rollers and she was rougher than a cob. I immediately hired a half dozed high-school kids to completely strip the new paint. This had to be done with solvents and wooden scrapers to prevent damaging or abrading the original shiny gelcoat. We must have gone through fifteen cases of paper towel and ten gallons of lacquer thinner.

Katy Burke, my sailing partner, had made all of the arrangements for the Christening. She got hold of my friend and editor of *Boating Magazine*, Tom Bottomly, who also happened to be a Scottish piper. He was honored to attend the event with several of his other pipers and drummers in full Highland regalia. Many of our friends and associates from *Sail, Yachting, Cruising World, Motor Boating and Sailing, Rudder*, and *Small Boat Journal* would also attend as well as con-

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tingents from the New York Times and other newspapers. Several hundred specially printed invitations had been sent weeks before, so we expected a large crowd.

On the Saturday morning of *Sabrina's* Christening, about 200 hundred people showed up. My Trinka dinghy had been placed on the lawn, fill with ice, and loaded with beer and soft drinks. Tables with salads, sandwiches, finger food, and mounds of shrimp and fresh muscles kept appetites appeased until the drones of pipes announced that it was time to give my beautiful boat her name. All followed the pipers and drummers to the end of the dock where Katy Christened *Sabrina* with a whack of the champagne. All shouted with joy then began to tear as the strains of Amazing Grace began to waft across the harbor.

By 1 pm, we were back to work getting *Sabrina* ready for her first sail and eminent departure for the race. The next couple of days would be hectic to say the least. Jack Hanson work like a dog and ran what seemed to be a hundred errands.

Expand on reduction of weight: leaving Corel dishes in favor of paper plates ... plastic substituted for stainless ware ... only minimum water (1 gal per person per day as IORC rules ... only bedding for two ... no port-potty ... minimum cooking utensils ... sail covers and sail bags left behind ... no bottled soft drinks (only in lighter cans) minimum ground tackle ... no awning, no Bimini ... all but one battery would stay aboard (others would be removed at Coney Island)...fenders would be left ashore at Coney Island as would gas jugs and outboard.



Jan and Jay snoozing along downwind.
© Bruce P. Bingham 1978 & 2003.



Jan, John, and Ray riding the weather rail on a beam reach. It just can't get better than this.
© Bruce P. Bingham 1978 & 2003.

The crew and I sailed every afternoon to work out our routines and to get a feel for the boat. One day, Phil (Bodey) Rhodes, jr. (a very well known naval architect in his own right and son of the famous NA, Philip Rhodes) came by and we went for a sail together. He just couldn't believe how fast my fat little boat was. He offered a theory for why *Sabrina* was able to exceed her mathematical hull speed; he said, "I think the boat is fooling the water into believing that a longer hull is passing through!"

Two friends, Bruce McPherson and Dianna Russell, from the yacht design firm of Sparkman & Stephens also came by and we went for a spin in the bay. They were dumbfounded by *Sabrina's* ability to accelerate in a puff and keep up a good clip in very light air. Frank (Francis) Kinney (author of *Elements of Yacht Design*) came along side with his beautiful blue yawl, *Santa Maria*, on our last afternoon before leaving for the race. He really liked the look of *Sabrina* as much as I liked the look of his boat. Together, we toasted *Sabrina* and my crew with glasses of sherry.

Jack, Katy, Jan, John, Ray and I worked very late into the night trying to finish up all that remained to be done. We did not succeed and were overtaken by exhaustion. We finally turned in for a few hours of much needed sleep.

The Crew

The International Offshore Racing Rules dictate the minimum compliment of people aboard a given length of boat. No offshore racer ever has less than four, so *Sabrina* would be packed to the hilt ... not only with crew, but their cloths, foul-weather gear with boots, food and water, munchies, toiletries, life jackets, safety harnesses, and Lord knows what else. On one hand, crew weight as a high percentage of total vessel displacement was to be a handicap for such a small boat. On the other, the crew and much of their gear represented a pro-





SABRINA reaches at full steam with her colorful 150% reacher/drifter.
© Bruce P. Bingham 1978 & 2003.

portionally high ratio of moveable ballast that would become extremely valuable when the wind really began to howl.

Jan (Yahn) Wendland: An English teacher from Holland who also taught skiing in Vermont during winter vacations. During summers, Jan taught survival-at-sea for the Outward Bound program at Hurricane Island, Maine. He owned a Nor'Sea 27, and was an extremely skilled Shields Class racer. Jan crewed for me several times for various boat deliveries. He was strong and agile, absolutely inexhaustible, an excellent tactician and superb sail trimmer. Jan was the consummate competitor and a really funny guy. Jan weighed in at 160 pounds and was chosen foredeckman.

John Forbes: An editor for the New York Times and an avid Laser racer. John sailed aboard my schooner, *At Last*, many times and accompanied me aboard *Saga* on her trip south in 1980. John's strong suit was his extraordinary touch on the tiller, especially in light air and sailing to weather. John was also a really funny guy. John weighed about 150 pounds.

Ray Groves: Born and raised in England, Ray was a bulk coffee bean broker in Manhattan. Ray owned a Columbia 32, and although not a racing type, had a lot of offshore experience, was as strong as a bull, great navigator, always eager and positive, and a really funny guy. Ray was about 180 pounds (all muscle).

My background as a designer, writer, and illustrator is largely known to you. My father was a yacht designer and builder, and my family always had boats ... sometimes several at a time. So, I have sailed right from the beginning, built my first boat when I was ten, and began racing aboard my dad's R Boat and a Star Boat before I was a teenager. I crewed aboard L Class sloops as a teen and sailed two Mackinac Races before joining the Navy. While in the service, I designed and built a little sail boat that was stored aboard the ship on which I served as a Quartermaster. My racing continued in Florida aboard my own Sandpiper Class sloop, SORCs and PORCs aboard various sloops and yawls, two Bermuda races, a TransAtlantic, and on and on. I also delivered dozens of boats over the years. I'm still racing to this day. Some think I'm a bit of a performance fanatic even though most of my designs were heavy, cumbersome, offshore cruisers. I only weighed 134 pounds (considerably less than today), and was the straight man in the group in addition to being owner/skipper.

As you can tell, humor was important aboard *Sabrina*. We'd have to be able to keep laughing even if all hell were to break lose. We were all very compatible and trusted each other's judgment totally. There would be no shouting at each other during the race except to communicate above the sound of wind and wave. Each of us were to take stints as cook and dishwasher, and all would be expected to cheerfully lend a hand no matter who was on or off watch.

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Ray and the helm, John and Jan on the weather side.
© Bruce P. Bingham 1978 & 2003.





SABRINA working her way to weather with her 130% Genny in light going.

© Bruce P. Bingham 1978 & 2003.

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This was a wonderful crew in every way. I couldn't have wanted more. *Sabrina* and I were not disappointed during the race ... not once even for a minute.

Off to the Race

The Thursday of *Sabrina's* departure from Oyster Bay to Coney Island was bright and clear. Sails were stowed, the last of the food was packed, jerry jugs of gas lashed to the shrouds, and all absolutely unnecessary equipment and personal belongings left dockside. The next day, John Forbes and Ray Groves would be driven to Coney Island by Katy who would return the unwanted batteries, gas jugs, and other excess-weight items to Oyster Bay.

Knowing that we had not completed the hardware installations, Jim Miller came by with a canvas bag of miscellaneous blocks; cam and clam cleats; odds and ends of line; and a wide selection of nuts, bolts, and screws from his shop. He also lent us a fully charged portable drill (a relatively new invention in 1978), and presented me with a new stopwatch and wishes for good luck. With a dozen wonderful friends wav-

ing from shore and Jan at the tiller, we cast off at noon engulfed in a typically Seagull blue cloud of exhaust and headed toward the mouth of the bay and Long Island Sound. There was a little breeze but not enough to prevent me from using the Seagull.

Long Island was relatively flat, but we could only manage a very disappointing 4.5 knots under power alone, so we motor sailed on a close reach. The Seagull didn't sip gas as I had hoped... it devoured it by the jug. The woefully inefficient Seagull, unlike most modern outboards, had no provision for a remote fuel tank, so adding gas (less than two quarts at a time) was a sloppy, wasteful process requiring super-human gymnastics. It also required an extraordinarily high oil/fuel mixture (20-25:1) that resulted in a choking stench and visible vaporous wake.



John and Jan looking forward.

© Bruce P. Bingham 1978 & 2003.

All afternoon, Jan and I took turns between steering and putting the boat together, making up sheets, downhauls, outhauls, boom vang, spinnaker-pool top'n'lift and fore guy, attaching luff tell tales to all of the sails, and getting the galley stove working (just to name a few chores). We may have been running against a tidal current because I recall dropping the hook at Little Bay at the southern end of the Throggs Neck Bridge shortly before Sunset. We could hear the roar of the traffic high over head. At dusk, the lights of the bridge sparkled and the loom of Manhattan filled the sky toward the southeast. *Sabrina* rolled gently as we began to learn myriad new sounds in the hull and rig. This will have been my first night of sleeping aboard my little black beauty.

I was awakened long before sunrise by the sound of early commuters making their way across the bridge to their work places in Manhattan. Rush hour was already well underway by the time my feet hit the damp foredeck to pull the hook. The eastern sky had only just begun to lighten as *Sabrina*





headed into the channel toward the city. Jan set about brewing java below and positioned himself in the companionway to watch the awakening shores pass by.



SABRINA leans to the breeze on a close reach with her 130% Genny.

© Bruce P. Bingham 1978 & 2003.

We had timed our morning departure to coincide with a slack tide at Hell's Gate (a notoriously swift and dangerous constriction in the western end of the East River), so there was barely a hint of current. Jan had made this trip many times but I had only transited the East River twice before in my schooner, *At Last*, so I was absolutely riveted by the evolving panorama that was being showered by the emerging sunlight. No ship's work was conducted until we had cleared all of the bridges, viewed the Manhattan and Queens shore and skylines, passed the Battery, and entered New York harbor. Only then could I appreciate the classic view of the city with the (then new) prominent twin towers of the World Trade Center dominating my attention astern.

The transit from the Battery to Coney Island was uneventful. Jan steered while I installed the stays'l sheet tracks. These would be used for the storm-jib and reaching stays'l sheet leads. Other odd jobs and race preparations occupied the remainder of the day until we pulled into the Coney Island Boat Club about early afternoon. First order of business was to put the portable drill on charge and unload all unneeded gear. Shortly after our arrival, Katy and Ray and John drove up in Ray's car. After transferring their stuff to *Sabrina*, and *Sabrina's* stuff to the car, we all took a break to briefly experience Coney Island's boardwalk, games, ride and famous hot dogs. I think we returned to the boat around 6:00 pm and got serious about our departure for the starting line. Our gun would be an hour before sunset. Maybe *add a little about the skippers' meeting.*

The start

Katy gave us a hand with dock lines and we pulled into Lower Bay. We had not anticipated the speed of the inflowing current, and *Sabrina's* smoky Seagull struggled to make headway as we slowly nosed toward open water against the tide. We could clearly see the racing fleet assembling a mere three miles to the south of Norton Point, but the passing time did not seem to bring us closer at an appropriate rate. We chugged on head-to-wind and sea with the throttle wide open.

Gradually, the distance diminished, and we could hear the warning and starting guns from the committee boat and synchronized our watches by the puffs of smoke. One by one, we identified the classes as they started. Ours was to be the last and smallest class to start, but it was clear that we would be late, perhaps by as much as ten minutes. We could also see that the start would be a spinnaker beam reach on the starboard tack. But the assembly of our spinnaker pole had not been completed, so John and Ray concentrated on this task with vigor. Meanwhile, the light black, red, and gold reacher/drifter was made ready as an alternative starting heads'l.

Bang ... we heard our starting gun and saw our cruising class head to the east. We were left alone struggling to get to the line. Under racing rules, we were precipitated from using our engine after our five-minute warning gun had sounded, so we had to do some serious windward sailing to clear the committee boat and the starting line. By the time the committee boat signaled our fair start, we were almost twenty minutes late and significantly under canvassed wince we were still unable to set the spinnaker. We fell of on a reach, doused the 130% genny and set the reacher. Off we went at a good clip with about eight-ten knots of wind over the deck. It would be another excruciating and frustrating 10-15 minutes before we could pop the 180% red-white-blue chute. The handicap of our late start seemed overwhelming, and morale aboard *Sabrina* was pretty grim. But we put on our game faces and exclaimed, "It's just a race!" Jan steered, John and Ray continued to work on the pole. I set about installing our new secret weapon on the bow pulpit!

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The secret weapon

Back when I was sailing the SORC, I crewed aboard the 38-foot yawl, *Doubloon*, owned by Joe Byars of Tampa. A friend of Joes had made an ingenious gimballed wind sensor that attached to the bow pulpit. The desired apparent wind angle was set into the sensor to correspond to the luffing of the heads'l read from the tell tales. The sensor's tolerance could be adjusted based on the sea conditions and yaw of the boat. The helmsman, and every one else aboard, could hear beeps (sailing too high) and boops (sailing too low) generated by battery-powered buzzers contained in a waterproof box that also served as the gimbal weight.

The sensor was so accurate that even the poorest helmsman could steer to weather like sailing the boat through the eye of a needle. It was also extremely helpful in light air and when running and reaching with a spinnaker.

Everyone aboard *Doubloon* was sworn to secrecy. No one else in the SORC knew about the wind sensor. Everyone aboard was convinced that it was superior to masthead wind sensors because the extreme motions aloft did not influence it.

There's no question that the *Doubloon's* wind sensor was partly responsible for her winning the Southern Circuit in 1962 and second place in 1963.

In 1976, I improved the design of *Doubloon's* wind sensor and installed one aboard my schooner, *At Last*. This model was fitted with red (sailing too high) and green (sailing too low) lights that could be seen by the helmsman. It also had an earphone jack so the helmsman could steer with a headset that would beep and boop. Being able to sail in silence without any lights flashing meant that the boat was trimmed and headed perfectly for the chosen wind angle.

Another model was built while waiting for the delivery of *Sabrina*. This sensor incorporated pinpoint bearings, gold-plated electrical contacts, and a super-sensitive very accurately balanced wind vane that could detect the lightest zephyr of a breeze. This instrument could turn a beginning sailor into an America's-Cup helmsman. And ... the longer the person stayed at the tiller, the better they got. It was absolutely incredible!

During the first night of the race in lightening and shifty breezes, *Sabrina* caught up to her class of boats and threaded her way through the fleet of much larger racers, largely with the help of our incredible secret weapon.

The first race night

Within minutes from crossing the starting line, I had the wind sensor up and running. *Sabrina* start to roll! In short order, everyone aboard was convinced of the accuracy and sensitivity of our secret weapon, and their trust in the instrument rapidly grew.

Twenty minutes from the start, we finally popped the chute, and *Sabrina* took off like a freight train. We were storming along on a broad reach with the main vanged down and the spinnaker pulling like a team of horses. We were probably doing a solid 6-6.2 knots. The motion and the sound were exhilarating.



John trims the chute from *SABRINA's* cabin top.
© Bruce P. Bingham 1978 & 2003.

Once we had settled down, I went below to start dinner. I don't remember what was on the menu, but it would require lighting off the so-far unused kerosene stove. Now, I've never been much of a kerosene person, preferring LP 10 to one. I squirted a little bit of alcohol into the burner retainer, lit the alcohol to preheat the burner, pumped up the kerosene pressure and, when the alcohol had fully burned out, opened up the kerosene to the burner. There was a sudden geyser of roaring flame right up to the cabin top. It was so hot, I could barely get close enough to turn off the burner. By the time the inferno had subsided, the overhead was blackened and a smelly choking cloud engulfed *Sabrina's* interior. Gagging for air, I made for the fresh air and light of the companion-





way. Once the cabin had cleared, Jan took over the stove-lighting duties. Dinner preparations proceeded without further incident ... except ...

Sabrina was sailing close to rail down. Every fourth wave or so, she would bury her sheer and ... water would stream from the galley water spigot! *Sabrina* had not been pressed this hard before, and it hadn't occurred that the water tank could be above the spigot. But so it was every time *Sabrina* surged and rolled her rail under ... and the water would siphon from the tank that was located under the starboard settee. A small wad of paper towel shoved into the orifice was the expeditious solution. After the race, a 42-gallon flex tank would be installed under the forward vee berth and the original tank would be converted to dry storage.



Jan, John, and Ray just out for a Sunday morning sail.

© Bruce P. Bingham 1978 & 2003.

As night fell, we gathered to windward with our legs over the rail. It was a dry ride, and we all felt good about our progress. We imagined that we were closing on the boats ahead. Actually we were but the gap reduction was not as yet measurable. I recall playing the sea shanties on my harmonica with the crew chiming in. Spirits were high, and we were out to enjoy the sail, regardless of how the race would turn out.

We set a two-on, two-off watch with two men on deck at a time. I was in no mood for sleeping so there was to be three topside all night. As the dark of the evening set in, it got quiet aboard *Sabrina*, and all talk centered on the business of keeping the boat moving at her best. The wind sensor was working perfectly so there were no admonishments to the helmsman at all. The stars came out, and we began to feel the wind lighten.

By midnight, the wind had become very fluky. The value of the wind sensor was really beginning to show. At times we couldn't feel the wind at all, and the tell tales on the shrouds would hang limp, but the sensor continues to sniff out what breeze there was and send signals to the helmsman. *Sabrina*

kept moving, often very slowly. We also began to see more than stern lights from the boats ahead ... we were also seeing a lot of red and green running lights. The distance between our racing class and us had also been cut in half. We concluded that the boats ahead of us had ground to a halt, had lost steerage, and were pointed in every direction. "Beep ... boop ... boop boop ... beep!" The sensor kept sniffing the air and *Sabrina* kept finding it and inched her way ahead. By 3:00 am, we had caught our fleet and were beginning to slide past our competition. One by one, the boats that had been ahead slowly slipped astern.

Dawn brought an amazing sight: about a dozen boats around us and at least that many astern. More amazing was that all were larger than ourselves ... most were much larger. *Sabrina* was the smallest boat in the race, but we were now in the company of a Tanzer 22 to port and a Tanzer 27 to starboard. Another boat a half mile on our starboard may have been an Allied Princes. Not far ahead was a sloop in the 30' + range. Between *Sabrina* and the horizon were many boats in the mid to high 30s. The air was still very light and had moved to the stern, and we were still making better speed through the water than most of the boats in our view.

Breakfast was cereal, bananas and a large helping of encouragement!

Most of the second day was moderate to light following breezes. We seemed to be able to stay with most of the other boats, but the largest ahead disappeared. Mid afternoon brought the sight of Montauk Point lighthouse and thick cumulus clouds gathering to the northeast. The boats that we had caught or passed during the night remained astern, and the fleet had thinned out markedly. At 5:00 pm, we rounded Montauk with a Cal 24 just ahead of us, just as the wind shifted to the west and began to blow.

We strapped *Sabrina* in on the port tack and within the hour, we reduced the main to a double reef and had set the little working jib. The spray began to fly, so we donned our foul-weather gear and took our places on the windward rail. Because we were somewhat in a lee as we crossed Gardner's Bay, the surfaces remained fairly smooth, so we didn't have to buck into a steep head sea and were able to keep up a full head of steam. Most of the way across the bay, we stayed right on the stern of the Cal (within 50 yards), but little by little she inched away. It was a great sail, and it appeared that this was weather made for the Flicka ... shortened sail, strapped in, rail at the water, human ballast on the high side, and going like hell. Man, it was great, and all aboard were having a wonderful time of it.

The second night

Close to nightfall, we could see lightening in the north. We were approaching Plum Island and had to make an important strategic decision: try to get through Plum Gut (between Plum

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Island and Orient Point) at the height of the ebbing tide with boiling fast currents on the bow... or take a longer rout by sailing to the east of Plum Island with less current nearer the beam. We chose the latter. We eased sheets, shook out the upper reef, broke away from the Cal, and gained more than a knot of speed. We never determined whether this was the right decision. By the time we sailed around Plum Island and headed into Long Island Sound, there were no other boats in sight. At the same time, the storms hit, and the wind shifted to the northeast. What the hell ... we shook out the remaining main reef and set the 110% Genoa on a pole and went roaring off dead downwind on a sleigh ride that would last most of the night. We were at or above hull speed until four or five in the morning. Before dawn, we were back to full sail with the chute set and drawing beautifully.

The third day was uneventful to say the least. For the most part, we stayed in the middle of the sound to take advantage of a flooding tide. The wind held at about ten knots, dead down wind. We only saw a couple of boats closer to the Long Island shore, but couldn't identify them, so we had no idea if they were in the race. All day, we wondered if we'd made the right decision to sail outside Plum Island. The fact was, had we identified any of the boats in the racing fleet, we would have been doing really great, insomuch as we had little right to be with any part of the racing fleet at all. We rolled down the Sound, hot and dry. The radio played, and we all caught up on our sleep.



Bruce rides high while Ray steers SABRINA toward Port Washington and the finish.

© Bruce P. Bingham 1978 & 2003

The last night

At sunset, we were off of Huntington Bay. We had closed in on the Long Island shore to stay out of the ebbing current. The wind went light as we passed the mouth of Oyster Bay where *Sabrina* had pulled out four days before. She had ac-

complished her first circumnavigation. We wondered if anyone recognized us as we skirted Lloyd Neck and Center Island. By 9:00 pm, we could identify Sands Point light at the mouth of Port Washington. We were soooo tired and soooo anxious to get in. We hardly cared any more that we couldn't see any other sailboats. We had little hope that we had done well, and were just thankful that nothing had broken, we were safe, and had a great time of it. The cabin was wet and strewn with soggy clothing, but we didn't care. The plan was that as soon as we could get to a dock, someone would get ashore and call Katy to come pick up the crew. I would stay with the boat, spend the night at Port Washington, and sail back to Oyster Bay the next day.

We didn't expect a welcoming committee ... in fact we didn't expect anything at 10:00 on a Sunday night. Who would be out here waiting for this little black boat anyway? But shortly after passing Sands Point, we saw an "RC" flag illuminated by flashlight bobbing in front of us. As we crossed the finish line and heard the signal horn, a bright spotlight found our mainsail, highlighting *Sabrina's* number 25. People on the committee boat cheered and so did we. The race was over.

After I had remounted the Seagull, the dock master redirected us to an anchorage where we were picked up by a mooring taxi. There was a party going on at the club with perhaps thirty people milling about with their plates of food. Thankfully, there was still enough for us. No one could tell us how we had fared in the race, but we were told that there were still some boat that had not finished yet. We took that as a positive sign.

Katy arrived at the club before midnight, picked up Jan, John, and Ray. The mooring taxi took me back to *Sabrina* where I fell into the settee and fell asleep to the gentle slap of hal-yards.

Race results

About a week passed when a post card finally arrived from the Race Committee of the Port Washington Yacht Club. I just about fell over. *Sabrina* had gotten first in her cruising class and a forth over all. There would be an awards dinner in a week at the club, and all of *Sabrina's* crew was invited to attend. Katy and I would be the only ones able to attend. We got a nice little trophy and a beautiful plaque for *Sabrina's* main bulkhead. There were a lot of very surprised people as it was announced that *Sabrina* had been the smallest competitor in the history of the "Round Long Island Race." It turned out that she is still the smallest since that rules changed by the following placing a 24-foot minimum hull length on the race.

As soon as I knew of the race results, I called Henry Morschlot at Pacific Seacraft to tell him the great news. Flicka admirers have been hearing about *Sabrina's* 'Round Long Island Race ever since ... and so have all of my friends. It would be only the beginning of *Sabrina's* wonderful life as a super boat.



San Francisco Bay Rendezvous



The San Francisco Bay Rendezvous in Marina Village, Alameda, California.

© Eric Jungemann 2003



The Flicka skippers are planning another Rendezvous in 2004.
Can we plan to see you there?

© Eric Jungemann 2003

By Eric Jungemann

Flickas from all over the Bay Area and Sacramento Delta gathered on June 14th and 15th for the San Francisco Bay 2003 Flicka Rendezvous. Five Flickas rendezvoused at the Marina Village Yacht Harbor on Alameda Island. Two additional skippers joined us in person as their boats were on the hard. In addition to four PSC Flickas, one lug rigged custom Flicka arrived and created a great deal of interest.

There was plenty to look at and talk about. Flicka modifications that received the most interest were a forced air heating system, SSB installation, radar installation, full cockpit canvas, custom and factory-built windvane systems, and a custom mast lowering system (Editors note: see article in this issue). The ingenuity of Flicka owners is just amazing.

One Flicka always generates a lot of interest but five Flickas in one place caused many people to drop by for tours and just to talk to the skippers. There is something so approachable about our little boats and many people with larger boats looked through them with admiration.

Each skipper received a plaque and Flicka t-shirt. Alan Weaver of Marina Village hosted the event without charge.

There was a lot of camaraderie and discussion for follow-up cruises and ways of making next years event even larger. We believe that there are at least a dozen Flickas within cruising range, so we're hoping to get those owners next year.



Cruising the Sea of Cortez

By Lee Crockett

The Sea of Cortez is the body of water between mainland Mexico and the Baja Peninsula. If you take the offshore trip down the Baja coast from San Diego, California, the unofficial "entrance" to the Sea of Cortez is a day's sail east from Cabo San Lucas to an anchorage called Punta los Frailes. You know you have arrived because the water temperature rises from a frigid 65 degrees to a warm 85 degrees. The offshore trip can take ten days if you do it in three big hops, longer if you day sail and anchor every night.

The other way to get to the Sea of Cortez is to drive from either San Diego or Tucson. The trip south from San Diego to Cabo San Lucas is a hair-raising experience since the Mexican Highway Number 1 is a narrow, two-lane road. From Tucson. However, most of the drive to Guaymas/San Carlos is on Highway 15, a four lane divided highway. The highway trip from Tucson to San Carlos takes about seven hours towing a Flicka and about five hours driving without 7000 pounds in tow (about 300 miles total).

Cruising in Mexico can be just like cruising in Southern California if you stay in areas like Cabo, Mazatlan, and other tourist destinations. There are resort marinas, Hard Rock Cafés, and just about everything else "California." Most of the Sea of Cortez, however, is wilderness...pristine, unspoiled, rugged wilderness. On the Baja Peninsula there are seven separate biospheres or distinct environments ranging from lush tropics to arid landscapes where nothing grows. There is lots of desert, lots of cacti, lots of mountains, but also North America's largest mangrove swamp.

One advantage to cruising the Sea of Cortez is that there are no ocean swells or waves (surf) driving to shore. The



PUNKER DOODLE in the Can Carlos dry storage lot among six or seven hundred other boats that range from trailer sailers to yachts.

© Lee Crockett 2003



Moving PUNKER DOODLE from the dry storage yard to the Sea of Cortez along a 1/2 mile paved road.

© Lee Crockett 2003



Aboard s/v PUNKER DOODLE



Approaching Tiburon Island, which is roughly eighty miles north of San Carlos near Kino Bay.

© Lee Crockett 2003



Anchored in Bahia San Pedro, seventeen miles north of San Carlos.

© Lee Crockett 2003

lack of swells makes cruising in a Flicka much more comfortable while no surf makes landing the dinghy on shore very calm and easy (much like a big lake). The Sea of Cortez is not exactly a "protected" body of water. Frequently "Chubascos" stir up which are intense winds caused by the fluctuation in temperatures over various land masses. Chubascos may blow for several hours at a time, any time, day or night. Twenty-five knots of wind is not uncommon in Mexico, and when a Chubasco is blowing, 35 to 40 knots. No problemmo! That's what reef points are for.

To cruise in the Sea of Cortez you really must be self-sufficient. There is no vessel assist and no Coast Guard. There is also no water outside of the marinas and official ports. You must also possess a high tolerance for bureaucratic officialdom.

Unlike anywhere in the United States, but like just about every other country in the world, you must clear into and out of each port of entry. This means, in some cases, a lot of time, walking, taxi rides, and frustration, but very little in terms of fees. You can, however, cruise most of the Sea of Cortez and only have to clear three or four ports. There are many rules and a total lack of consistency as to how those rules are enforced.

In early April my father and I met in Tucson then drove down to San Carlos, Mexico to do a short sail on the Punker Doodle. We left Tucson early in the morning, did a provisioning at the Safeway just before the border crossing, and then headed south on an uneventful road trip south.

We arrived in San Carlos around 2:00 pm. The **Punker Doodle** was based in San Carlos where it was dry-stored on its trailer in the Marina Seca's dry stor-

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Cruising the Sea of Cortez

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age lot. Marina Seca is a huge operation, probably 700 boats on stands and trailers. The big advantage is the boat can be stored mast up since there are no overhead obstructions between Marina Seca and Marina San Carlos where the boat is launched. The cost: \$57.00 per month.

Marina San Carlos, which is owned by the same family that owns Marina Seca, is an upscale marina with concrete floating docks, security, yacht club, launch ramp, crane, etc. For \$14.00 they lifted the Punker Doodle off her trailer and gently placed her in the water with their crane and FOUR men! The only issue is that tide must be in for them to use the crane. I had made arrangements via email with both "marinas" prior to departure. When we arrived at Marina Seca the boat was out front, ready to go and Marina San Carlos launched us two hours earlier than scheduled.

Once the boat was in the water we motored over to a slip and spent the next two hours or so cleaning, stowing, etc. The only disadvantage with leaving the boat in dry storage is that it was covered in dust and dirt.

With a breeze coming up and cervezas (beer to you gringos) in the icebox, we motored out of the marina and into San Carlos Harbor at around 5:00 pm. San Carlos Harbor is a completely protected, enclosed harbor with a narrow, but well marked entrance. Once we cleared the entrance, we did a southeasterly broad reach in 15 or so knots of wind, which moved us along at 5.5 to 6 knots. We broad reached out and broad reached back, much like I used to do in San Diego after passing Point Loma. It was a very relaxing two hour sail. We spent the night in the Marina since we wanted to shower in the morning and I had one boat project I wanted to do (installing a new water pump in the galley).



Lee Crockett aboard PUNKER DOODLE near San Carlos, Mexico.

© Lee Crockett 2003



Another view of s/y PUNKER DOODLE anchored in Bahia San Pedro.

© Lee Crockett 2003





Aboard s/v PUNKER DOODLE



Jack Crockett aboard s/v PUNKER DOODLE in the Sea of Cortez.
© Lee Crockett 2003



Anchored in Bahia San Pedro.
© Lee Crockett 2003

The next morning, after showers, breakfast, and lazing around, we set off at around 10:00 am. We cleared the harbor entrance and headed on a north-westerly course, which took us past enticing spots like Martini Cove and Catch 22 Beach. We really didn't have a destination in mind because there is a well-protected anchorage about every five miles from San Carlos. Once we made the right hand turn out of the harbor, Tiburon was clearly visible and we knew that Kino Bay was about the same distance.

We actually sailed the whole way, first on a broad reach, then on a dead (or almost) downwind run. It was very relaxing and a beautiful undeveloped coastline was on the east while we could just make out the mountains in the Baja Peninsula to the west. And all the while, Tiburon was ahead.

By mid-afternoon we decided to make Bahia San Pedro our anchorage for the night. On the chart and in the cruising guide, Bahia San Pedro is a well protected, crescent shaped anchorage with a 500 foot high rock jetting out on the western side. We sailed in at around 4:00 pm in 15 to 20 knots of wind and fairly active wind waves. Once inside we dropped the anchor in 15 feet of water, which gave us plenty of "worry room" from the shore. (Cruising note: Even if you drag and run aground, most of the anchorages in the Sea of Cortez I have been in have sand or gravel bottoms).

Bahia San Pedro is a "typical" Sea of Cortez anchorage with rugged mountains, cacti, and complete isolation. There were two other boats anchored there. No crowding, no worries about someone dragging into you, really laid back. So, I fired up the dingy and off I went. My Dad opted to stay on board instead of exploring the beach. Late that evening, the wind started howling, which is pretty typical. Unfortunately,

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Cruising the Sea of Cortez

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the wind was coming from the south, which blew fairly good-sized swells into the eastern side of the anchorage where we were. The result was a night with much rolling. The next morning we moved to the western side of the anchorage and the roll completely stopped.

We had a relaxing breakfast and a dinghy ride through the anchorage to meet the other two boats. S/V **Zeebedee** was an engineless, cat/junk rigged, Canadian built vessel owned by an Englishman. We had a nice conversation as he utilized his sculling oar to get out of the anchorage. The other boat was a Peterson 44 owned by a man from Prescott, Arizona who would come down for four or five days at a time.

At about 11:00, we motored out of the anchorage and, sails up, set southeast back toward San Carlos. After three and a half hours, we had made four miles over ground. We gave up and started the engine. We pulled into Martini Cove at around 5:00 pm, set the anchor, and were immediately descended upon by a swarm of flies and a flock of gulls that were too well trained. So we decided to forgo the Cove and head back to the Marina.

The next morning we took the boat apart, had it lifted back onto the trailer, and set off for the drive back to the United States.

Where is the **Punker Doodle** now? In St. Louis, Missouri. This summer she will go to Lake Michigan, The Chesapeake, or the Mississippi to the Ohio to Kentucky Lake to the TennTom Waterway to Mobile, Alabama.

Next fall? I hope to do the offshore trip from San Diego to La Paz Mexico in the Sea of Cortez, and then spend the winter there. Any takers for a Flicka cruising rally to Mexico?



Looking west in Bahia San Pedro toward PUNKER DOODLE. The Sea of Cortez lies behind the mountain.

© Lee Crockett 2003



Martini Cove is the first anchorage north of San Carlos Harbor and is a common location for happy hour.

© Lee Crockett 2003



What are the chances of meeting another Flicka in Wilcox, Arizona?

© Lee Crockett 2003





Flicka Rigging Specifications

By Chuck Garrett

These are the rigging specifications from the PSC Flicka Manual that I ordered from Robin, back when he was still at the factory.

CODE	FITTING / SPLICE, etc.
ME	Marine Eye
TBK	Turnbuckle
NE	Nicro Press Thimble Eye
TE	Toggle Eye
PSYB	Pre-Stretched Yacht Braid
YB	Yacht Braid
HS	Halyard Shackle
SnS	Snap Shackle
ES	Eye Splice
BE	Burned End
VC	Vinyl Covered Stainless Steel Wire

Standing Rigging			
RIGGING	LENGTH PIN to PIN	PIN SIZE	END FITTING
Headstay	28' 0"	3/16"	ME-TBK
Backstay	28' 11"	3/16"	ME-TBK
Uppers	26' 10.5"	3/16"	ME-TBK
Forward Lower	15' 4.5"	3/16"	ME-TBK
Aft Lower	15' 6.5"	3/16"	ME-TBK
Forestay (Cutter)	21' 11"	3/16"	3/8 TB 3/8 Toggle
Bobstay	5' 3"	1/4"	TE - TE
Whiskerstays	5' 0"	5/32"	TE -TBK
Comment: On Kenyon mast the backstay is 29' 6.5" Note: All Standing rigging is 1x19 Stainless Steel			

Running Rigging				
RIGGING	LENGTH	TYPE	SIZE	ENDS
Main Halyard	1 @ 60'	PSYB	3/8"	HS-BE
Jib Halyard	1 @ 60'	PSYB	3/8"	SnS-BE
Staysail Halyard	1 @ 55'	PSYB	3/8"	SnS-BE
Main Sheet	1 @ 50'	YB	3/8"	ES-BE
Jib Sheet	1 @ 50'	YB	3/8"	NE-NE
Staysail Sheet	1 @ 40'	YB	5/16"	BE-BE
Topping Lift	1 @ 54'	YB	1/4"	ES-BE
Traveler Line	1 @ 05'	YB	1/4"	BE-BE
#1 Reef Cunningham	1 @ 10'	YB	5/16"	BE-BE
#1 Reef Cringle	1 @ 22'	YB	5/16"	BE-BE
#2 Reef Cunningham	1 @ 17'	YB	5/16"	BE-BE
#2 Reef Cringle	1 @ 28'	YB	5/16"	BE-BE
Comment: For single handed package add 10' to halyards and #1 Reef Add Jib Dowser 55' of 1/4"				





Flicka Companionway Dodger

By Eric Jungemann
s/v "Hotspur" # 386

When I purchased **Hotspur**, it did not have a dodger. I had a number of more critical projects but eventually the dodger moved up sufficiently on my list to warrant some action. During this period, I collected every Flicka dodger picture I could and mentally worked through which designs (and trade-offs) I found appealing. Since I had owned several sailboats with dodgers, I had some firm notions of what would be required for my Flicka dodger. Many skippers have put full width dodgers on their Flickas. This article is about an alternative . . . a companionway only dodger.

Since I sail offshore in Northern California, the dodger had to be strong enough for that environment. This implied stainless tubing and strong fasteners. The dodger needed to be easy to remove and store for trailering. I wanted the ability to fold the dodger forward, although it was OK to do this with the boom off-center. This implied clearances for the boom vang and some method of easily detaching the dodger snaps to fold the material. This decision impacted how the dodger was tensioned firmly in the "up" position.

The design had to minimize holes, snaps, and modifications to the boat itself. The dodger would take into account that a sea hood would be installed for attachment forward. Although I have seen some dodgers installed without a sea hood, the advantage of keeping the companionway hatch area dry are compromised without a sea hood. Additionally, the forward attachment of the dodger becomes more complicated. In boats with wheels for steering, the best rule is to have visibility over the dodger while standing. In a tiller-steered boat, equivalent visibility while seated needed to be incorporated into the design.

Issues regarding my full boat cover needed to be taken into account.

- The dodger should not affect sail-



The picture below shows the dodger from the front. There are no side windows (they would be pretty small and would impact folding the dodger forward). There is a small, green acrylic cover for the front of the dodger and a boot to cover the dodger material when folded forward. The boom clears nicely.

©Eric Jungemann 2003



This picture shows the companionway view. We did not add stainless steel bars to the dodger as it is not used as a handhold when moving forward. Notice that the only hardware is on the teak runners and the front of the sea hood. Fasteners are eyelet fasteners for strength and easy removal.

© Eric Jungemann 2003



Aboard s/v HOTSPUR



The dodger bow details are shown here. The dodger is very stable and held back by the bungee system shown here. To move the dodger forward, the bungee is detached and the eyelets are unfastened and it is folded forward (with the boom off center). You can visualize that when you are at the tiller on the windward side, your view forward is not obstructed.

© Eric Jungemann



Port view of the dodger.

© Eric Jungemann 2003

ing, i.e. winch operation or moving around on the boat.

- The overall design had to be simple and unlikely to be damaged if someone fell in the cockpit.
- From a safety standpoint, it had to have a design that was unlikely to block the hatch if the boat was rolled or overwhelmed by a large wave, i.e. it would be swept away or could be moved aside easily even if damaged.

These choices are obviously a blend of the subjective and the practical. Others might (and have) made a slightly different requirements list for their Flicka dodgers.

This dodger was designed and executed by Margaret Fago of Hogin Sails in Alameda, CA. Margaret had many ideas on how to mesh a practical design with my dodger laundry list. It was indeed a companionway dodger as opposed to a full width dodger. In order to get easy access below, we raised the front of the boom 3" and the rear of the boom 6". This required a slight recut of the mainsail. The tradeoff was a slight loss of sail area (almost negligible) in return for a proper height for companionway access. Height under the dodger for sitting was not a factor since this dodger was not full width. Perching under the dodger in the companionway and standing on the companionway steps is very comfortable and dry with this set up.

There are nearly as many dodger designs as there are individual Flickas. These choices are obviously a blend of the subjective and the practical. Others might (and have) made a slightly different requirements list for their Flicka dodgers. Adding a dodger is a worthwhile investment, particularly for offshore sailing. The improvements in keeping the boat dry and well ventilated, plus the ability to hide out of the weather while remaining close to the tiller and winches, are big pluses.



Flicka No. 1's First Day

By **Bruce P. Bingham**
s/y *SABRINA*

In March of 1978, while living on my schooner, *At Last*, in Oyster Bay, NY, I received a letter from Bill Luther. Bill was a very close friend and once draftsman for me when I had a design office in Santa Barbara, Ca. He was now the in-house engineer/draftsman for Pacific Seacraft and had been singularly responsible for the acquisition of the Flicka molds from Nor'Star (the builders of the first semi-production fiberglass Flickas) and conduit for the production-rights deal between Pacific Seacraft and myself. The letter was an invitation for me to tour the PS facilities, witness the construction of several new Flickas, discuss production design details, and to attend the April launching of Flicka No.1 in Newport Beach.

My acceptance was sent off in the afternoon's mail.



Flicka poised on the blocks while Fred Bingham, the designer's father, looks on.
© *Bruce P. Bingham 1978, 2003.*

My reception at the Costa Mesa plant was very cordial, and I was impressed by the organization and rhythm in the production buildings. There seemed to be genuine dedication and comradery among the workers. Everything I saw was geared for quality. At that time, Pacific Seacraft was offering the PS 25, Mariah 32, and (I think) the Crealock 34. I'm not sure. At the same time, the country was slipping into a recession of historic proportions and the sense of risk was apparent.

During my visit, there were two Flickas being assembled and another in the mold. All had been sold and there were already orders for another half dozen. Pacific Seacraft was distributing a pre-production brochure sporting one of my early Flicka drawings on the cover for a lack of photos. Flicka No. 1 had already been trucked down to the Newport Shipyard where several workers were busy wrapping up various small details



Bill, PS's engineer and draftsman, and Trish Luther proudly await the launching of Flicka No. 1.
© *Bruce P. Bingham 1978, 2003.*

and tending to the "Do" list prior to launching. PS had sent out hundreds of invitations for the event. Some went to the local and national boating press, and others found their way to prospective buyers. A reception with plenty of food and drink would be set up the next morning for the hopefully large crowd. Saturday would be a big day for Pacific Seacraft and the Flicka, and my first opportunity to see a finished boat.



Part of the anxious crowd at Flicka No.1 launching.
© *Bruce P. Bingham 1978, 2003.*

Bill picked me up very early at my hotel. After a quick breakfast, we went by the plant to gather some tools and parts, then headed for the boat yard. As we pulled up, there she was proud as could be ... and looking much larger than the 20-footer she was.





**Flicka No. 1 in her element for the first time.
Oh, how sweet it is.**
© Bruce P. Bingham 1978, 2003.

Flicka No. 1 was a very plain boat. She was entirely campaign-colored gel coat with no boot stripe, reddish-brown bottom paint, and that's all. Her scrolls and cove stripe had not been painted, and she had no registration numbers or homeport. She did, however, have the Flicka logo on her quarters, and a vertical brown banner with the word "FLICKA" in white had been hoisted from the heads'1 halyard. It was ten in the morning, and people were already gathering to check out this tiny little yacht.

Until launch time, Bill was scurrying around from worker to worker making sure that the do list was being done just the way he wanted. Bill's wife, Trish, was setting up the food and drink tables. In the center of it all was a large cake emblazoned with a Flicka sail plan. Launch time, noon, was fast approaching and a crowd was growing. Flicka No. 1 waited proudly as people browsed the brochures and tried to get closer to the new boat. Tied to the dock directly aft of the marine railway were a PS 25 and a Mariah, each having their own vertical banners and rigs filled with flags.

Precisely at 12:00, Bill took up the microphone, welcomed everyone, said a few brief words about the company and the Flicka, then gave Trish the go-ahead to "do the deed." She shouted, "I Christen you Flicka," or some such words, smacked the bobstay plate with a bottle of bubbly, and the boat began to move slowly down the ways to the cheers of the 70 or 80 who had come to share the event.



**No sooner was the Flicka secured to the dock,
the crowd began to board and board and board.**
© Bruce P. Bingham 1978, 2003.

This was a moment of high anxiety for Bill and myself. Every design and builder always fret over how the boat will float when first touching the water: high or low on her lines, trimmed by the bow, listing? It seemed like an eternity before began to show signs of floating off the blocks. And to our joy and relief, she leveled out about 2-1/2 inches above her designed waterline ... right were we wanted her for an unloaded boat. Everyone applauded and Bill and I exhaled!

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**At one time, I counted 11 people on deck, but she
stood up to the weight with remarkable stability.**
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Once released from the puppets and braces of the cradle, she was led to her dock and tied securely. Immediately, people began to scramble aboard. Two, six, eight, ten, eleven ... they just seemed to more than the boat was designed to hold. I was very concerned about the Flicka's stability and watched the vessel roll slowly as people got on and off, worked their way around the deck, and disappeared and reemerged from the companionway. I told Bill that I was really concerned that the boat might list dangerously, or worse, roll on her side to dump her topside human load into the harbor. In response, Bill tried to encourage some to step ashore, but none would. At one point, I decided to step aboard myself to get a feeling for the Flicka's stability with all those people on deck. To my utter surprise, the boat seemed rock solid and barely responded to my additional weight. After, there was no attempt to restrict the numbers.

My brother had arrived with his own Mariah, *Outward Bound*, and offered to be the chase boat for Flicka's first sail. So far, I had spent my time taken photos, figuring that I would have plenty of chance to see and sail the boat in the following days. After the crown had thinned, and the food



Flicka No. 1 heads into the open water of the Pacific for the first time.

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Flicka No. 1 works her way along the Newport Beach shoreline in light air with six aboard. Her performance with a heavy load surprised all.

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consumed, Flicka's sails were set and the dock lines dropped. I jumped aboard my brother's boat, camera in hand, as it backed into the harbor. The Flicka was pushed into the fairway to catch a breeze because she had no engine ... just an empty outboard bracket. Aboard the Flicka were Bill and Trish Luther, Bill's brother Johnnie, and three guys from the plant. That's about a 1,000-pounds of live load!

The day was bright and mild with a light breeze drifting in from the ocean. As soon as Flicka's sails filled, Bill headed down harbor on a beam reach. Flicka picked up speed and showed us her first bow wave. It wasn't much. The high rises along the shores kept the wind at bay and confused.



Bill Luther, Pacific Seacraft's engineer and draftsman and long-time friend of designer Bruce Bingham, was responsible for "working the deal" that brought the Flicka molds from Nor'Star in Santa Barbara to PS. He also converted Bruce's design for production, making many improvements that led to Flicka's success.

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Flicka No. 1 finally gets a decent breeze and shows what she can do with a heavy load aboard.
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Outward Bound also picked up speed but had a bit of trouble staying with the Flicka. We were all amazed at how easily the Flicka slipped along. This would be only the beginning of our amazement!

The Flicka and *Outward Bound* glided along the shore and through the anchorages of Newport Beach Harbor. Henry Morhschladt, PS's founder and president, had ordered the word FLICKA sewn onto the boat's heads'l. Other boats joined us and some skippers asked what a Flicka was, and we were anxious to tell them. I thought it was a little tacky looking, but Henry was a consummate promoter, and it helped the Flicka gain visibility.

As we neared the mouth of the harbor and cleared the buildings to windward, the breeze steadied, and Flicka picked up speed. *Outward Bound* fell astern. When the lay of the entrance

presented itself, the Flicka and the *Outward Bound* hardened up on the starboard tack and gained a little more speed. *Outward Bound* fell farther astern. As we headed into the gentle Pacific swell, the Flicka pitched happily and leaned to the wind. She tasted the ocean and liked it.

Once in open water, the Flicka and *Outward Bound* eased sheets a bit and headed to the southwest to get away from the shore. I yelled to Bill to slow down so we could catch up. I wanted to stay close to take pictures and also to study the Flicka's motion. Generally, I was very pleased. After putting on a few miles of picture taking, Bill eased the Flicka up to the *Outward Bound's* bumkin, and I transferred to the Flicka's bowsprit. It would be my first experience aboard a Flicka underway.

I was really amazed at the feeling of "bigness" when I went below. The Flicka felt like a large boat in almost every respect ... especially her motion. I just couldn't get over it. Bill let me sail her for a while, and I couldn't get over how easily driven she was, even with the load of six adults aboard (I would have been passenger number seven if no one transferred back to *Outward Bound*). And I was even more surprised at how effortlessly the Flicka could sail away from the Mariah. Johnnie took the helm, and Bill and I sat on the foredeck feeling very proud like new fathers. Remember, the



Flicka No. 1 scoots along over gentle swells in light air with a full load (well not really a full load).
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Flicka design was born in the late sixties, and finally it was a reality in fiberglass almost ten years later. We hadn't been sure this day would ever arrive. But it had, and it was great. Shortly before sunset, we entered the harbor, nosed up to the dock, and put the little Flicka to bed for the night. It would be my only experience with Flicka No. 1, and it had been an extreme pleasure. In the fall, Bill and Trish would sail together aboard a Flicka again. It would be aboard my own Flicka No. 25, *Sabrina*, down the Chesapeake to the Potomac and Washington DC, after her showing at the Annapolis Boat Show. Who would have thought you could cruise with four aboard a twenty footer!



