

Flicka Friends

Fall 2006



Vol. 11, No. 3



Flicka Port Replacement



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From the Editor



Next Issue...

- Another Flicka Photo Issue?

The files are empty! If you have a story about sailing, working on, or some other aspect of Flicka ownership, please consider sending an article and/or image to Flicka Friends.

Thank you!

Cover Photo

Front Cover

Bill Overman sailing s/y MOJO
on Lake Michigan near Oconto, WI.
Photo by Bill Overman © 2006

Back Cover

Wing and wing sailing at 4.5 knots on
Sutton's Bay aboard BEN MAIN, Jr.
Photo: Tom Davison © 2006

If you have a high quality photo of
your Flicka and would like to see it on
the cover, please let me know.

tom@flicka20.com

Light air sailing under a full gaff mail and a 120% genoa.

Photo: Tom Davison © 2006

By Tom Davison

The last photo gallery issue of Flicka Friends was published in the winter of 1998. That issue showed Flickas from South Africa, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Florida, Illinois, Utah, California, and Washington. I'd like to publish another photo gallery issue as the Winter 2006 issue of Flicka Friends.

With the popularity of digital cameras, I would suspect that there are many

more Flicka digital images that could be published in this issue. Hopefully, there will be enough images to separate them by geographic location. If you have a digital image of your Flicka for this issue of Flicka Friends, please send the file to:

webcaptain@flicka20.com

Please include a caption along with the location, boat number, hull number and the name of the photographer.



A Fine Summer Day

About Flicka Friends

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

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

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

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

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BEN MAIN, Jr. at the dock on a fine summer day.
Photo: Tom Davison © 2006



A Bowsprit Alternative:



While this bowsprit appears to be a factory bowsprit, the central white portion is aluminum.
 Photo: Steve Grisanti © 2006

By Stephen Grisanti

It was 1999 and I was studying the surveyor's report on the condition of my new Flicka. One area that stood out was the deterioration and integrity of the stock wooden bowsprit. I did a considerable amount of research on other types of replacement woods, including teak, and some other well-known Brazilian hard woods.

At the time that I purchased my Flicka, I was in contact with Roger of Pacific Seacraft. I was very fortunate that I was able to consult with Roger on a very regular basis. For all of you who are not familiar with this member of Pacific Seacraft, he was one of the original staff members that helped in the design and development of the Flicka.



Stainless steel plates were added to protect the teak from the anchor.
 Photo: Steve Grisanti © 2006



Aluminum and Teak



Imagine eliminating inspecting the wood bowsprit.

Photo: Steve Grisanti © 2006



The center aluminum bowsprit matches the factory dimensions.

Photo: Steve Grisanti © 2006

In fact, he knew every square inch of these beautiful boats, from electrical, sail fabrics, hardware, to the design of the gaff rigged Flickas. As you can imagine, I was on the phone with him quite often. He even sent me original designer plans of the sloop and gaff rigs, demonstrating the rigging and sail size.

When my Flicka was finally delivered to my boat yard, I began the process of making a list and plan of my 1200-hour restoration that was about to begin. I started by dissecting the entire boat, from fuel tanks, teak, hatches, to the weak bowsprit.

Once the entire bowsprit was removed, I brought it up to my factory where I completely removed all the teak side wood, railings, and hardware. When I took apart the actual layered bowsprit, I immediately saw the damaged areas.

In fact, the wood was so soft and spongy that I could stick my finger through it without any effort. This concerned me and is what started my process of research for future options. I learned from Roger that many factory Flickas came through with non-painted bowsprits, while some buyers opted for bowsprits painted in a white epoxy finish.

Roger went on to tell me that, once a bowsprit is painted, it would be difficult to detect any deterioration unless a thorough inspection were made each year. I knew there was no right way of inspecting it each year without damaging the finish, so this option was not one that interested me. Roger also shared with me that the life span of a bowsprit, not maintained, is approximately 4-5 years.

In fact, Pacific Seacraft sold them regularly, and at a very high price. I brought my damaged bowsprit to a boat yard in my area to get a quote for having one

(Continued on page 6)



A Bowsprit Alternative:

(Continued from page 5)

made in teak. The price was approximately two and a half times the cost of a new one from Pacific Seacraft. Although it was expensive, I was genuinely considering having it made.

My thought was that, after restoring and attaching my new bowsprit, I wanted it to be the last time, so it had to be a permanent solution. I also liked the fact that the wood matched the existing side panels along each side of the bowsprit, and that having it in teak would be quite beautiful.

During the restoration of my Flicka, I was fortunate to have owned a very successful metal restoration and fabrication company. I had 40% of my boat stored there waiting to be refinished. When it came time to replace the bowsprit, I had an idea to fabricate one using the strongest marine aluminum to the specs of airplane wing, for strength and integrity. I remember my conversation with my fabrications employees; it was centered on making me a bowsprit that would outlast my Flicka. It also had to be an exact replica of the wooden bowsprit, and once powder-coated in white, would resemble the stock unit that originally came with the boat.

The cost of the aluminum material was far less than the cost purchasing teak as an option. In fact, it was quite inexpensive. I used 1/4" aluminum for the shell and shape, with 1/4" on the interior gussets. The interior of my bowsprit looks very similar to the interior of an airplane's wing. It almost has a honeycomb design. The solid round tip, where the bronze hardware slides over to accept the stays, was made from a single block of aluminum, which was shaped exactly like the original.

Once all the components were welded together, and finally powder coated in white, I had an exact and lighter weight bowsprit that will last forever. Profes-



The platform holes were sealed using with teak plugs.
Photo: Steve Grisanti © 2006



The powder coated anchor matches the bowsprit.
Photo: Steve Grisanti © 2006



Aluminum and Teak



The aluminum and teak bowsprit should last much longer than the original factory item.

Photo: Steve Grisanti © 2006

sional welders generally have some artistic vision, and should not have any problem creating a replica of your wooden bowsprit, especially if you remove it and use it as a template.

To further strengthen the integrity of my complete front bow pulpit and bowsprit, I studied all the areas that receive wear from weather and normal use. I noticed that the teak opening, where the top part of the anchor sat, was worn down from vibration and from the heavy metal anchor rubbing up against the teak wood during normal sailing.

Here I had a 1" x 8" piece of polished stainless steel made which was attached using six (6) stainless screws. It not only looks beautiful and stock, but also has kept this area of my bowsprit 100% flawless since 2000.

In speaking to Roger, and from after a thorough inspection of my original damaged bowsprit, I realized one flaw where the water was allowed to penetrate the wood. This was on the sides of the teak where the bolts came through one side of the teak, through the middle of the bowsprit, and finally

through the other teak side. Water would sit in these pockets, and eventually find its way into the bowsprit.

Even with caulking and sealing, the strain on this area of the boat would eventually weaken the seals and allow water through, which, in time would rot the hidden bowsprit. To remedy this problem, even though I did not have to worry about it anymore, I placed 1 1/4" teak bungs in every opening, which covered the nut and bolt, and also gave my bowsprit a very beautiful finished look.



Port Replacement

*By Bill Overman
Flicka # 209*

Newfound Metals bronze ports were used to replace all my portlights on my 1982 Flicka (# 209). I used the four smaller ones for the forward ports and, if I remember correctly, the two very large 22" ports on the cabin stern. Since there isn't much of a bend on the four forward ones, the installation items listed here concern only the large ports, but the information can be used for the smaller ports also.

REMOVE OLD PORTS

First off, when I took my old ports out I discovered cavities and rotted wood in the balsa sandwiched in between the fiberglass. I used a chisel and Dremel to remove the wood rot out. A mixture of West Marine epoxy was used, mixed and thickened with colloidal silica, to fill the holes on each of the port cut-outs, then sanded them to level. If you find this rot, fix it and you'll want to make sure you have the cutout taped on both inside and outside to protect against drips.

PREPARE OPENINGS

You will note that neither the smaller nor the larger portlights fit the opening from your old ports. You will have to either router or jigsaw cut the extra space needed to accommodate the new ports. Routing is the cleanest way if you are good with a router. If you are not, then beware that, if you do it free hand and slip, you will have a gouge in your opening that will be nearly impossible to fix or replace.

I had a friend hold the inside part of the port against the inside bulkhead right where I wanted the port to be. Using the stern vertical edge as a starting guide, I drew an outline around the portion of the portlight that fits through the opening. Not trusting my own skills, I had a friend, who is an expert carpenter, rout the holes out for me. It was a nice snug fit and in those areas where I



Here is a brokerage photo showing s/y MOJO in Florida.

Photo: Bill Overman © 2006

needed a little extra space, I just used a Dremel bit to give me the needed extra space where it was pinching. You want a pretty snug fit here. I used the back vertical edge as a starting point because it seemed the curve you are dealing with in the cabin increases as it goes aft—so I went forward with the cutout to diminish the problem of the curve as much as I could.

I also think, for practical reasons, trying to cut the extra space needed toward the stern would neither look good

nor help out the stability of the cabin strength. The edge of the portlight would be too close for comfort to the vertical joint where the bulkheads for the cabin and the cockpit meet. Just my opinion.

ADDING TEAK?

Here's something you will notice the moment you place your portlights in through the inside. The flange that sticks through to the outside is too long and will snag your legs and everything else when your walking up and



Aboard s/y MOJO



After arriving in Wisconsin, a number of upgrades were made. They including new ports along with painting the hull and the scrollwork.

Photo: Bill Overman © 2006

down the side of the boat. To shrink this down a bit I bought 5/8" marine plywood and made frames, stained them with teak stain, that have one side fitting flat against the inside of the portlight and the other side flat against the inside of the bulkhead.

The frame then became a type of sandwich between the portlight and the inside bulkhead. I just traced the flange for the frame of the cutout and made the width of the frames about one half to three quarters of an inch over the outside edge of the portlight.

I varnished them and they—well, they look like frames and most importantly shrink the outside flange in a bit. I did this for all six portlights. Obviously, whether you do this is your decision. I am just asking you to take a look at the protrusion of the flange first and see if you can live with it. If not, this is one way you can get around it.

The frames can be massed-produced once you have one made because you can use the first one you make as a pattern for the rest. It's a pain, I know, but I couldn't live with the protrusion problem.

INSTRUCTIONS...

Here's the biggest problem I had with the manufacturer's instruction. They tell you to buy this airplane drill bit and ask you to drill 1/2 inch diameter holes in the outside of your cabin to accommodate the thread nipples that extend out from the back side of your outside cabin bronze frame.

Please, please note this and note it well! The length of those nipples are darn near the entire width of your cabin bulkhead.

What they are asking you to do then, for the larger portlight anyway, is to drill eight one-half inch holes totally through your bulk head. You have the outside frame with nipples on it and



Port Replacement

your old portlights are out. Measure the length of the nipples and compare it against the width of your bulkhead. Not much difference, huh?

I did it as instructed and don't feel good about it because when you drill those holes you will notice their outside edges come dangerously close to the actual opening. This is the area that the outside frame lies against and is the "load handler" for breaking seas against it.

In my opinion these large holes weaken the portlights ability to take any sustained heavy breaking seas. I could be wrong, but I am in the process of building an outside fiberglass shell (shutters) that extends a good distance beyond the outside frame and that can be bolted on to handle the blows if I ever decide to take this boat on the big blue pond. If you plan extensive ocean voyages, I'd give this option some consideration.

First, the large portlights are too big in the first place for safety sake, even without the eight one-inch diameter holes.

And second, if one of these portlights popped at sea, you will have a gigantic hole with very few ways to plug it. If you go this route, I suggest either a shutter system as I am making or pre-made portlight wooden or fiberglass sheets shaped wider than the outside frame.

In case of an emergency, you could either bolt or screw these over the exposed cutout on the outside bulkhead. I don't know how this would work in rough conditions. That's why I am making the shutters.

I'm not sure, but I don't think the manufacturer realized the width of the bulkhead of the Flicka. I assume he was thinking of larger boats with wider bulkheads. The Flicka's bulkheads are only 5/8' in width with very thin fiber-



Shutters are being constructed to cover the two large aft ports.

Photo: Bill Overman © 2006



Here is a shutter in place on s/y MOJO.

Photo: Bill Overman © 2006



Aboard s/y MOJO



Two large ports were used aft. Note the insect screen in the large port and the teak spacers for the two smaller ports located forward.

Photo: Bill Overman © 2006

glass slabs sandwiching the balsa core. I talked to them after I was done and made the following suggestions. They told me they would add the suggestion to their information packet. Apparently they haven't, so here it is.

Option A:

If I had it to do over—which I don't...I would do this. I would make it simple. It would look a little different than some portlights, but for me the safety and simplicity issue would override it.

On the outside bronze frame, I would ground the nipples down flat against the frame and drill a quarter inch hole right through the frame where the screw fits through. The screw is quarter inch, unless they changed it. That totally eliminates the need for drilling the eight one-half inch screw holes totally through your bulk head.

Then I would drill the eight quarter inch screw holes from the inside and slip the screw in the inside holes and through the outside frame.

I'd cut the screws to the length which would accommodate a bronze hex nut and an acorn nut to top it off for looks. And that is all I'd do.

Option B:

If one was intent upon having at least part of each of the nipples lodged in a hole to help hold the outside frame in place without undue stress on the screw, then you might consider one of these options: Grind the nipples down so you only have five threads left. You only need four catching to have maxi-



Port Replacement



Two large ports were used aft. Note the insect screen in the large port and the teak spacers for the two smaller ports located forward.

Photo: Bill Overman © 2006

mum holding power on a quarter inch screw. Then drill the half-inch holes on the outside, but only go as deep as you need to go to get the ground nipple in place. That way you are not through-holing your bulkhead eight times on the framed area.

Then you could cut the screws to length, screw them into the nipples and not have to mess with the outside nuts. No sexual puns intended.

Or, if you are still intent on having a section of the nipples recessed (and there is an argument for that to hold the frame in place), you could grind the nipple down to a quarter or three eighths of an inch, drill the quarter inch holes through them and then proceed as in Option A above.

If you do decide to go with the manufacturer's suggestion, one problem you may run into is how one drills the airplane drill holes in the right place so the nipples from the outside match the bolt holes from the inside. Maybe you are handier than I, but this caused me a lot of trouble.

You stick the portlight in from the inside and get it positioned right where you want it. Then mark the center of each hole with a pencil. Take the portlight out and drill a small pilot hole with a one eighth bit right through at the center of each hole.

That hole on the outside will act as the center of the airplane bit they made you buy and which has a pointed tip. When you are drilling your pilot holes and

your outside holes, make sure to use the angled bit holder (it attaches to a drill) they also had you buy to match the slant of the hole with the exact slant of the cabin bulkheads.

If you don't, the screws you use to sandwich this thing together won't line up with the nipples and you will find your outside frame will not fit flat against the outside bulkhead. I hope I haven't confused you. Once you get the portlights in hand, it will be pretty obvious what all this means.

If you have any problems or questions, please feel free to contact me at (920) 826-5769. If I'm not home, let me know when is a good time to call you.

Or e-mail me at ovflicka@aol.com.



Fall Sailing on Lake Michigan



Light air sailing and some initial fall colors on Suttons Bay, Grand Traverse Bay, Lake Michigan.

Photo: Tom Davison © 2006

By Tom Davison

While walking down to the marina three weeks ago, the first orange leaf fell from one of the trees next to the road. As anyone living in a deciduous forest knows, it was the first of many more.

For northern boaters, this single leaf confirms what they already know. Summer is now a memory, autumn is here, and the first snows of winter will arrive soon enough.

Between that first orange leaf and the first snowflake lie some great days and spending a few of them sailing is a gift. These extra days on the water feel different from spring or summer sailing. Maybe the advance of colder weather is the reason for cherishing one more day under sail.

It would only be a week, maybe two, before the trailer would be brought to the marina and the seemingly ritual end-of-the-season tasks completed. The boat would be moved to the ramp and

loaded onto the trailer. Winterization of the various systems is next. Then the mast is lowered. After securing everything, the sailboat is road worthy. A few miles away is a boat barn where the sailboat will stay through the long cold winter.

Many months from now, the Flicka will be readied for another year. The beginning-of-the-year tasks will start with warmer weather, weather that these very same trees will alert us to with the appearance of the first green leaf.

