



Hooligan's Apalachicola Eight

by Ted McGee

Two year's ago Paul Gallant (*Hooligan*) put together a trip down the Apalachicola River. The trip, known as *Hooligan's Chattahoochee Coup*, started with 8 Catalina 22s on Georgia's Lake Seminole and wound its way 106 miles down the Apalachicola River to Apalachicola, Florida. From Apalachicola the boats sailed west to Panama City and on to Ft. Walton Beach, Florida. You may have read about that trip in MainBrace or Mainsheet.



Paul Gallant on *Hooligan* - on his way to White City. Photo by Dee LaGarde.

During the months following the *Chattahoochee Coup* plans were made for a follow up trip to explore the Apalachicola Bay and surrounding islands. Paul Gallant, our trip leader, planned a two-part trip. The first part would take us from Apalachicola northwest along the Intracoastal Waterway (more west than north) to Port St. Joe. From there, weather permitting, we would sail southwest back to Apalachicola, forming one loop of a figure 8. This part of the journey would put us outside the protected waters of the Intracoastal Waterway and in the Gulf of Mexico. The second part of our trip would take us from Apalachicola, following the Intracoastal Waterway northeast (more east than north) to Dog Island, just south of Carrabelle, Fl. From



Who would have thought that practicing boarding *RoxseA* would be so important. Photo by Bob & Trish Endicott.

there we would again sail outside the Intracoastal Waterway, weather permitting, southwest back to Apalachicola, forming the second loop of a figure 8.



Dora and Ted on *RoxseA* at Eagle Bay. Photo by Bob & Trish Endicott.

This adventure begins like many others, with a gathering of C22 sailors excited to share the experience with long-time friends. Barely a month after Hurricane Ivan came ashore, causing destruction along the Florida panhandle and in particular the area of the *Northern Gulf Coast Cruise*, eight Catalina 22s gathered for *Hooligan's Apalachicola Eight*.

- Paul Gallant – *Hooligan*
- Mike and Dee LaGarde – *Ameline*
- Bob and Trish Endicott – *Tequila*

Sunset

- Ned Westerlund – *Wingin' It*
- Kent and Jane Overbeck - *Leap*

Frog

- Ted and Dora McGee - *Rhapsody in sea*

- Robert Donehoo – *Shady Deal*
- Stan and Annie Connally - *Cay Cat*

The adventure begins

The trip officially began on Saturday, October 9, 2004. Half of the boats launched at Scipio Creek Marina and the other half launched at Apalachicola City Marina. Our first rendezvous was at the mouth of the Apalachicola River. With spirits high and sails full we made our way west, following the Apalachicola River and Intracoastal Waterway to White City, our first stop. Sailing in light air against a river current is challenging and slow going. Eventually, everyone in the group except us was motor sailing. White City is a small town providing a quiet stopover for the night. With little to do once there, Dora and I opted for the slower pace under sail.

Most of this leg of the journey was quiet. As we passed through the Cypress swamps prevalent in this area we could

hear the wind in the grass. Around 2:00 PM fishing boats began passing us. We lost count of how many there were, but it turns out there was a fishing tournament that day and the destination for all the fishing boats was White City. Fortunately, by the time we arrived the tournament was over and the fishing boats were gone.

On Sunday, October 10th, we headed for Port St. Joe. About a mile west of White City we followed the Gulf County Canal south to St. Joseph Bay and then sailed southeast to St. Joe Marina. After lunch we had a beautiful sail across St. Joseph Bay to Eagle Harbor. Storms threatened, but politely waited until we were secure inside the harbor and tied up for the night before rain fell. Eagle Harbor is in the middle of St. Joseph Peninsula and part of St. Joe State Park. One side of the peninsula is uninhabited and still remains in its natural state. A short walk across the peninsula is the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico. In between rain showers we walked the beaches in search of shells.



Ted being towed by Dora. Photo by Bob & Trish Endicott.

Monday's departure was delayed due to bad weather. It gave everyone ample opportunity to discuss routes back to Apalachicola. If the weather remained bad we could return to Apalachicola through the Intracoastal Waterway via White City. If the weather cleared, sailing outside St. Joseph Bay was still a good option. At 2:00 pm Monday afternoon the group left Eagle Harbor, intending to anchor near the mouth of St. Joseph Bay at St. Joseph Point for the night. Although the sail to St. Joseph Point was beautiful, the weather showed no signs of clearing. The wind was blowing from the northwest and we anchored just outside the harbor in as protected an area as we could find. After listening to weather reports six of the boats sailed back to St. Joe Marina for the night. They planned on following the route through White City

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back to Apalachicola. That left two boats at anchor in the north of St. Joseph Bay for the night; Paul Gallant on *Hooligan* and us on *Rhapsody in seA*. Our plan was to wait out the weather and see what Tuesday morning brought before deciding a route.

Hooligan's and Rhapsody in seA's adventure

Tuesday morning was glorious, complete with clearing skies and a spectacular sunrise. The wind and seas were calm. We had brief radio contact with *Ameline* to let them know our plans. We would rendezvous at a GPS waypoint in Apalachicola Bay, Wednesday morning at 8:30. We pulled anchor and headed for the Gulf. We didn't know at the time that weather and tide conditions would prevent us from rejoining the group as planned. From this point on in the story, I can't tell you much about the other six boats experience. Another story teller will have to fill in those details. I can only tell you about *Hooligan* and *Rhapsody in seA*.



This is the lighthouse we explored on Little St. George Island while waiting for high tide. Photo by Dora McGee.

The first couple of hours we motored. The wind was light and we had a long way to go to make our planned anchorage in Apalachicola Bay, about 40 miles away. We motor sailed southeast along the Gulf side of St. Joseph Peninsula to Cape San Blas. Cape San Blas has plenty of deep water, but the chart shows breakers all around. We had two choices, pick our way through the breakers or take a longer route about 10 miles offshore. We opted to take the shorter route through the breakers. After safely navigating Cape San Blas we arrived at Indian Peninsula. Indian Pass is a narrow and shallow pass that provides access to Apalachicola Bay. However, this part of Apalachicola Bay is shoals and oyster beds. The channel through the pass is narrow and unmarked. A good depth finder is needed to navigate through it. We entered Indian Pass just long enough to get ice and lunch at a local campground and then headed back into the Gulf of Mexico.

After lunch the wind had picked up and we sailed east along the Gulf side of St. Vincent Island to West Pass, which separates St. Vincent Island from Little St. George Island. We sailed through West Pass into Apalachicola Bay and anchored on the north shore of Little St. George Island. We knew we were in shallow water but a quick check of my GPS showed we were at low tide. We felt safe for the night. After dinner and a beautiful sunset we turned in. Shortly after going to bed we felt the keel of *Rhapsody* bump bottom. This wasn't right, perhaps we drug anchor. A quick check showed we were still in the same place. There was another bump, and another. I checked my GPS again, where I quickly discovered my error. I was still looking at tide tables for St. Joseph Bay. Low tide in Apalachicola Bay was a couple hours later. We decided to move the boat to deeper water but in the dark couldn't find a clear path. We would have to stay put. Sometime after midnight the bumping stopped. The tide was coming back in and high tide would be at 4 AM.

I was up a 6 Wednesday morning. Paul was up shortly after and we talked about the tide situation. We would have to move the boats soon or face another low tide. We got ready for the day and were preparing to get under way. At 7:30 we bumped again. I immediately started the motor and hollered over to Paul that we were bumping. I had studied the chart during the previous low tide and felt the safest way out was northeast. We bumped several times before one last bump and we were in deeper water. *Hooligan* followed just a couple of minutes behind us but the outgoing tide quickly closed the path and *Hooligan* was trapped. After anchoring *Rhapsody* in six feet of water I took our dinghy, *RoxseA*, over to see what could be done to get *Hooligan* free. We looked for an alternate way out but couldn't find one. At 8:30 I had radio contact with *Tequila Sunset* and *Ameline*. I told them we were ok but would not make the rendezvous. We would meet up with them that night at Dog Island.

Paul could walk all the way around *Hooligan* without getting his shorts wet. It was clear we would be spending the day at Little St. George Island. This was ok with us. Little St. George is uninhabited and there is an abandoned lighthouse on the south shore. We would spend part of the day exploring the island until the tide would free *Hooligan*. *Rhapsody* had been safely anchored about an hour. We took one last look at the anchor before Dora and I climbed into *RoxseA* and headed to shore. Once on the island we climbed a knoll and looked out over the

scene. Our dinghy *RoxseA* was pulled up on shore, *Hooligan* was waiting for high tide, and *Rhapsody* was safely at anchor in six feet of water. Nearby was an old cabin that was used by volunteer workers who worked on the lighthouse and other groups who did work or research on the island. We hiked about a mile or so to explore the lighthouse, searched the south beach for shells, took pictures, and were just generally enjoying the day. For awhile there were only three people on the island, Paul, Dora, and me.

Rhapsody in seA sets sail on her own adventure



Hooligan waiting for the tide to change, *Rhapsody* is missing. Photo by Dora McGee.

When we got back to the old cabin another couple had arrived. We chatted for a few minutes while Dora walked back up to the knoll overlooking our boats. The wind had picked up and was now blowing 15 to 20 knots from the northwest. There was *RoxseA*, still pulled up on shore, and *Hooligan*, still waiting for high tide. But something in the picture had changed. There was a boat missing and it was *Rhapsody*. The other couple had been on the island about 45 minutes and said there were two sailboats when they first arrived. Whatever happened to *Rhapsody* had happened in the last 45 minutes. *Rhapsody* was nowhere to be seen. She had apparently broke anchor in the increased wind and waves and was running before the wind.

We went down to the beach and as I was pulling *RoxseA* out into the water I could see what looked like a sailboat a long way off. Whether it was *Rhapsody* I didn't know. *RoxseA* is a little 8 foot Trinkka with a 2 HP motor. If we had any hope of finding *Rhapsody* it was going to be in the Trinkka. *Hooligan* was still trapped by low tide. All Paul Gallant could do was watch us through binoculars as Dora and I headed out in 15 to 20 knot wind and 3 to 5 feet waves in search of our sailboat. The Trinkka handled the sea conditions well. Sometimes we would get on top of a wave and surf,

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but after appearing and disappearing, Paul lost sight of us after we had gone a couple of miles. Paul talked to the other couple on the island, who agreed to wait till we returned.

It was adrenalin that kept us going as **RoxseA** worked her way through the waves and wind. I kept my eye on the boat we were chasing while Dora scanned the shore in case **Rhapsody** had run aground somewhere. After about an hour it was clear the boat I was chasing was heading for Government Cut, a pass on the east end of Little St. George Island that leads to the Gulf of Mexico. The boat wasn't getting any bigger and it didn't look like we would catch it. About 90 minutes into the chase the boat we were chasing started to look bigger. We were either gaining or it had stopped. A little while later I was able to identify the boat as **Rhapsody**.

The anchor on **Rhapsody** finally caught and we were able to catch up to her. **Rhapsody's** anchor caught in pounding surf, about half a mile from Government Cut. She was in four feet of water and about two hundred feet behind **Rhapsody** was the shore. From **Rhapsody's** original anchor position to where

we finally caught up with her was about four miles. Somehow she had missed the shoals of Horseshoe Cove, two sets of pilings, Higgins Shoal, and Little St. George Flats. The pounding surf presented another challenge, transferring from the dinghy to **Rhapsody**. We approached **Rhapsody** from the stern, which was lifting out of the water and could easily come down on **RoxseA's** bow. The ladder on **Rhapsody** was down and Dora managed to catch it and climb aboard the first try. I came aboard **Rhapsody** next and secured **RoxseA's** tow line.

I remembered giving Bob Endicott a hard time earlier because he had 9.8 HP motor on **Tequila Sunset**. I found myself wishing I had that motor now. Fortunately our 5 HP Honda proved strong enough to motor **Rhapsody** forward through the surf and against the wind. Dora pulled the anchor and we headed back to **Hooligan's** position. When we arrived **Hooligan** was still waiting for high tide. We anchored and waited for the tide to get high enough to free **Hooligan**. While we waited the reality and emotions of what had just transpired begin to set in. Finally, around 2:30 PM the tide was high enough for **Hooligan** to get underway. With a friendly wave to the other couple we set sail. It was late in the



Wingin It, Tequila Sunset, Ameline tied up at Eagle Bay. Photo by Dora McGee.

day and we had 30 miles to go to get to Dog Island. We decided instead to put in at Scipio Creek Marina, 8 miles away, where our truck was. From there we drove to Carrabelle where we were able to reach the rest of the group by VHF radio. This was the first radio contact they had from us since missing the morning rendezvous. They were relieved to hear from us and we made arrangements to meet Thursday morning in Carrabelle.

The group reunites and the adventure ends

Thursday morning we finally met up with the group. **Ameline** opted to sail back a day early and was on her way to Apalachicola. Weather for the rest of the

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trip did not look promising. Strong headwinds with heavy evening thunderstorms were forecast for Thursday night's anchorage. The group decided to end the cruise a day early. We shuttled everyone to their tow vehicles so they could take out in Carrabelle.

Like all adventures, this one had come to an end. No one had managed to complete both loops of the figure 8 by sailing outside of the Intracoastal Waterway in the Gulf of Mexico. **Hooligan** and **Rhapsody in seA** only managed to complete the western loop of the figure 8 and never made it to Dog Island. Five of the boats had visited most of the destinations, sailing from Apalachicola to Port St. Joe, returning to Apalachicola, and then sailing east to Dog Island. Only **Ameline**, sailed by Mickey and Dee La-Garde, managed to make all the destinations by sailing from Dog Island back to Apalachicola. We meet for dinner Thursday night where we swapped sea stories. The promised thunderstorms arrived and we were all grateful to be safe ashore. Friday's departure was filled with hugs and goodbyes, but we all knew we would see each other in May at the 2005 *Northem Gulf Coast Cruise*, the next great adventure.

Buddy Bearings, Friend or Foe

By Dennis Slaton Technical Editor



In 1992, as we drove from Georgia to Jackson, Miss. to the southeast Regionals, we had a wheel bearing go up on the trailer while speeding along at 70 mph., killing the tire and doing damage to the threads on the axle. We had extra bearings, but the hub was toast and I had no file to work on the damaged threads. So we left the boat in the middle of nowhere, and drove on to Jackson, Miss. for parts to do the repair. We ended up at a small trailer-manufacturing place, operated by two good ole Miss. country boys. As I followed one of them around collecting my parts he proceeded to give me a lesson in "Boat Trailer Bearings 101" He had noticed the red grease in the hub along with the Buddy Bearing. To make a long story short, this was his bearing philosophy: Use real wheel bearing grease, the old kind, thick and stringy, pack the bearing with a bearing packer or by hand, don't fill the hub with grease, just a little on each side of the bearing, don't use Buddy Bearings to fill the hub with grease, It will over fill the hub causing the seal to fail, allowing grease

sidewall flex, which minimizes heat. He also wasn't a fan of radial trailer tires, because of their lack of sidewall support. He also gave me a file to work on the axle threads. "Good Ole Boy". Since then I have confirmed his philosophy with several long time machinists. Using his tips I've trailered thousands of miles over the last twelve years without a problem, even so I still carry around extra bearings and a couple of extra hubs on my trips. This is just my opinion, your opinion and "Your Mileage May Vary".

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out and dirt and water in. Ever notice how many trailer wheels have grease slung out the back side. Grease is also a great insulator, and hubs full of grease run hotter preventing the bearings from cooling properly. The Wives Tale about the hub having to be full of grease to keep out the water is just that. The surface the seal runs on is important, if it's smooth, water can't get penetrate. Pumping grease in a hub via a Buddy Bearing is never a substitute for doing your bearing maintenance. Trailer tires should be inflated to the maximum pressure written on the tire. The extra pressure helps control

Official Ballot
For Constitution/ Bylaws

This is the official ballot and no other form of voting will be accepted. Copies may be made for voting purposes. C-22 Association Members only are qualified to vote.

I accept the changes as presented.

I reject the changes as presented.

Absentee ballots can be cast by checking the above. The final vote will be taken at the 2005 National meeting at which time the absentee votes will be counted along with the votes of the membership at the meeting.

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*Mail to Ted McGee, Secretary, C-22 NSA,
 3790 Post Gate Dr., Cumming, GA 30040,
 or submit at National General Membership
 Meeting in 2005*