

THE *Typhooner*

a newsletter for owners of CAPE DORY TYPHOON sailboats, and other Cape Dory sailboats, as well as for those who want to own one, and those who once owned one, and now realize that selling the neat little boats they had was the biggest mistake of their lives.

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free (for the present)

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Thanks to all of you who have sent for and supported *the Typhooner* over the past three issues. Our geographic distribution of members is now: AR2, CA 6, CO 2, CT 5, FL 9 & 1/2, GA 1, IL 3, LA 1, MD 5, MA 9, ME 1, MN 4, MS 1, NH 3 & 1/2, NJ 3, NY 2, OH 2, PA 3, PR 1, RI 1, TX 2, VT 1, VA 1, WI 1. (The halves are for a family that winters in FL and summers in NH). Total 72. I figure I've spent \$18.25 in envelopes and postage, so I'm doing OK. Since the last issue I have received a total of \$35 in contributions.

BEARINGS & WAYPOINTS: All but one reader chose the "soft path" (keep it loose and simple, no boards of directors or big org stuff) over the "hard path" (formal organization, charters, rules, dues). One reader said, "we're sailors, so we don't expect to get directly from point A to point B." Several, however, took seriously my contention that the "soft path" would turn into the "hard path" eventually. That may indeed happen, but there are two factors tending the other way: one is that the number of requests for this newsletter has fallen off (though that may pick up when *SAIL Magazine* runs a note on us in their August issue; they said they would, when they called me yesterday on the phone) and the other is that there are a number of small Cape Dory owners' groups around the country, who already have enough of a structure in place to run their own regattas without the need for a national organization. That's fine with me!

For the time being, therefore, this newsletter will continue “as is”: irregular, informal, relying on occasional donations, and full of technical notes and historical investigations, plus anecdotes and experiences. I welcome these; I don't have the software to do illustrations, nor cash to pay contributors, but I'd just as soon not write all the material by myself.

About the *Directory*: I'm sending it free to anyone who wants it, plus a new one to every new joiner. It is updated periodically, so if you haven't seen one for some time, ask and I'll send it to you. It's getting rather long (about 7 pages) to send to each reader with each issue. So only the newer subscribers get one automatically. That's to get them into the action fast. Others: write away!

TECHNICAL STUFF: Mr. Winthrop Fisher, of 3103 Timber View Drive, Sugar Land, TX 77479, is interested in finding a *coaming cleat*. He has sent a picture of one, which, since I can't do illustrations at this point, I will have to describe for you. Imagine an ordinary jam cleat, with two horns on a base or neck, screw holes in the foot, horns right over the length of the foot. Now imagine that you have a giant's strength in your hand, and while holding the foot in place, you can take those two horns and bend them sideways, at a 90° angle, so that they no longer lie right over the foot, but beside it, while still parallel to the foot. (The horns themselves aren't bent out of normal shape). West Marine and Boat U. S. have already been queried. Apparently Spartan Marine (Robinhood, ME 04530) used to have them, but no longer. In a page Mr. Fisher photocopied from their catalog no. 13, the “unique design” of this cleat appears as no C185PB (polished bronze.) It would probably be costly to have them made specially in a foundry. Does anyone know where such cleats could be found?

Mr. Ken Shaw, 14145 W. Warren Circle, Lakewood, CO 80228, wants to know the Range of Positive Stability (RPS) of a Typhoon. Apparently it can't be calculated from basic data alone, and it isn't in my collection of old manuals and sales literature. I don't think that it's the kind of thing sales people want to talk about; it might make the customer nervous. The Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers (601 Pavonia Avenue, Suite 400, Jersey City, NJ 07306) might have the answer; but one of you readers out there might, too.

CARL ALBERG: Kim Richards, of the Lake Michigan Cape Dory Owner's Association (P O. Box 694, Gurnee, IL 60031) has provided us with the information we've been seeking about the Cape Dory's designer, Carl Alberg. Alberg was born in 1900 in Göteborg, Sweden's major west coast port; studied naval architecture there at the Chalmers Institute (now Chalmers University) of Technology, and came to America in 1925. John Alden found him working as a sparmaker in a Massachusetts boatyard, and he soon joined John Alden's design office. Alberg worked as a civilian employee for the US Navy during World War

II. He opened his own design office in 1946, and then (1949) took a job with the US Coast Guard. He stayed there for twenty years, and in his spare time turned out the Pearson Triton 28" (1959). The Triton was one of the first of the fiberglass yachts, and made his career; it was a rapid success and still has its own thriving class association. Alberg retired from the Coast Guard in 1969 and joined Cape Dory Yachts; the first he designed for them was our own beloved Typhoon. His aim was to create "easily handled family boats to satisfy the majority of cruising people." In this, as we all know, he brilliantly succeeded, designing 56 boats that were built in some 10,000 copies altogether. His boats were planned, from 19 feet up to 45, to fit the old CCA rule. The above facts are taken from an obituary essay published in the January 1991 *Cruising World*, so it can be safely assumed that Alberg died toward the end of 1990. And now we know!

What we don't know, is why he named these boats after a tropical cyclone; was it to honor an earlier boat of the same name? We have no answer to this first question. And how many Typhoons were built, and how many are still out there? Opinions vary as to the second question; and you, beloved readers, must help us answer the third. Finally, we still don't know the date of his retirement, nor do we have the whole story of the fate of the Typhoon design and the production of boats based thereon, after he left Cape Dory Yachts.

HIN'S: John R. Butler USCG (Ret.) of 16855 Heritage Bay Road, Rogers, AR 72756 (he sails his Typhoon, *Joy II*, on Beaver Lake), offers the following useful information on Hull Identification Numbers:

"HIN"'s: what are they? and who cares? — "HIN" is yet another government acronym standing for "**H**ull **I**dentification **N**umber". It is analogous to the VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) that has been standard identification on cars for some years. HIN's were established by the Federal Boating Safety Act of 1972 and provide a means to identify every boat manufactured since then. Like the VIN on your car, the HIN on your boat should help reduce theft, and to make identification, upon recovery, simple and positive. Also like VIN's, there is a standard place to find the VIN on any boat: on the upper starboard side of the transom, molded into the fiberglass. (I don't know how they are done on non-fiberglass boats, but I'm sure the "where" is the same). HIN's, since they began 1 November, 1972, have always been twelve digits. There were two optional formats until 1 January, 1984; the current format became optional then, and mandatory as of 1 August 1984.

Back to "who cares?" Only the curious, unless you own, are buying, or are just interested in boats. For instance, when I bought a new Montgomery 15 in the fall of 1984, the HIN told me that it was built in June of 1983. Armed with the

knowledge that it had probably been sitting on the dealer's lot for over a year, and that he was likely tired of seeing it there, I made a very low offer and got a very fine bargain.

If you own a boat, or are buying one, it would be wise to compare the HIN on your title with that on your boat. A discrepancy might just be a typo; it might also be a covered-up theft. If the HIN has been obviously changed, or removed, you really have something to worry about!

How do you read them? Simple. The first three should be capital letters identifying the manufacturer. (My Typhoon's HIN is CPDD1526M78F; CPD must be what Cape Dory selected to identify their boats). The next five digits are the manufacturer's assigned "production or serial number." The Coast Guard allows the manufacturers to "do their own thing" in these five digits and can't decipher them for you. But sometimes they are easy: my Montgomery 15 had "15264", the 15 for the model, 264 for the sail or hull number, and this last was, in fact, on my mainsail. On my Typhoon, I have no idea what the D stands for, but the sail/hull number identifies it as the 1526th Typhoon built.

During the '72 to '84 HIN cycle, the last four digits could be *either* month and year (my Montgomery's last four were 0683 = June 1983), *or* "model year format": one letter, followed by "model year" (two numbers), and "production month" (one letter). So my Typhoon has a model year format of M — which is probably explained in Cape Dory's old records — followed by 78 for the year, and was built in January. The first twelve letters of the alphabet indicate the month, beginning with August; the sixth letter, F, stands for the sixth month after August, January. Probably August started the cycle since, presumably, the Act was passed in August.

For you lucky folks with newer boats, the first eight symbols are read the same; the last four code the month of production (first a letter, and now logically beginning with A for January, ending with L for December), second symbol a single number signifying the year of production, and the last two symbols two numbers, signifying the model year. So, L485 would be a boat built in December of 1984 and called a 1985 model.

Now that I have thoroughly muddied your waters, go sailing in them!

(Interpreting my own HIN, I find that 0038 indeed jibes with the plate number, but M80A doesn't, quite, jibe with the date stamped on the starboard aft deck, 10 16 79. Presumably the boat was started in August 1979, and completed in October — does that make sense? and was a model 1980 boat. OK?) — Editor.

FOR THE NEXT ISSUE I'm saving Dr. John Long's account of his trailering a Typhoon from San Luis Obispo to San Diego. It's very informative but I'm trying to keep issues of *the Typhooner* down to four pages to save postage. At last the weather has cleared here and maybe I can sail again!

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