
The Shallow Water Sailor

Number 91

Founder: John Zohlen

February 2001

The Bo'sun Chair

I am writing this "Chair" on December 12th. Here in Maryland cabin fever has not taken over as yet, though I already feel tinges of it. It seems to come on sooner as the years go by.

Virginia, her dad, and I will be leaving for New York City in the afternoon, timing our arrival at night to miss the terrible city traffic jams. Virginia's dad is in a medical trial for a new Lymphoma medicine. We will be doing this for four weeks in a row. We'll have a good celebration after it's done.

I hope you like the backleaf photo of the Belvin Marine sign. It was perfectly lit by the afternoon sun when I snapped it. My son, Bryan, just graduated the MBA program at William & Mary, and his wife, Melissa, gave him a great party. She rented the meeting room at the Watermen's Museum in Yorktown, VA, for the party. All afternoon I was able to look out on the York River and think of next year's sailing season. We must plan to do at least one of the Five Fair Rivers next year. Say the James River. We can start at Richmond and sail down to Jamestown!

As to the Shallow Water Sailor membership, we have now 120 members, with ten new members added over the last few months. I thought it interesting that we have two brothers and two sisters as members! William Neal of Jackson, WY, is a new member and brother of Peter Neal. Both daughters of Moby Nick

have joined: Laura DeMass of Michigan City, IN, and Ellen Scheuer of Ithica, NY.

Other new members include Ned Flanagan of Hamden, CT; Lawrence Roth of St. Cloud, MN; Don & Maria Iverson of Fair Oaks Ranch, TX; James and Frankie Ford of Redding, CA; Ward Wilcox of Memphis TN; and Wayne Doherty of Etobicoke, Ontario.

Also new members, and proud Dovekie owners, are Sam & Tatiana Fishe of Osprey, FL. Sam gave me a call after buying his new boat. He had a friend check out the boat before he put his \$ down. He read part of the letter from his friend to me and I had to laugh. It is with pleasure that I reproduce the letter on the last page of this issue with permission from Sam and Mr. Norman, the author. Mr. Norman's perspective on the Dovekie is what you would expect from the general public. We who love these strange boats must keep in mind that what is our sustenance is another's poison. Mr. Norman was a little concerned because there was more to the letter than we can know; for instance his reference to the inner tube involves much more than meets the eye, as he left Cuba years ago and must have gotten a good taste of the salty waters between his home of origin and the coast of Florida.

May the year 2001 find you in pleasant waters,



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Precious Cargo

Bob Ahlers

The sun was getting low over the Okeechobee Waterway; only four o'clock and time to find a safe nook to anchor for the night. These November days were getting short, although still warm and sunny, even hot! As we turned into an inviting cove two miles west of LaBelle we spied a weathered looking center cockpit sloop with light blue topsides. "That's *Precious Cargo*! It's Patrick and Alice!" sang out Carol.

We had met the crew of *Precious Cargo* briefly at Man O War Cay in the Bahamas last winter. Originally from Ireland, they had been cruising and living aboard for years, though only in their 40's. It seemed amazing to find them in the middle of southern Florida, the only other boat in this pristine, isolated, anchorage. We waved wildly as we entered the cove. Patrick appeared on deck dressed, in the European fashion, only in skimpy briefs. Peering into the setting sun, he didn't have a clue who we were, but he waved back politely anyway. After we dropped the hook in five feet of water we grabbed a bottle of cold Chardonnay and some munchies and rowed our little brown *Wren* over to visit. The *Wren* is our calling card; the folding wooden dingy is the first thing people notice and what they remember longest.

Patrick had dressed up for the occasion; he had pulled on a pair of old khaki shorts over his briefs. Carol and I reintroduced ourselves and explained where we had met, but his puzzled look told us he still didn't have a clue who we were. I pointed out the *Wren* and I could see a light go on. "If you had her tan bark sails up I would have known you," he said in his soft, Irish accent. "I remember you sailing around Eastern Harbor at Man O War."

"Are you sailing solo these days?" I asked, having seen no sign of Alice.

"Alice is still in Ireland. We hauled and stored the boat in Fort Myers, the cheapest place I've found, and we flew back home for a visit."

We opened our wine and offered Patrick a glass, but he declined and went below and came back with a warm beer. There was a wind generator spinning merrily on the stern, so I asked if he didn't have refrigeration.

"No, takes too much power, more trouble than it's worth. The Wind Bugger allows me to leave my running lights on all night on a passage, and use an autopilot. Wind vanes don't work well on center cockpit boats, too much friction. Oil lamps work all right for reading."

"Carol and I just got a 50 watt solar panel. It seems to be doing a good job keeping our battery topped up. We only use it for one light and our VHF radio. We want to install more lights, and a cd/tape player would be nice."

Patrick shook his head. "You would be better off chucking all your electronics overboard. They're addictive. Next you'll be wanting radar, refrigeration, water makers. More things to spend money on, and then break down and cost frustration and more money. You're better off without them."

"Well, we have two fiddles, a guitar, a flute and a tin whistle on board that don't require any electricity. Perhaps we should let it go at that."

"Is Alice joining you soon?" Carol asked.

"She is supposed to fly in to Fort Myers the end of this month. I just got *Precious Cargo* back in the water a week ago, and I'm getting her back in order. This past summer I had a chance to cross the Atlantic on *Spray*, Joshua Slocum's boat. It took me 10 seconds to think about it and say yes, but Alice wasn't too keen on the idea. She stayed with family in Ireland while I crewed. It was a long, wet, cold trip. Took us 67 days, hand steering all the way. No winches or electronics on *Spray*; all heavy block and tackle and gaff rig."

"Alice and I had planned to buy a home in Ireland, and when I arrived we looked around, but prices have gone out of sight. We had planned on about 60,000 pounds, but quite ordinary houses were going for 200,000 pounds. We have been cruising full time for over five

years now, and Alice would like to settle down to a home that's not in danger of sinking. She likes getting places, but doesn't enjoy the passages. Myself, I would be content to sail around in circles. We had quite a row when I decided I had enough of Ireland and was returning to the boat. I'm afraid it might be bad news when she gets here."

"How long have you been together?"

"Twenty years. She's coming because she wants to be with me, but I'm afraid she's had enough of sailing."

The conversation drifted to other topics. We talked about small boats versus big boats, simplicity versus complexity. "I bought *Precious Cargo* to have a boat large enough for two people to live on full time. I would like to build something smaller, in steel. I am a welder by trade." When Patrick talked about boats and sailing his eyes lit up and he became much more animated even though his voice stayed the same. When he spoke about Ireland, houses and Alice his shoulders slumped like a heavy weight was on them. His body Irish said more than his words.

We asked about LaBelle, just ahead on our own trip. "It's a nice town. It reminds me of Irish towns, has a real "town" feeling to it. There are public docks you can tie to for free for three days. The library is right there, and although you can't borrow books they have lots of old paperbacks they give away. Restaurants and food markets are a short walk away. There is a good hardware store and a great used book shop. Speaking of books, have you any on board you care to pass on? I can stay away from civilization a long time if I have plenty of reading material."

"We'll see what we can do." By this time the sun was well down and we had to get back to *Time Enough* before the vampire-like mosquitos descended upon us. Every night at 6 PM sharp they had driven us below decks and tested the tightness of our netting. "I hope everything turns out all right with Alice, however it turns out."

"Thanks for rowing over. I've been here three days without speaking to another person. Generally I like

wilder, secluded anchorages, but a little company is nice now and then. Hope we will meet again."

"I guess you never know," I replied. "Hopefully Alice will be on board then, and we can play some tunes."

Back on board *Time Enough*, with the mossies buzzing loudly outside the screen, I asked Carol "What is Patrick's last name?" "Precious Cargo," she replied.

"That will do." I wondered what, or who, the precious cargo was that gave the boat her name.

Houses are but badly built boats. So firmly aground that you cannot think of moving them.

They are definitely inferior things. Belonging to the vegetable not animal world. Rooted and stationary incapable of transition.

The desire to build a house is the tired wish of a man content hence forward with a single anchorage.

The desire to have a boat is the desire of youth, unwilling yet to accept the idea of a final resting place.

On the wall of a Cape Cod marina office, as discovered by Walt Elliott

Richard G. Shepherd
1032 Grandin Ridge
Cincinnati, Ohio 45208

11/03/00

Dear Ken,

Just a note to say that the latest SWS, 12/00 is a splendid piece of work. I thoroughly enjoyed it and am grateful for all the effort you put into it. I do hope you are getting a kick out of your Editorship. You people along the Chesapeake are in perfect small boat cruising country. I'm a two boat guy, too, and would just love to have my Sea Pearl Tri and my Flicka in your part of the world. Well, one can't have everything. It should be a mild winter. Let's hope for an early Spring. Best regards,



Sail Florida

Ron Hoddinott

[Ed. Ron is the founder of the West Coast Trailer Sailing Squadron of Florida, this is an excerpt from a HensNest message in which the Hen members write about Florida waters and whether to sail the colder Cedar Key waters or the warmer water of the southern keys. Ron's web pages can be found at:
<http://www.ij.net/wctss/wctss/index.htm>]

I'll have to agree that the Keys can be warmer than Cedar Key in February.. but it can also get cool in the Keys in February.

As to Pennekamp, it's really good only if you plan to do some diving. But remember to bring a wet suit for this time of year. Otherwise, go south to Long Key, Fiesta Key or Sugarloaf Key. Stay in the Sugarloaf Lodge where you can launch your boat, sail the beautiful keys on the Florida Bay side, including the Snipe Keys where the guides go from Key West. Beautiful area. Sugarloaf Lodge - 1-800-553-6097. They don't charge to store your trailer or car, either.

If you decide to go to Cedar Key (not as far and much more quaint-old-Florida), there are plenty of islands to sail to in your Mud Hen. Atsena Otie, the site of the old Cedar Pencil factory and Henry Plant rail terminus lies just off shore about a half mile. Further to the south (it seems like to the west until you check your compass) is Snake Key, which is said to have the most dense population of pit vipers anywhere on the west coast although I've never seen one there. Snake Key has a shallow cove on the west side that is an excellent Mud Hen anchorage. The Osprey nests are right overhead. Sea Horse Key is a bird sanctuary most of the year, but may be available in February. There's an old lighthouse on SeaHorse. North Key is the least visited and prettiest key in the area. Around the far side (west) is McCrary Cove, with white sand beaches and a deep water anchorage right up to the beach.

If you want accommodations, they shouldn't be a problem in February. We always stay at the Island Place. These are condos that are managed as rentals. Mike and Cindy Leiner (who recently sold his Marsh Hen) runs the establishment. 1-352-543-5307. The nice thing about the Island Place is that they have a small beach where you can leave your Hen... right outside your window.

NormsBoat

The Replacement of a Dovekie

Norman Wolfe

After the wonderful spring cruise this year (2000) I had an opportunity to sell my Dovekie, and I did. Why? I have enjoyed Dovekie #119, *Piilu*, for about 12 years (at least when I was living in DC), and have enjoyed the invitations of John Zohlen, Phil Sampson and others when I have crewed for them. I like everything about the Dovekie, but recently my knees are objecting to crawling forward.

So... After selling my Dovekie, I began searching for a replacement which would be compatible with Shallow Water Sailing. I wanted a boat in which I could walk from stern to bow without crawling, and secondarily, self rescuing. (After my capsize on the 1988 Elk River Spring Cruise, I feel as if I have not sailed as aggressively as I would like.) I did not need a boat as big as Dovekie for my singlehanding, and if it was under 20 feet, perhaps it would fit in a garage with room to spare for working on it.

I looked at Bolger's Camper, an 18 foot design based on his Birdwatcher. I had seen (but not sailed) a Birdwatcher built by Jim Michalak, so I also considered a few of Jim's designs (found at www.apci.net/~michalak/). I also corresponded with a few people who had built Michalak designs, and thought his AF3 would almost suit. But at 15 feet long, I thought it could be a little bit bigger. So I sent the following letter to Jim:

*Jim Michalak
118 E. Randle St.
Lebanon IL 62254*

Dear Jim,

Thanks for the fax concerning your terms for modifying AF2 and AF3 for me. The arrangement you describe is fine with me. Therefore, I have enclosed a

check as payment in full for design of a sailboat similar to your designs AF2 and AF3. I understand that the resulting plans and instructions are for me to build one boat only, and that you will try to sell copies of the plans to others.

To recap my design requirements: I previously owned and sailed a Dovekie; this boat is to replace it with two major improvements: 1) no crawling necessary and 2) self rescuing. I also want a boat slightly shorter than the Dovekie so it will fit comfortably in a 20' garage.

- Boat and trailer 20' or less overall, so perhaps an 18' boat.*
- Slot-top to allow walking upright from cockpit to bow.*
- Enough flotation areas to allow self-rescuing.*
- enough ballast for single-handing, but without water ballast.*
- cabin length 6'4" or more, for sleeping.*
- Two oar ports, port & starboard*
- two offset stern sculling points so I can stand on the centerline while sculling.*
- provision for motor mount for small outboard. (your suggestion.)*
- kick up rudder and lee board(s).*
- stowage rack for oars while under sail; and for spars while rowing. Perhaps a cradle on one side of the cabin top.*
- Rig: I liked Dovekie's sprit rig; I have sailed gaff rigged Bay Hen which has too many strings when striking the rig. I like the idea of your standing lug, but I need windward ability to short tack on the narrow estuaries of the Chesapeake. Can a sprit rig work?*

Please provide me an estimate of when the plans might be ready. I plan to build it over the winter for a 1 March 01 launch.

*Sincerely Yours,
Norman Wolfe*

re: AF "2.5"

He is tentatively calling the design "NormsBoat". If anyone has a better suggestion than "NormsBoat", perhaps a turn on "Wolf", please e-mail me your ideas (norman.wolfe@att.net). I have about four months to change the name.

My new boat will also be called *Piilu*, as was my Dovekie. It means Duckling in Estonian, my wife's heritage. But there is a temptation to call it "John Chewning" in memory of the great Dovekie tinkerer.

I considered building it myself, but I have never built a boat and I do not really have the space to do so, so I looked for a builder. I found Richard Cullison was only about 30 minutes away on the North side of DC.

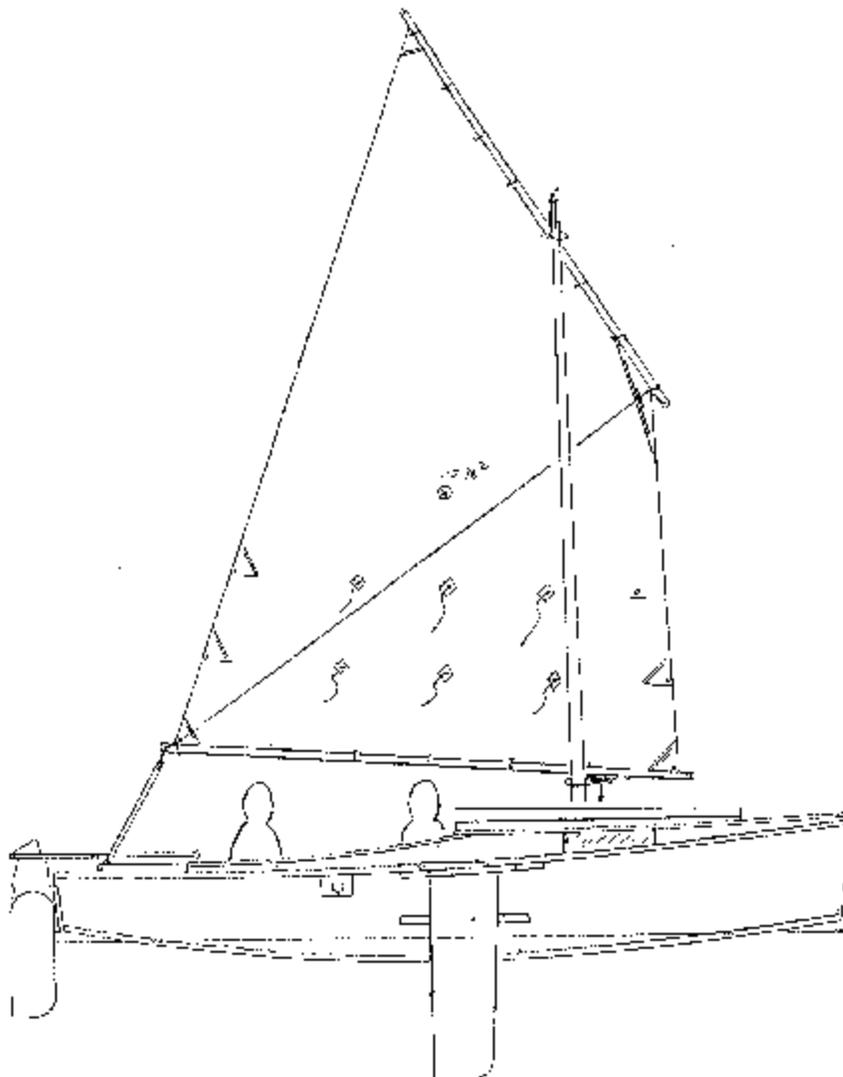
Richard built John Gerty's Martha Jane for himself, so I had seen his workmanship. I accepted an invitation from him to ride to the Wooden Boat Show at Mystic Seaport, so we had several hours to talk boats. I found that he and I share many ideas about small boats, and that he would have time to build "NormsBoat" in the autumn, after finishing a project underway. He was also familiar with Dovekies, having attended at least one Spring Cruse and also storing Dean & Mary's "Heron" in his yard (along with about a dozen other

boats). He also sailed "Heron" on the Magnum Opus to the North Channel this year, so he knows the boat which is my frame of reference.

Jim took about a month to draw the plans. As soon as I received them, I built a crude cardboard model of NormsBoat, using the same scale as the plans, 1 inch = 1 foot. It has been a real help as it allows me to try out ideas. John Zohlen, Ken Murphy, and of course Richard Cullison have also examined the model and contributed suggestions.

Richard has expanded his workshop for the project, and plans to build a Bolger "St. Valorie" for himself when NormsBoat is completed. (See Wooden

Boat Nov-Dec 2000 for St. Valorie). As of 10 November, Richard is completing his current project, has ordered plywood and epoxy, and is preparing to begin. I will submit a progress report after Christmas. [Ed. We hope to follow NormsBoat from the laying of its keel to its maiden voyage. As *Piilu* means duckling, I vote for "Wood Duck" as the design name. The "wood" in the name got my attention. The real bird "is the most highly colored North American Duck ... with highly iridescent plumage that words cannot describe," according to Peterson.]

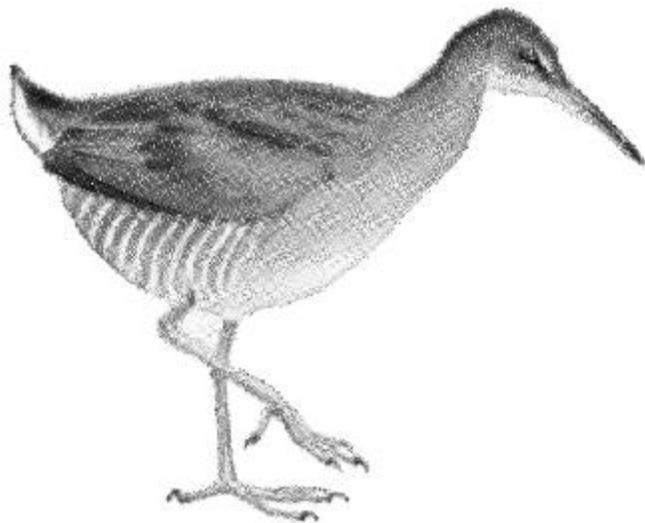


Mullica River in October

Harry Mote

With the weather getting colder and forecasters predicting a more "normal" winter with more snow and ice than last year, Alice and I decided to take one last short cruise in Ardea, third week in October. We sailed from Barnegat Bay, New Jersey, down through the bays behind Long Beach Island, past Little Egg Inlet and west into Great Bay to the mouth of the Mullica River, where we anchored for the night in a small marsh cove.

While Alice was firing up the stove to prepare dinner, I sat in the cockpit, mindlessly looking around, enjoying the late afternoon when I saw the grass move at the edge of the marsh, about 30 feet away. Dinner went on hold, when I quietly called Alice out, equipped with binoculars and bird book. The bird in the grass proved very shy and it was well camouflaged in the light yellows and greens of the fall marsh grass. We identified it as a Clapper Rail, the first rail we have seen.



Rails are described as "secretive" in their habits and difficult to see. They are said to be able to compress their bodies laterally, (as in skinny as a rail) to navigate through the narrow spaces among the marsh grass. As Audubon wrote of the Clapper Rail in his Birds of

America, 1842: "On the least appearance of danger, they lower their head, stretch out the neck, and move off with incomparable speed, always in perfect silence...they have a power of compressing their body to such a degree as frequently to force a passage between two stems so close that one could hardly believe it possible for them to squeeze themselves through."

We sat there watching our rail forage until the light got too low. We identified it visually and by its occasional kek, kek, kek call. *Ardea* never lets us down with neat stuff to see in marshy places.

Next morning we headed up the Mullica River. Since we had to lower the main mast to get under the GS Parkway bridge, we decided to pull the mizzen too and motor up river and back so that we would not need to raise two small drawbridges farther up stream. Our destination was a restaurant for lunch on the river in a place called Sweetwater, near Batsto.

The river is moderately wide and winding, for the couple of miles, with marsh as far as the eye can see. Farther up, the river narrows and shallows, with the channel marked with cedar stakes, and with more development as you approach places like Green Bank and Sweetwater. But the lower reaches are beautiful, if you like marsh land.

After lunch we headed back down stream. We had gone up river with an in-coming tide and had only about a foot of clearance over the mast and gallows at the lower of the two drawbridges going up. I generally eye-ball (line up) the bottoms of the parallel structural beams of the draw section of the bridge that we are about to go under to judge clearance. Coming back down river, the tide had changed to ebb, but we had virtually no clearance at the low bridge. I had to grab the halyard to pull the tip of the mast down so it wouldn't scrape along the beams of the bridge as we slowly went through.

We sailed east, out of Great Bay to Little Egg Inlet and a sandy cove inside the south end of Long Beach Island at Holgate. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife park rangers have made it nearly impossible to go ashore in this

sandy place, restricting the area to piping plovers year 'round, even though the plovers nest only in the spring and summer. And the natural beauty of the sand dunes and sandy beaches has been destroyed somewhat with fences and large orange signs that warn and threaten. Nevertheless, we enjoyed the sunset, the shorebirds and another beautiful evening. Little Egg Inlet is one of my favorite places.

We sailed north and home the next morning, with increasing cloud cover and looking more like winter. Another nice cruise on Ardea. Don't remember ever having had a disagreeable one.

Spring Cruise Planning

John Zohlen

The twenty-second Annual Chesapeake Bay Spring Cruise will be held from May 4th to May 6th. Phil Sampson and Jake Millar had recommended the Little Choptank River as a possible spring cruise location. So on Election Day Ken Murphy, Norman Wolfe and I did some exploring of the river which is on Maryland's Eastern Shore for the 2001 cruise. It looked like a great place for some shallow water sailing.

The Little Choptank River is found on pages 12 and 13 in the Maryland Department of Natural Resources chartbook "Guide to Cruising Maryland Waters." This will be river sailing again, but fairly wide and with no real hazards (mud and sand bottom) to shallow water sailors. We will launch from the public ramp at Madison Bay, on the south side of the river. The Madison Bay ramp coordinates are Lat: N 38-30.454', Long: W 076-13.372'. The Madison Bay Public Ramp is located in Madison about 15 miles WSW of Cambridge. For those coming from the north, drive south on Highway 50 and cross the Choptank River bridge. Pass through Cambridge, proceeding south on Highway 50 for a few miles. Turn right onto Highway 16 West and drive about 12 miles until you reach the Madison Fire House on the right. Turn right onto Canning House Rd. The ramp is about 300 yards down the road. There is no fee for launching. However, parking at the ramp is somewhat

limited based on past Spring Cruise attendance. Arrangements have been made to park across Canning House Rd in an annex of the Madison Bay Marina & Campgrounds, to the right of Marley Cafe as you face the restaurant. There is a fee of five dollars a night for parking there. That would be \$15 for those arriving on Thursday night and \$10 for those arriving on Friday noon. Please see John, Norman or Ken at the ramp on Friday morning to pay your parking fee. We will pay the owner at one time. A point of contact at the launch site is Kitty Hugh, manager of the campgrounds and restaurant. Her mailing address is c/o Madison Bay Marina & Campgrounds, 4814 Canning House Rd., Madison MD 21646. The campground telephone number is 410-228-4111.

The Little Choptank River flows from east to west into the Chesapeake Bay. There are numerous creeks on both the north and south shores. The river is abundant in history. During the War of 1812 a British revenue cutter grounded at the mouth of Madison Bay (about a mile north of the ramp), was captured and burned. For those interested in history, we can turn eastward as we leave Madison Bay. The Old Trinity Church is located at the head of Church Creek. It was built in 1675. Apparently there is a public wharf in front of the church and a very interesting graveyard. One of the gravestones is simply a mill stone with no name. A reconstructed post mill (turned by wind) is located at the head of Gray's Creek. In the 1840's it was part of self-contained community consisting of a saw mill, blacksmith shop and small ship yard. For those adventurous, we can turn west as we exit Madison Bay. The remains of James Island guards the entrance to the Little Choptank. We could circumnavigate it (1-2 feet of water around the southern end) and explore the broads of Slaughter Creek (also very thin water). So much water, so little time!

For those interested in lunch before leaving the area, the Marley Café, across the road from the ramp, opens 1130 on Sunday. Hope to see a good turnout at the Spring Cruise, and that we have good weather. There are plenty of snug anchorage if the weather is not cooperative. Think faire spring winds.

ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS
NOV 6, 2000

DEAR KEN & VIRGINIA:

"LIVE BY THE SWORD; DIE BY THE SWORD!"

MY FIRST INCLINATION WAS TO PUNCH UP "kgmurphy" -- FROM MY ADDRESS LIST AND ZAP OFF AN E-MAIL. BUT MY FRIEND WANTS A HAND-WRITTEN LETTER, SO HERE IT IS. PLEASE EXCUSE THE PRINTING IN LIEU OF SCRIPT: AFTER SO MANY YEARS AS A DRAFTSMAN (PRE CAD DRAFTING) I LONG AGO LEARNED TO PRINT FASTER THAN CURSIVE SCRIPT.

I USED TO WRITE A GREAT MANY PERSONAL LETTERS LIKE THIS. IT IS SURPRISING HOW MUCH MY GROWING COMPUTE ABILITIES HAVE ERODED THAT PRACTICE. HOWEVER, I NOW COMMUNICATE WITH MORE PEOPLE.

YOU ARE UNDOUBTEDLY MORE CONVERSANT WITH THE E-WORLD THAN MOST SWS, CERTAINLY GAYLE AND I. YOUR SWS NEWSLETTER HAS GROWN BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS IN VARIETY OF CONTENT AND QUALITY OF PUBLICATION, ALL THANKS TO E-TECHNOLOGY.

LIFE IS A CONTINUING TRADEOFF. I HAVEN'T DONE A LOT OF SAILING THIS LAST SEASON. BUT I HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE TO HAVE SPENT MORE THAN A FEW BRIGHT SUNNY WEEKEND MORNINGS FLYING OVER NORTHERN ILLINOIS AND SOUTHERN WISCONSIN IN AN OLD CESSNA-140; SOMETHING I'VE WANTED TO DO FOR FIFTY YEARS. AND DOING IT IN A CLASSIC "TAILDRAGGER" EARNS ME THE

ADMISSION TO A CIRCLE OF PILOTS WHO FLY
STEARMAN BIPLANES AND VARIOUS OTHER AIRCRAFT
COVERED WITH FABRIC AND DOPE.

YESTERDAY, DOWN IN STERLING, IL, THERE WAS
A MISCELANIOUS GROUP OF LOW-WING AND SWEEP-TAIL
LIGHTPLANES PARKED BY THE FLIGHT OPS. BUILDING.
OFF TO ONE SIDE, WAY OFF, WAS AN ELEGANT OLD
STINSON. SINCE I WANTED TO GET A CLOSE-UP
LOOK AT THE STINSON, ANYWAY, I TAXIED OVER
AND PARKED THE 140 RIGHT BESIDE IT.
WHILE I WAS INSIDE, PHONING GAYLE AND THE
FAA OFFICIAL DOM, THERE WERE A PAIR OF FINE
OLD BIRDS, TELLING A MUTE STORY OF AVIATION
BEFORE THE "JET AGE."

NOT ALL TRADE-OFFS ARE BAD.

AND OUR ADVENTURES IN TRUE NORTH ARE
JUST BEGINNING, FOR GAYLE AND I.

FAIRE WINDS, YAWL

Moby Dick

Eloy Norman

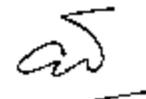
To: Sam Fiske
Subject: New old boat.

Like a good report (this is not), I'll give you the results first so you may skip the rest if are not in the mood or consider it impertinent. I was wondering all along why you being in Fla. (where all the boats in the world are), need to buy a boat so far from you. But after riding to the Calvert Cliffs to see your new command, I realized that is not that distant from Osprey. Well, your boat exists. I placed my hand on it. Mission accomplished. The present owner, Mr Young had the happy disposition and countenance of a Tel-Aviv ham vendor. He was helpful, and showed me the numerous nick-nacks in the sale inventory. First he assured me of no structural damage, and I couldn't see any either. The boat is all in one piece, with minor dings and scratches that in no way detract from the almost nonexistent gel coat. The boat, kept outside, shows the effects of weathering (chalking). On the other hand, the mast, the sprit, the sails, the rudder, and various covers and hardware, have been kept indoors and are in very good shape. The trailer, with its new tires (including a spare) appears sound and functional.

You and I have different ideas about boats. Obviously your experience and background makes the best educated choice. Which was very good for the Navy. When it comes to a pleasure craft, the romantic in me takes over, and the first thing that comes to mind is that anything less than 2000 Hp is not pleasurable at all. In a sailboat (and women) two things are in order: Simplicity and Good lines. If the design is simple (elegant) for the usage intended, it gets one vote. If it has good lines it probably does everything well also, and I'll give it another vote. The boat I saw gets none (which probably shows my ignorance and excessive weight). This boat looks simple at first glance, but it contains a pot-pour-ri of nautical (and not so nautical) gadgets. Windows (that will leak) on the hull to allow oars to imitate a galley; cranks for this and that; three (!) centerboards; "IwoJima" mast raising system; and the greatest of them all, porta-potty in place of the lazarete. What I thought were bunks, turned out to be storage bins. Sleeping accommodations act as cockpit decking during sailing. There is a tent that encloses the cockpit. The inside of the tent can be decorated with pictures, instruments and marine paraphernalia provided you remove everything after using it. Comfort is not one of the strong points of this boat, and I suspect that efforts to attract your wife to this vessel, are going to revive memories of the battle of Tsushima. Her reaction may be violent with the possibility of your new craft turning into a submarine. That she will like.

I know you have made your mind about this, and I also know I can't change it. Better yet, I'm not trying. You have your reasons, and all I'm doing is telling you as I see it from my side of the river, and to make you laugh in the process. If I wanted to be serious, I would tell you that it is an unusual boat for an unusual man. You will do well with it, specially ghosting in sheltered waters.

If you were to change back..... years ago I, extensively and very successfully, cruised the Florida straight. It was a comfortable fun filled adventure that exposed me to new lands and customs. I was so moved at the end of the journey that I retired my vessel, and kept it all this years in a place of honor. I'm willing, for the right sum, to part with a bit of my history and let you enjoy my old ship. If you are interested it is a 1950, 14" dia. Firestone, Royal Seal innertube. You can use it for cruising, or you may want to give it to your lawyer.....Now, that's a good investment!


10.2.01

BELVIN MARINE

INC



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