

Flicka Friends

Summer 2004  Vol. 9, No. 1



Restoring Gelcoat



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From the Editor



Flicka # 315—BEN MAIN, Jr. is nearly ready for two weeks of sailing on Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. The story will appear in the next issue of Flicka Friends.

Photo: Tom Davison

Next Issue...

Sailing northern Lake Michigan and Lake Huron aboard BEN MAIN, Jr.

Cover Photo

Restoring the hull of BEN MAIN, Jr., Pacific Seacraft Flicka # 315.

Photo: Tom Davison

Dedication

This issue of Flicka Friends is dedicated to Gary Kries. He is the editor and publisher of **SEA TALK**. This is newsletter for the Northwest Pacific Seacraft Owner's Association. It will only a short time until Gary is back on Puget Sound aboard his Pacific Seacraft Flicka s/y **PASSAGES**. I hope his recovery is quick and complete.

By Tom Davison

After a couple of weeks working on the hull and the exterior wood, **BEN MAIN, Jr.** is just about ready for a trip from Suttons Bay on Lake Michigan to

Drummond Island on Lake Huron. The trip was one-way on the water with the return trip via the truck and trailer. The next issue of Flicka Friends will include a lengthy story about this trip with lots of photos.

Flicka Friends needs Articles!

By Tom Davison

The Summer, 2004 issue of Flicka Friends is finally here. Since the article and image files were empty, the Winter, 2003 and Spring, 2004 issues of Flicka Friends were dropped.

A few regular authors provided the articles and the images for this issue. My thanks to Lee Crockett and Dave Kenyon for their continued support of Flicka Friends.

If you have something to contribute to the newsletter please let me know. I've been able to manage twenty page issues and would like to see future issues remain near this standard.

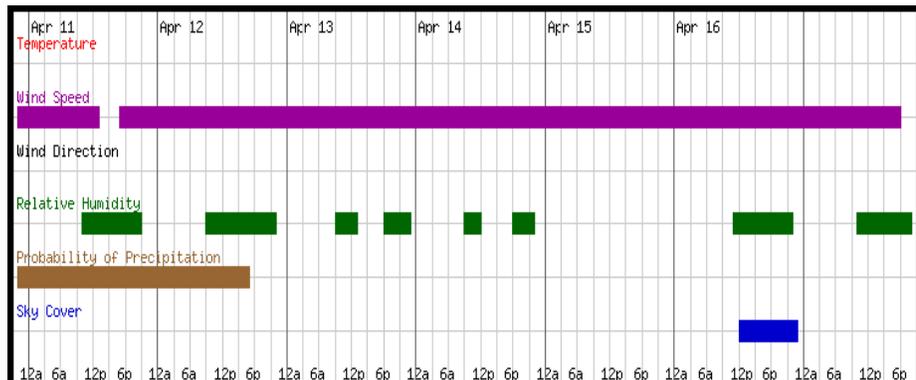
An older Flicka newsletter called The Scrollwork died after a couple of years due a general lack of something to publish. I don't want this newsletter to disappear. Please help me keep this newsletter alive.

Thank you.





Weekend Wx Planner



The National Weather Service provides a graphical display that shows when the weather will match the particular ranges you select.

By Tom Davison

The National Weather Service has been upgrading their software over the last two years. The improvements will be beneficial for weekend sailors.

There are two experimental weather forecasting tools that will provide you with a forecast in your sailing area. They are based on latitude, longitude and a 5 KM grid.

Enter the parameters you desire for your trip and the National Weather Service will provide the periods over then next seven days. This should help for projects where certain weather conditions are required.

Weather Activity Planner

You can enter a range for the following parameters:

- Temperature
- Humidity
- Wind Speed in MPH
- Wind Direction
- Sky Cover
- Probable Precipitation

While you can determine when weather within the range you select, the information is displayed as a bar on a chart. Unless the ranges are relatively small, you don't get detailed information.

Hourly Weather Forecast Graph

This graph contains more information than the Weather Activity Planner, but is limited to a 48 hours range. There is a pull-down which allows you select a starting date and time for this range over the following four days. This allows you to determine the weekend weather on Thursday.

- Temperature
- Dew Point
- Wind Chill
- Wind
- Relative Humidity
- Sky Cover
- Rain
- Thunder
- Snow
- Freezing Rain
- Precipitation Potential

The interface varies from one Weather Service Region to another, so you may need to search the webpage for this information. In my area, you can only enter the lat/long on the Weather Activity Planner. From that page, your can access the Hourly Weather Forecast Graph. Since both the Weather Activity Planner and Hourly Weather Forecast Graph are Lat/Long based, you can enter various locations. This might be helpful for crossing a bar or transiting a pass.

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 2003. This includes Flickas constructed from plans obtained directly from Bruce's California office. About 400 sets of plans were sold. According to Bruce Bingham, many Flickas can be found in New Zealand, Australia and Sweden.

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

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

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Restoring the Gelcoat

By Tom Davison

When Tom Grimes's Flicka, **BEN MAIN, Jr.**, was pulled from the water last fall, the hull was in dire need of maintenance. The gray hull was faded and chalky. Since the boat was stored late and Tom's return to Michigan was late this year, the restoration occurred in late June.

The process was simple enough. Gather compound, polish, wax, an orbital polisher and lots of rags and start to work. The decision was made to use one brand of compound, polish and wax. Since the products are designed to work together, mixing various brands might not yield the best result. We selected Meguiar's products for this project.

STEP ONE—Compound

The product selected was Meguiar's # 49 Mirror Glaze Heavy-Duty Oxidation Remover. This is a product for moderate to severe gelcoat oxidation. This strength was needed to remove the oxidized gelcoat from the surface of the hull. The first trip around the hull did not remove all of the oxidation, but the gelcoat was beginning to change. While you could say that there was some shine to the surface, it was obvious that additional work would be required.

The first and second compound applications were several days apart. The second application of the compound removed the remaining oxidation from the hull. Once again, there was an improvement to the hull. A test for a third application showed that no more oxidation was being removed.

STEP TWO—Polish

With the oxidation gone, it was time to apply polish to the hull. The compound used was Meguiar's # 45 Boat/RV Polish. It was applied and buffed with an orbital polisher. This was much easier and faster than the compounding. After



The condition of the gelcoat is easy to determine when you look at the hull of the Sabre 30 next to the Flicka.

Photo: Tom Davison



The finished hull is a considerable contrast to the photo above.

Photo: Tom Davison



of s/y BEN MAIN, Jr.



The gold scrollwork looks great against the freshly restored hull.
Photo: Tom Davison

the first application, the hull was a different color, much darker than before. After another day, a second application of the polish brought even more depth and shine to the hull. The work was beginning to pay off, just another couple of laps around the hull to go.

STEP THREE—Wax

Sealing and protecting the hull from sunlight was the final step. Since the first two products used were Meguiar's, the wax used was their # 56 Boat/RV Pure Wax. As indicated in the instructions, the hull was waxed twice. The orbital polisher was used both times. This also protects the polish from environmental contaminants.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Overall, it took about fifteen hours of work to take the hull from the chalky faded gray to something that most people would appreciate. The result is a Flicka that will attract interest and compliments. There really isn't much to say about this project, use lots of clean rags and plenty of elbow grease.

The real test was when the Flicka returned to the marina after winter storage. A number of local boaters that knew the sailboat had the opportunity to view the hull. All were pleased to see this fine little sailboat with restored gelcoat.

Since the wind was generally lacking during the subsequent trip, the diesel engine was used more often than desired. This left carbon from the exhaust on the transom and thru-hulls. Not difficult to clean, but requiring attention after just two weeks afloat.

The water line also needed a little bit of care. After trailering BEN MAIN, Jr. back from Lake Huron, the hull was cleaned and another coat of wax was applied before launching. Now it is time to turn my attention to the deck. Another fifteen hours to go, we will see...



The rudder and aft scrollwork also look great!
Photo: Tom Davison



Adding Solar Cells

By Lee Crockett

Many cruising sailboats supplement their battery charging ability by adding a genset, wind generator, or solar panels. Of all the ways to generate electricity onboard, solar panels are the least likely to fail or experience problems, provided one is sailing in an area where the sun shines.

There are basically three types of panels available today; Monocrystalline (such as Siemens), Polycrystalline (like Kyocera), and Thin Film or amorphous (Uni-Solar). Monocrystalline panels have uniform dark gray cells and have the highest output per cell area. Polycrystalline cells look somewhat like shattered glass and tend to be less expensive and only slightly less efficient per cell area.

Monocrystalline and polycrystalline solar panels are rigid and have a glass cover. Thin Film type panels are made by depositing the active silicon on either a stainless plate or a flexible backing. Thin film type panels are about half as efficient per cell area but are considered unbreakable and shadow protected. They are also significantly less expensive.

Regardless of the type of panel, they only degrade slightly in output over time (by 10% or so). So a ten year old panel will work almost as well as a new one. Also, solar technology has matured so there is probably not some new process on the horizon. The thin film type panels are significantly larger (like twice the size) compared to the monocrystalline or polycrystalline for similar output.

Why then, would anyone use a thin film solar panel? Because they are lighter, unbreakable, and will not shut down if a shadow is cast across their surface. Even the shadow created from a shroud will effectively reduce the output of a monocrystalline panel by as much as 90%. That same shadow will only reduce the output of a thin film panel by the cells it covers, maybe 5% - 10%.



The solar panels are attached to the stern pulpit.

Photo: Lee Crockett



The mounting hardware is a simple arrangement.

Photo: Lee Crockett



to s/v PUNKER DOODLE



The port solar panel is up and the starboard panel is down.
Photo: Lee Crockett

This has a number of implications for Flicka owners. Regardless of the type of panel, mounting panels of sufficient size on a Flicka is a challenge. In addition, the panel's output is often overstated (or stated in terms of "ideal" conditions) and has a direct relationship to its angle toward the sun. For example, on our 38 footer, our Unisolar 42 watt panels that were rated at 3.17 amps generated, at most, 2.75 amps when angled directly into the sun, and only around 1.5 – 2.0 amps when the sunlight was hitting them at an angle of 60 degrees or less. This was in Mexico where the sun really shines.

On the **Punker Doodle** I installed two 45 watt monocrystalline panels. They are roughly 12 by 40 inches and 15 years old.

Most of the panels I have seen on Flickas are mounted on the stern pulpit or above the transom. While it is tempting to mount a panel on top of the companionway hatch, that location is almost always shaded by something and the panel cannot be angled easily to face the sun.

Mounting panels on the pulpit rail is easy by utilizing a couple of Helms rail clamps (\$18.00 per pair) and some flat aluminum stock (about \$10.00). While not perfect, this arrangement allows the panels to be angled somewhat. This also keeps them out of the way and allows the panels to be removed when trailering the boat.

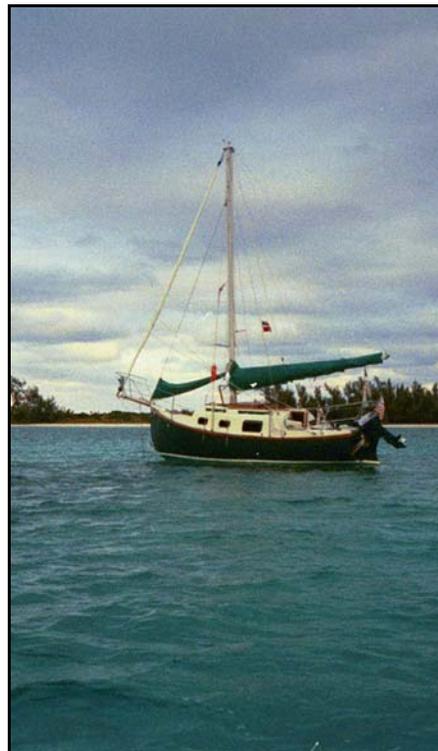
I used 12 gauge, marine grade, duplex wire that passes the current through a solar regulator. The regulator is connected to each battery. The result is that when I visit the boat, both batteries are fully charged at just over 14 volts. I expect that the two panels will generate around 5 amps per hour while they are pointed toward the sun (even though they are rated at 3.5 amps each). Generally, this only happens for four to six hours per day in the best circumstances. However, to generate that same 30 amps via the **Punker Doodle's** engine, I would have to run the engine four or five hours a day.



The installation of the solar regulator was simple.
Photo: Lee Crockett



Q.E.D.



TOP LEFT Q.E.D. at the docks in Hopetown, Abacos

LEFT Q.E.D. Anchored Lignum Vitae Key, Florida Keys

BELOW LEFT Sunset from while anchored in Coconut Grove, Florida.

ABOVE Q.E.D. anchored in Lignum Key, in the Florida Keys.

All Photos: Dave Kenyon

These photos were taken during a trip from Key West to Fort Lauderdale to the Abacos aboard Q.E.D. This Flicka was built from plans by Dave Kenyon in 1987.

The construction of s/y Q.E.D. was featured in a series of three articles in Flicka Friends

