



MultiMedia

October 2004

The Newsletter of the Florida Offshore Multihull Association

The Editors Soapbox

by Colin Povey

Well, what is the busy season for most people is fast approaching if not already here. Schools have reopened, many organizations have restarted from their summer hibernations, the weather is improving (of course, **any** weather would be preferable to what we had in September...), and it's time to get back on the water with FOMA.

And in what I think in the best news of all, we will soon be free of political ads!

Lots of things are happening in FOMA as well. The result of our meeting survey is reported in this issue, as well as information on the upcoming boat show.

The Christmas party information is contained in this issue as well. Plus a hint at who our speaker will be for the November meeting.

But first, some information on people in our club. As we reported in the last issue, Uncle Sid was hospitalized for a while with an intestinal blockage due to a hernia problem and a faulty repair. He went to a different hospital this time, one that is generally regarded as one of the best in the area, and by luck the chief of surgery was the surgeon on-call the weekend he went in. So, about the time you are reading this (October 15th), Uncle Sid should be going under the knife again, This time hopefully for a permanent repair. He will not be at the October meeting, unless the date of his

operation changes.

Another big change revolves around the Clear-water Sailing Center. Exactly what has happened is not totally clear to me, but wholesale changes have occurred in the operation of the place, with the result that the director, Dan, and the water front director, our own Captain Ron Butler, are no longer employed there. Ron and Carole are apparently selling their house, moving onto the boat, and planning on sailing to the Bahamas for an extended period. We hope that Ron and Carole keep in touch with us, by sending in reports on their travels like they did the last time. I know I really enjoyed living vicariously through their writings the last time they forayed into the waters of the Atlantic.

Closer to home, FOMA is again getting a booth

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Our Next Meeting

The October FOMA meeting will take place on Tuesday, October 19th, our usual third Tuesday. We will meet at our usual time (6:00 PM for drinks, with the meeting starting at 7:00 PM) at the Steak and Ale located at the corner of Druid Road and US 19 North (just South of US 60, Gulf-to-Bay).

We have a very special pair of speakers this month: David and Mary Santos. They spent 11 years sailing their Catamaran around the world! They faced pirates, battled storms and even adopted a cat! You won't want to miss this meeting!

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Mark your calendars now for Tuesday, December 14th, the **second** Tuesday in December for the FOMA Holiday Party. It will be held at the Steak and Ale restaurant.

We will have our usual Chinese Gift Exchange. Details will be presented in the next *MultiMedia*.

From The Editor



What's next, locust?

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FOMA Meeting Survey report

by Colin Povey

You may remember that in the August issue of *MultiMedia*, I ran a survey to try and learn what brings members to meeting and what does not. FOMA Commodores and program Directors have long had opinions about what members want, but have never tried to really collect data. So, I decided to. Well, it's now time to report what we learned from our survey.

I had 12 survey responses returned, which was a very good response.

To many questions, there is an answer that was mentioned most frequently, as well as an answer that the most people listed as most important. I will discuss all of the answers that received a reasonable amount of answers.

The first question was: *In deciding whether or not attend a FOMA meeting, please rank the following in terms of order of importance:* The most frequently mentioned answer was "meeting geographic location", mentioned in eight surveys. Two answers were tied as most important, meeting geographic location and "other" (both received an average of 5.0 out of 6.0), where people listed reasons such as upcoming activities, availability, and what friends are expected to be at the meeting. Close behind in both areas (frequency and importance) was 'speaker topic'.

Since FOMA cannot control people's availability or what friends show up, it obvious that just as in real estate, location is vitally important, as is the speaker topic for that night.

This was, to me, a somewhat surprising answer, as short of going to Tampa or Tarpon Springs, I

assumed most people would be willing to travel almost anywhere in the county. It's also a key question that the next two questions refer to. So, let's proceed.

The second question was: *Rank the meeting topics that interest you the most.* The most frequently mentioned answer (11 responses) was sailing general, with an example of racing tactics. Close behind was travelogues (10 responses). Also mentioned frequently was sailing equipment (sailcloth as an example) and social (9 responses each), with no educational component. The item listed as most important was sailing equipment (4.6 out of 6), with sailing general (4.4 out of 6) and nautical specific (4.3 out of 6) (bottom paint was the example) close behind.

Clearly, sailing related topics, both equipment and general knowledge are very important to our members (duh!), but social meetings are also considered important. What was interesting here was that while many people listed travelogues as a response, it was only ranked fourth in importance. This can be interpreted that while many people like travelogues, they are not very important. This pretty much tallies with our meeting results with travelogues, as we generally get a mediocre attendance.

With the next question, we finally have a congruence of answers and rank. We asked members to rank their preferred geographic location or meetings. I divided the county in four areas I called Upper Pinellas (Countryside Mall and further North), Upper Middle Pinellas (Gulf-to-Bay to

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FOMA Meeting Survey Report

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Countryside Mall), Lower Middle Pinellas (Park Boulevard to Gulf-to-Bay), and Lower Pinellas (below Park boulevard). With the question *Rank the best place for a meeting for you*, we had 11 members answer Lower Middle Pinellas (3.5 out of 4), meaning Park Boulevard to Gulf-to-Bay. Close behind in importance was Lower Pinellas (very highly ranked by eight members) (3.3 out of 4). Ten members ranked Upper Middle Pinellas but not as highly as the proceeding answers (2.7 out of four). Every member except one who answered this question ranked Upper Pinellas as their least favorite choice (1.8 out of four).

It's obvious that the area I called Lower Middle Pinellas is the favorite with members, followed closely by Lower Pinellas. Many people (10) found Upper Middle Pinellas acceptable, but it was not their favorite. Almost no one wants to travel above Countryside Mall. This is very useful information, as it makes it easier to zero in on locations for our meetings. In retrospect, I probably should have asked about an East/West preference as well, but I wanted to keep the survey to one page, and omitted this question.

The next question was: *If you missed a recent FOMA meeting or two, we want to know why. What was the reason(s)?* Here, we had a clear 'winner'. Work or family commitment or conflict was by far the most commonly cited reason for missing a FOMA meeting. The only other results that even came close were 'Other conflict' and 'just forgot'.

The next question concerned the price of a meal

at our restaurant. Again here we had a clear indication of desire. To the question: *What is your preferred price range for dinner per person (do not include alcoholic beverages)?* The clear favorite was \$15-20 per person, to include tax, tip, and non-alcoholic beverage. We asked about lower and higher priced cuisine, and the answer was exactly split between those who wanted a lower priced restaurant, and those who would not mind spend a little more. To me, this means that \$15-20 per person is hitting it right on the head. This makes the officer's job easier, as we were always trying for a \$15 limit, and it was getting harder to find restaurants that would meet this requirement.

Now that we know how much members want to spend on dinner, I wanted to know what kind of food you wanted to eat. Are we a bunch of red meat eaters or closet vegetarians? The good news is that we have clear answers. The favorite cuisine was steak, followed closely by seafood. Coming in third was Mexican, followed closely by Chinese, then American.

Next on the agenda were three more food related questions. The first referred to the type of service at the restaurant: Full-serve, Buffet, or no preference. A clear majority of people didn't care, choosing no preference.

Full menu or limited selection was the next question. A limited selection is often required at some of the restaurants we use, to make it easier on the kitchen. As in the above question, most people had no preference.

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Meeting Survey Report

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Now, we move onto drink. Most sailors have been known to imbibe an occasional alcoholic beverage from time to time, and I wanted to know what your preference was on this issue. Here, there was no clear-cut winner. Only one person strongly preferred a full license, while most said beer and wine was OK.

Lastly, we come to a question where I asked you to tell me which restaurant that FOMA has used in the past year or so were your favorites, in terms of food, room, costs, location, etc. The clear winner was Steak and Ale. Three restaurants tied for second: Carmelita's, Applebee's, and Foxy's. The Chinese Super Buffet and Chili's tied for fifth. Unfortunately, Leverocks was not listed, as the Pinnellas Park location is closed, and the whole chain is in bankruptcy at present.

As for suggestions, only one item was mentioned more than once: Baseball, with a preference for less of it. OK, got it. We'll go back to one summer social meeting a year. And we are in luck in 2005, as the tentative schedule shows that on the third Tuesday in August, our Ray's are plying the dreaded Bronx Bombers, also known as the New York Yankees, that day. It will make for an exciting night at the **Trop**, that's for sure!

OK, so there we have it. We want restaurants located south of Gulf-to-Bay Boulevard but not far south of Park Boulevard. We want places where the entrée, beverage, tax, and tip come to \$15-20 per person, and preferably serve steak, seafood, or Mexican food. The best topics are all across the board, but include just social meetings, without a speaker.

The Editors Soapbox

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at the Strictly Sail show in St. Petersburg this November. We need volunteers to man the booth for a half-day to spread the word about multihulls and to convince people to join FOMA. Your reward is a free pass to the show during the half-day you are not working. Strictly Sail St.. Petersburg (the name change since last year is the result of a merging of the two boat show organizers) starts



The Tall Ship Unicorn

very soon, Thursday November 4th, and runs through Sunday, November 7th. Please contact Wayne if you can work a shift at the show. We especially need people on Thursday, to help setup the booth, and on Sunday afternoon, to take the booth apart. We are even on the web page of the show at: http://www.sailamerica.com/boatshows.cfm?show_id=sp&mode=exhibitors_detail&Company=FOMA%2D%20Florida%20Offshore%20Multihull%20Assoc.

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Coast Guard & Prepared Boaters=Perfect Rescue

by Robert Farley, St. Pete Times Staff Writer

Anchored about 20 miles offshore, Bradley Fitchett and Johnny Grant went to sleep aboard the Angler Management intending to wake up early and fish.

But the two awoke about 1 A.M. Sunday to find their 32 foot fishing boat taking on water. Bailing was futile. The boat was going down. So they hopped into an eight-man life raft. Before they abandoned ship, however, they tethered the boat's EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) to the life raft.

"That's why the EPIRBs are just great. They take the search out of search and rescue."

Their EPIRB distress signal was picked up by satellite at (linked to, Ed.) The Coast Guard's district headquarters in Miami, and an HH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew was dispatched from the Coast Guard Air Station in Clearwater.

About a mile away from the last known position fixed by the EPIRB (20 miles west of Treasure Island), helicopter pilots Lt. Charlotte Pittman and Lt. Nahfhon AlmanMoss saw a blinking light from the life raft through their night vision goggles.

When Fitchett and Grant fired a flare, the pilots knew it was them. When the pilots came upon the covered life raft, one of the two men was hanging out the back, waving, Pittman said.

Nearby, the pilots saw part of the stern of Angler Management sticking out of the water.

As the helicopter hovered, a rescue swimmer dropped into the water and swam over to the life raft. He helped Fitchett, 39, of St. Petersburg and Grant, 34, of Indian Shores swim in the calm waters over to a basket that hoisted them into the helicopter.

The fishermen were not injured and were flown back to Air Station Clearwater. They could not be reached for comment Sunday night, "They were definitely excited," Pittman said. "Their heart rates were up. Everything happened kind of fast for them. They had been through a lot." The helicopter was on scene 35 minutes after the call was received in Clearwater, Pittman said. Coast Guard officials said they did not know why the boat took on water. But the two men did everything right,



Coast Guard Jayhawk with swimmer in the water.

Pittman said. They had and used a life raft, flares and EPIRB. "It was a good rescue, Pittman said. "That's why the EPIRBs are just great. They takes the search out of search and rescue."

Upcoming Events

October 23 - Caladesi Island State Park

November 13 - Downtown St. Pete - dock at city marina

December Venice Boat Parade!

For more information, contact Dan Wallace at (727)786-5748 or via E-mail at: daniel.wallace18@verizon.net

**The Racing Quarter
This will be brief.
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He will be our Rac-
ing Chair.**

Editors Soapbox

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This year, the Tall Ship *Unicorn* will be at the show, The *Unicorn* is a 118 foot top-sail schooner. *Unicorn's* sturdy hull was crafted in Holland in 1947 from steel salvaged from German U-boats. Launched as a fishing vessel working the North Atlantic, the Unicorn has traveled to the Amazon River and Australia. By 1979 she had been converted into a sailing ship and renamed Eenhorn or "one horn," Dutch for Unicorn. During Strictly Sail St. Petersburg, the Unicorn will be open for tours.

Lastly, I want to make a plea. *I need help*, especially for the next few months. It's the busy season in the catering business (where I work) and in case you didn't notice, I wrote everything in this issue, except fore the article I stole from the St. Petersburg *Times*. I don't think I will have time to write much for the next few months, so please, if you do something sail related, take a few minutes and write it up for MultiMedia. Don't worry about not being a great writer; I'm obviously not going to give Hemingway or Shakespeare a run for their money, but I can edit anything you send me. So please, put pen to paper, or even better, fingers to keyboard, and send me a note that will be interesting to people in FOMA.

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