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THE FOUL WINCH

Racing a "cruising" Alberg and a fouled sheet.

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MBSC AT GEORGIAN BAY REGATTA A

A great weekend of racing.

SNAKE ISLAND BUOY

Midland Bay Sailing Club: Fall 2022



COMMODORE

HUGH LOUGHBOROUGH

Lease negotiations with the Town of Midland continue. We expect to have a mutually acceptable lease signed in September or October.

Before he passed away, Ted Symons nominated Midland Bay Sailing Club as a Historical Venue at the Midland Sports Hall of Fame. On Saturday September 24, I attended the Midland Sports Hall of Fame banquet on behalf of MBSC and received

a plaque commemorating MBSC's induction in August 2020. Learn more at the following link. [Midland Bay Sailing Club Historical Venue 2020](#) The plaque will be proudly displayed in the Ted Symons clubhouse.



photo: Lisa Razuri-Codirezzi

MBSC NEGOTIATIONS MAKE THE NEWS

[Midland Today](#) had an article on the lease negotiations. Mayor Strathearn spoke of the transformation of the MBSC land.

Derek Howard wrote:

To understand how successful the Midland Bay Sailing Club has become, it should be heard from Midland Mayor Stewart Strathearn of how that land was when he was a child.

I remember driving out there as a kid when it was burning sawdust; underground smoke coming up. It was just like Mordor out of Lord of the Rings," described Strathearn of the swampy waterfront which defined Midland's industrial heritage from the late 19th Century until the early 1970s.

If you are interested in the minutiae of civic governance, you can access the city staff report and recommendations for MBSC [here](#).

A great big thank you to all involved in the



THE FOUL WINCH

BY DAVID TAKAHASHI

Let me start this tale by saying that we are cruisers with a Good Old Boat. We have a 1978 Alberg 37 that we have outfitted for cruising and gunk holing around Georgian Bay. Now when I say cruising, I mean serious cruising, with no concern for weight or what's on the deck. Our Brochure weight is 16,000 lbs. Plus 4 deep cycle 125-amp batteries and a starter battery. Solar panels to keep the refrigeration / freezer charged up, and to keep a case of beer cold. My point is that we are a heavy boat, comfortable for sure, but heavy by racing standards.

When it comes to racing, at one point in the Alberg's past glory, she was considered fast by Club racing standards and is still pretty quick in moderate to heavy air.

We belong to the Midland Bay Sailing Club on the shores of Georgian Bay Canada home to some of the best cruising and gunk holing in the world. Once a year our Club sponsors a pig roast and pot luck dinner for our local YMCA camp. We provide

the food, local retail home improvement stores provide the material, and volunteers provide labour for a weekend of maintenance on the YMCA's bunk houses and main dining room. This is a Club weekend with all members invited and while we are at it, lets race to the YMCA camp, hence the name Hog Race. This year things were a little different as the YMCA camp was closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Club decided on making a day out of it anyways. Blessing of the fleet, sail past and a modified Hog race. All are welcome, cruisers and racers.

The weather man was predicting some pretty good winds in the afternoon gusting to 25knts. Alberg weather! Needless to say, we were pretty excited about the prospects of heeling over and sailing hard to wind. The rules called for your crew to be apart of your personal circle of close friends, so of course we invited 2 of our cruising buddies to crew with us. The day before, I took our bimini down, emptied our water tanks in an effort to lighten our boat and battened every thing down

below that I could see becoming a flying projectile when the winds got stronger. I kept thinking, this might be our big chance to win the Hog trophy and have our boat name engraved on it. Ah, the glory, I could see it now, holding the trophy above my head, just like the Stanley Cup.

To begin with, my crew and I were not familiar with the starting count down. 1 horn blast to the 5-minute start then 1 blast starts the 5-minute countdown, then a couple more blasts to start the race. Well, we got all confused from the first blast and decided to just shadow the racers in the group, which worked well. We weren't the first to cross the starting line, but we were close behind. The first leg of the race was a down wind run and it was a more casual white sail race, so lucky us, no spinnaker's allowed. We actually faired well following a very light weight Trimaran which blew over the line in a blur. Sailing wing on wing we were 2nd overall. We approached the first mark in good position, the wind was up to about 15 knots, which was great for our heavy displacement hull. As we rounded the first mark the Trimaran seemed to skip on top of the water, literally blasting off to the second mark at the top of Snake Island. We were still in 2nd overall, but... first in the open mono hull class, which to me makes a huge difference. Now I say this because every sailor knows that a multi hull sailboat can be very, very fast if the crew knows how to sail, or fly as we witnessed and watched as she dashed all my hopes of finishing first over the line.



MBSC race night, August 17. photo: Christopher Gooding

We sheeted in and started beating towards the 2nd mark behind the Tri and ahead of the rest of the pack. As the wind picked up, it matched the adrenalin we felt as we healed over and put the rail in the water. All was good! We rounded the 2nd mark and set our sails for a dash to the finish line with the wind forward of the beam. If the winds held true, we would only have to throw in 1 tack to cross the line, still first or second depending on how you classified the boats in the race. This is where things went awry, we needed to adjust our head sail and started to sheet in. Did I mention that we were cruisers? Because the wind was still brisk, one of the crew put too many wraps on our primary self tailing winch and promptly locked it up, with a little further to go till we had to tack, the decision was made to wait until we tacked to un-ravel the fouled winch. Big mistake! The wrap just kept getting tighter and tighter. When it came time to tack, the jib sheet wouldn't budge, so we took the sheet from the port winch, brought it around to the starboard secondary winch in an attempt to ease the strain on the first jib sheet. Our secondary winch is not self tailing and, well... didn't we proceed to put too many wraps on it too and... you guessed it, locked that sheet up as well. What to do??? By this time, we were getting close to the old town coal dock where the locals go with their families on a sunny afternoon to picnic and fish. On that particular day there was quite the crowd. There we were, heading straight for the dock at 6 knots with a full main and jib powering us forward. Fortunately for us the coal dock has deep water which allowed us to come in close enough to the surprise and delight of the fishermen on the dock.

TACK!!! And throw the boat into irons was our only option at the time, so we thought. We started the engine and turned head to wind to drop the main and figure out what to do about the jib sheets. All my hopes for the Hog trophy were dashed in what seemed like a fleeting panic sickened moment. With the engine running and the main sheet down we headed to windward and pulled the Jib down. Defeated, we motored back to the club for cocktails, BB-Q and gam. Sitting in our cockpit

lamenting over our disastrous performance, some racers came over and wanted to know what happened and offer their condolences, and of course advise us about what they would have done under those not so uncommon circumstances.

Being cruisers, we never really had to sheet in as fast as we could, quick maybe, but surely not as fast as we could. What to do about a fouled winch was not something I had given much thought to, but in the racing community, it is fairly common place, or so I'm told. One friend said he carries a dedicated line with a pelican hook to hank on and run back instead of bringing the other jib sheet across. But the best suggestion and the big take away from that dismal day and horrible situation is to bring the other sheet over and secure it, then go forward and cut the jib sheet at the clue, let the

other jib sheet take up the tension and simply re-tie the jib sheet. Simple? Maybe, but going forward on a heaving deck with a knife to release the strain may not be the easiest task, but if there is a next time, I just might give-it a go.



Heading back to Killbear from Parry Sound. photo: Philip Krueger

PAINT SIP LAUGH

BY BARB JAY

WINE AND PAINT - HOW CAN YOU GO WRONG!

On September 8th the ladies enjoyed a relaxing evening of shared experiences while being guided by Liz Lasky to create a beautiful Fall Birch Grove painting.





THE HOG RACE AND RENDEZVOUS

BY PETER CHALKLEY

What a beautiful weekend in September to enjoy the bay and reacquaint yourself with friends and MBSC traditions! Unfortunately the wind didn't hold up and most of the 18 boats didn't finish the race. Express Mail, Makana, Tok Tokki and Wendilin 3 all sacrificed their rafting appetizer time to complete the race.

Once we got to Camp Kitchi, there were over 30 boats at anchor awaiting the roast pig and activities on shore. This years theme was Vikings. When the Viking horn blew mighty warriors drifted to shore for the feast many dressed in incredible outfits and suitably raunchy in their behaviour and demeanour.

After a best 2 out of 3 tug of war contest, we eventually made our way inside the lodge. Here the first table to be served must first win the traditional Viking game of Toilet Paper and Bondage. There was outrageous cheating, but after 10 minutes we concluded no winner, but enjoyed giggles into the night.

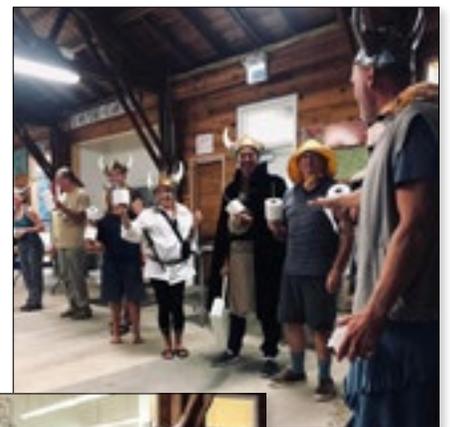
A great feast was followed by a bonfire and guitar, and some more drinking for those thirsty. Best costumes were awarded to Phil Alcove and Karen Green who each won a nice bottle of libations. The event of the year was back in full style. Thanks to Barb, Kathy, Jim (and me) for getting this together.

PS. Barb has your \$20 Hog R&R t-shirt waiting for you!



Don't be shy - go whole hog.
photo: David Takahashi

VIKINGS



EDITOR

PHILIP KRUEGER

The 2022 season, for the crew of *Tortuga*, was a year of adjusted expectations. Unlike last year when we made a run for the North Channel, getting as far as Baie Fin, this year we settled on local exploration and revisiting anchorages closer to Midland. We started the season with twelve day cruise up to Parry Sound with our buddy boat (and fellow MBSC'ers) *Leading Edge* (on cover: passing Cousin Island, Kilcourse Bay). The balance of the summer was shorter trips. We spent more time on the dock than we ever have, waiting for Saturday morning guests to arrive.

After enjoying a great sail up to CS1, we were particularly happy to find that both boats could sneak into the larger, northern part of Echo Bay where we waited out some weather. It was a perfect sized bay and only had a handful of boats, unlike the smaller cruiser crowded south-east



bay. The kids were especially happy to find a rope swing. I'm hoping the higher water levels stay to keep this bay open to sailboats.

After the heavy weather passed we treated to brisk sail up the Wabuano channel,

running at hull speed into Kilcourse Bay.

Closer to home, we finally made it to Longuissa Bay. The spectacular sunsets were a highlight for me and the wetlands in the west end were great for exploring by kayak. Unfortunately there seems to be some tensions between cottagers and boaters, which is a shame because on the two weekends we visited, boaters were respectful of the shore and quiet. It was nothing like the sideshow circus I've seen at Beckwith.



I'll have what they had, but make mine a double.

Speaking of the usual anchorages, we were happy to share Hockey Stick with one other boat in late August after watching not one, but two powerboats lift up logs on thier anchors!

We made it to a couple of pub nights but were dissappointed that we didn't make the Georgian Bay Regatta or the Hog Race. Somehow life has a way of getting in the way of sailing on occasion. As life gets back to normal-ish we are looking forward to connecting with our fellow sailors at more events.



Spider Bay morning.

WHY DID I WAIT SO LONG ?!

BY RACHEL LEWIS

A NEW MEMBER DISCOVERS THE JOYS OF MBSC

With the invitation for articles for the newsletter, I ponder on what I might write to both say thank you to all the wonderful folk I have met and to share the good (and perhaps hint at the other) that I have enjoyed since coming to MBSC.

As a somewhat seasoned boat custodian and sailing cruiser, I had spent the last five years lost in the powerboat wilderness of Beacon Bay Marina, Penetang'. Nice facilities. ('nuf said on that.) My boat and mistress, "Manumit", a 1979 Endeavour 32, was crying out for the camaraderie of others of her kind. Finally, I got the message and all I can say is "Why did I wait so long?!"

The first time I stepped into the clubhouse, I relaxed and said "Now this is a Sailing Club." I have been a member of several sailing clubs in the past and to be once again standing in a gathering

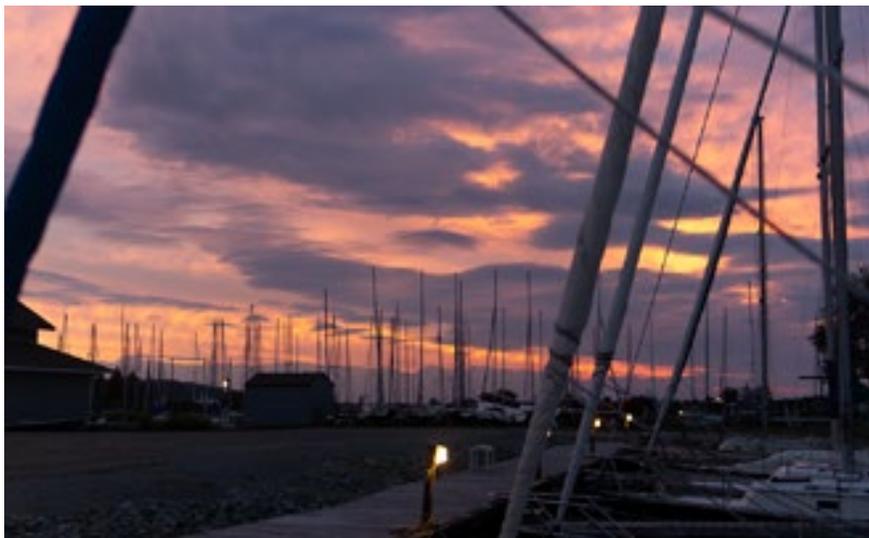
of messing up.) But I berthed Manumit like a pro', something that I couldn't seem to repeat for the next month!

Even though the boat had not yet arrived at MBSC, I came down to the club "Boats-in" and I was immediately put to work by Cher', helping with the breakfast. Mentors, Lynn and Pat, provided a warm welcome and some familiar faces at my first Pub Night. Slowly, I received the accoutrements of memberships: a KEY! and a Burgee! (Proudly flown). Threaten with being dragged across the parking lot, I was anxious to get my work hours completed, hard labour ensued as I was brutally pressed into painting sailing school picnic tables and cleaning the clubhouse weekly (Thank you, Karen and Ria). On familiar ground, Brian O'Sullivan schooled me in the intricacies of Race Committee duties, the MBSC way. Quickly, MBSC became familiar.

Pub Nights became filled with friendly faces (and the gift of COVID), anchorages held the promise of fellow MBSC cruisers, and the conversations on the dock became ever more interesting.

Then came the Women Who Sail Tuesday coffee morning. What a wonderful group. Competent, vital and fun! Even the guys feared to enter! To all the ladies, join us!

All of this culminated this weekend in the Hogs Regatta (Regatta: intentional) What a wonderful gathering of marauding Vikings, the heavy drinking of mead from horned helmets, and gorging on freshly hunted wild boar. The Ladies won the tug of



Midland Bay sunset viewed from C dock.

space that is about community and mutual participation, flanked by trophies, burgees and busy noticeboards, was like a welcome hug to a new home. Manumit was happy too as we arrived dancing in a stiff breeze, to dock under the keen observation of others on G Dock. (I was terrified

war and my admiration goes out to those that preserved in the race to get to the feast first. Once again, amazed to be there and my "Thank you's" go out to Barb and Peter.

And so my first season draws to a close. I have met some very special people. There is still my first Haul out at MBSC but I have no fear (well, maybe a little) that all will go smoothly.

So to my new family at MBSC, thank you for such a warm welcome and my first great season. I am looking forward to next year.



THE MBSC AT THE GBR

By Peter Chalkley

What a super week of sailing in western Georgian Bay! The 36th Annual Georgian Bay Regatta saw almost 40 boats competing making a huge comeback from Covid years. I had done 2 previous regattas, and was really looking forward to doing it with my new (comfortable) Catalina 36 and to visit that side of the bay for the first time.

A new addition to this race this year was the Feeder Race. Boats coming from the east met at Christian Island for an early start the next day for a fun race to Thornbury. The water balloons provided

an exciting start giving successful tosses a 10 minute credit! John negotiated the hazards the best and Expression won the first ever, hope to be continued, Feeder Race.



Rick and Ben winning the Family Participation Trophy

The GBR start was at Meaford where we were hosted by Reef Boat Club with a tasty BBQ and sponsored cold Creemore beer. On the first race to White Cloud we were surprised by a 40 knot storm front. Several boats didn't reef in time and jibs were ripped, that's how sudden it came up! I truly enjoyed my full enclosure during this time and mailed the previous owner an additional cheque for not appreciating it enough in our negotiations.

Anchoring in Port Elgin Bay I was amazed at the beauty of the Niagara Escarpment, which I had not seen before. After a long sail we were happy to have a such a protected bay and a relaxing Bingo game during the night. A quick race around Hay Island the next day was followed with a race around Cape Croker and into Hope Bay for the night and shore party.

The following day was a drifter around Barrier Island, and then the constant southerly breeze brought us safely to Lion's Head. Here there was a street party in town or a trivial pursuit contest for the those staying in to rest.

The sixth and final race was back to Wiarton and again the wind held strong and was a super end

to the week. Award banquet was at the Lions Club with a great fish and chips dinner. We shared the beach with the Canada Day festival and enjoyed fireworks at night.

MBSC had 8 boats competing this year, many for the first time.



Keego III and crew in Meaford showing her colours.

In the High Cruising Division Sojourn was our only entrant and was very happy not being in last place each race, beating his prediction that he would be!

In Low Cruising, Avalon placed third with an impressive showing in every race. An exciting story in the division was Keego III winning her first race ever with fond memories of Keego II!

High White Division was a very competitive MBSC affair. Phillip Stoesser in Wendlilin III won the division with an impressive 8 points over 6 races, beating out Doug Young in Sgian Dubh by one point. Third and Fourth went to Wicked and Ever Green. White Sails protected them from any rear attack...

In Low White Division, Expression was up against tough competition and placed 5th overall

Our club didn't enter any boats in the Flying Divisions.

Of special note, Rick White and his grandson Ben won the award for the Best Family Participants.

Ben was actually the only youth on the entire regatta this year, and being on the smallest boat in some tough conditions he must have made his grandfather incredibly proud! Must have motivated him enough to upgrade to a Catalina 34!

I haven't even told you about the rafting appetizers, the Poker Run game, and bottles of rum for many prizes all with gift sailing bags. Come and see for yourself...

So what are you doing next August 2-6? Sail competitively or just for fun in the Cruising Division. Meet new people, find new anchorages, learn new things, or drink some beer - all options are available! The

course will probably be starting out of our club, so we look forward to a large contingent on the water!



Phillip and crew winning the High White Trophy

2022 5.5M REGATTA

WORDS & PHOTOS BY JENNIFER HARKER

Twice this summer Midland Bay was alive with the sight of sleek racing 5.5M sailboats. In a return to pre-Covid activity, Midland Bay Sailing Club was able to host two North American 5.5M Regattas with Canadian and American crews.

While a robust European fleet races regularly in several countries, Midland is the only location in North America where these boats are actively racing as a fleet.

The enthusiasm and camaraderie is contagious and the fleet continues to grow with the support of MBSC members. Since the first regatta in 2014, about 50 club members have been involved and it's a unique opportunity to race in these former Olympic class boats.

It is exciting to see the fleet continue to grow and attract more participants from both sides of the border.

In June six boats were on the line and local favourite Nantoria, skippered by John Lister, finished first in the fleet with Firestorm, from the Texas Corinthian Yacht Club, hot on her heels.



Each 5.5 had at least one MBSC member aboard and four boats were skippered by members including Eugene Kokbas who sailed Summer School to top spot in the class classic division.

Firestorm is owned by Texan William Turner and has a long history and connection to his local club.

The June competition was Firestorm's first races in North America since 1989. Built in California for legendary racer Albert Fay, her racing credentials include winning the World's in 1983 and a World third in 1987. Following Fay's death, the boat was sold and went to the Netherlands in 1997, where Firestorm sailed in the 50th anniversary races in 1998 and then topped the evolution division in 2000.

Inspired by her history and racing pedigree, as well as the half model that hangs in Turner's home club of the Texas Corinthian Yacht Club, he's had his eye on the former Fay boat for more than a decade



and is thrilled to own her and be racing competitively.

He and crew Tal Hutcheson said it was a bucket list to see the boat, never mind owning or sailing her. Hutcheson said, "It's especially cool for me as Firestorm was built by a close family friend, my dad's godfather. Being on the boat and being competitive is special, it's a feeling, a real connection."



The two 5.5M North American Regattas in Midland featured close racing throughout and this is the only location the 5.5 fleet is actively racing in North America.

History abounds at the regatta as the fleet also includes Pride, owned by American Joe Strelow. Pride was Ernie Fay's boat from the 1960s and was featured in Sport Illustrated in September 1963.

The Fay brothers battled each other for sailing supremacy for years and it is fantastic that these boats continue to compete, writing new chapters in this storied boat class.

By August's regatta the fleet had grown to eight boats, enabling organizers to split the fleet into two fleets, one for the wooden classics and another for the fiberglass evolutions.

Skippers were vying for their class trophy as well as overall North American Champion.

The late summer variable conditions were near perfect for the five day regatta, testing the skills of skippers and crews, some of whom were aboard a 5.5 for the first time.

An accomplished Shark racer, Eugene Kokbas took the helm of Summer School this week for his first 5.5 experience. Kokbas said, "It's truly a



MBSC member Chris Gooding was aboard O'Kelly in June and enthusiastically returned for the August regatta. This year 22 club members participated in the regatta as crew, skipper, race committee and on-shore support.

privilege to sail this vintage boat. She's beautiful. We tried to make her previous owner proud."

That was clearly the case as Kokbas skippered Summer School to the top spot in the classic division.

On the evolution side, Firestorm would take home the trophy, as well as be crowned the overall North American champion for 2022.

In a unique show of cross-border cooperation, Summer School is jointly owned by Canadian John Lister and American Joe Strelow, who each have their own boats to race, thus providing an opportunity for others like Kokbas to experience the joy of 5.5 racing.

Each 5.5 boat had an MBSC member aboard and



Firestorm from Texas finished first in the evolution division and claimed the overall championship for the North American 5.5M regattas. MBSC member Jeff Brook (centre) brought his skills and weather knowledge aboard to help skipper William Turner (left) and crew Tal Hutcheson.

four were skippered by members – Kokbas, Lister, Dean Harker and Matt Cowan. In all 22 members were involved in the regatta in various ways. Hats off to MBSC's unflappable Rick White, who



Bay Port General Manager Steve Goddard (second from left) accepted a thank you plaque and a donation of \$1300 from MBSC members John Lister, Chris Gooding and Dean Harker. The North American 5.5ers wanted to give back to the community by making a contribution to Bay Port's Boaters For Best Care campaign in support of the Georgian Bay General Hospital in Midland.

seamlessly coordinates the race committee every regatta.

While the racing is serious and competitive, back on shore, social events and camaraderie are the best part of the 5.5 fleet. MBSC members Cheryl and Matt Thurley, Lorraine and Dean Harker, Karen and Don Rethoret, and Anne and Bill Mills host dinners for the entire fleet with everyone bringing their special culinary creations to round out the meal.

In August that spirit of cooperation, camaraderie and giving took on a new focus. This year participants wanted to give something back to the community that continues to welcome them year after year. Bay Port Yachting Centre has supported the 5.5 fleet since the first regatta in 2014, assisting with launch, haul and summer

storage. Sailors wanted to show their appreciation for Bay Port's vital support so took a collection and donated \$1300 towards their Boaters for Best Care campaign raising funds for the Georgian Bay General Hospital.

Plans continue to expand the fleet and there are opportunities to own a 5.5, crew or skipper or help with the regattas.

Want to get involved or learn more about the North American revival of the 5.5s? Email danielrossi@earthlink.net or listersjohn@gmail.com for more information.

Visit <https://5.5class.org> for information about 5.5M activity around the world. Under the Latest 5.5M News heading, readers can find several articles and photos on the 2022 North American events.

MAYBE THEY DON'T ALL STINK

BY PHILIP KRUEGER



We spotted this guy zipping around Longuissa Bay on Labour day weekend. He criss-crossed the bay every which way he could for the better part of two hours. Weaving between boats, dodging anchor lines and the steady stream of dinghys headed to "dog-poop island". We raised a glass to his proper use of this type of vessel, which apparently also serves as his tender attached - um ugh, to a stink pot.

My therapist tells me I am making positive progress, acknowledging that I assume every powerboater is some lower life form, like a Neanderthal.

The next morning the sweet pine/moss breeze was replaced with the industrial scent of airport, burnt jet fuel. It was generator exhaust from an upwind stinker.

I was somewhat jealous of this dinghy sailor, he looked like he was having a blast and it helped remind me that perhaps some of "them" are ok.



1984 TALL SHIPS

BY GORDON LACO

TALL SHIPS SPARK MEMOIRS OF INTERESTING TIMES

Midland was visited by several Sail Training vessels this past season, being one of the designated ports on the Tall Ships America Great Lakes Challenge list. Sail Training isn't really learning to sail... it is actually using the teaching of seamanship to ignite qualities of leadership, self confidence and courage that are within all of us, but normal daily life too rarely calls upon. Most military services, our Royal Canadian Navy included, maintain and operate sail training vessels because the principal works.

I've sat on the Boards of Directors of both the Canadian and American Sail Training Associations for most of my career. These Associations are the professional governing bodies for the civilian and military vessels delivering sail training programmes. A funny thing is that during the 1990's when the term 'Tall Ships' began taking hold in common speech, we were all trying to kill the application of it to our vessels. Only lubbers called schooners, brigs etc 'tall ships'. Well we lost that fight and now we all use it because people understand what it means. The old Canadian Sail Training Association is now Tall Ships Canada... the American Sail Training Association is now Tall Ships

America; and they Yanks have even tried to copywrite use of the term 'Tall Ships' as exclusively theirs. How the world turns.

Since my days as Executive



photo: Robin Rowland

Director of Toronto Brigantine (successor to our fellow MBSC member Richard Birchill), operators of the brigantines PLAYFAIR and PATHFINDER, port visits have become big business. The arrival of a squadron of sail training ships in a port means big tourism dollars for that port, and substantial port visit fees to the ships; badly needed revenue which has become important sustaining income.

But back in the 1980's it was all much more rough and tumble. People were literally astonished at the millions of people who crammed waterfronts to witness sail training ship gatherings. Sometimes, often, facilities and plans were overwhelmed... often just what sort of ship was visiting was badly misunderstood.

The most dramatic misfire of a port visit event I've ever seen was actually my first participation in a Tall Ships Rally... that was back in 1984 on Lake Ontario. I was aboard the schooner SOLSTICE MOON which was part of the 23 ship armada touring the lakes that summer. We joined the



event in Toronto, SOLSTICE MOON's home port, and our next port visit was Rochester New York diagonally across the lake...a race. Our vessel's owner quickly realized the level of hospitality for 'officers' vs 'crew' was dramatically different, so he duly elevated all hands to officer status. I became 'Watch Officer G. Laco' on my participant's pass.

As we approached Rochester we were in third place behind PROVIDENCE and the British brig CIUDADE DE INCA, a very old wooden sailing ship. INCA was leading, but also in sight ahead of us as was PROVIDENCE. We were all broad reaching in a north west wind and about 20 miles from the finish... suddenly we saw INCA brace her yards and she hauled up onto a close reach heeled far over making more sail apparently abandoning the race. This was odd... Then we saw a US Coast Guard cutter charging after her flashing lights and calling her up on VHF to stop. It transpired that writs had been filed against her in the States over the deaths of two Americans who were lost when INCA's sister ship MARQUES had been sunk in a squall north of Bermuda earlier that season. (She took my colleague Ian Brimms with her) INCA was fleeing to the Canadian border to avoid being impounded. She made it into Canadian waters but was stuck



Playfair's crew hanging around as they head south past the Gin Rocks. photo: Philip Krueger

in Kingston for years until the legal issues were resolved and she could go back out to sea due to one of the Seaway Locks being American. (She herself was sunk on the coast of Wales with loss of life about ten years later and her owner went to prison for two years on a manslaughter charge for failing to maintain the vessel... that's another story)

So into Rochester went the remaining ships of the fleet... the city went wild the vessels in the fleet we re three Polish 'sail training' vessels, so the local community of people with Polish ancestry

really put themselves out to be welcoming. They organized a huge picnic event in a farmer's field outside the city which we were all brought out to with the Poles in school buses. The Polish-Americans of Rochester had assumed that the Polish ships would be crewed by nice Polish boys of student age. They were not... the Poles were tough merchant and naval seamen on the last year of their professional qualification program



Pathfinder, heading up Beausoleil Bay, just past Big Dog Channel. photo: Philip Krueger



Playfail, 33-tonne 72' brigantine built in Kingston, ON.
photo: Philip Krueger

before going to work. Most were in their mid to late 20's with years of sea time behind them. Tough sailors looking for a spree ashore.

The first problem arose when the Poles realized there was no beer... only juice and soft drinks. They nearly rioted so the organizers quickly brought in two tankers of Genesee beer... the trucks were the size of home heating oil tankers. Each had four



St. Laurence II under full sail.
photo: Philip Krueger

taps on the back end. Scrambling to find drinking cups, the organizers distributed big milkshake containers they got from the local McDonalds. So we went from no beer to far too much beer in an instant. But the mob was now a happy mob, although getting out of control.

It was at this moment when the second problem became apparent. In addition to bussing all we sailors in, the Polish community had organized busloads of young women and girls from all around Rochester to come to enjoy traditional Polish dancing with the nice Polish boys. Well they weren't boys, they were seamen looking for action. When the girls started entering the enclosure it was like Christians in a Roman circus being sent



St. Laurence II, built in Kingston Shipyards in 1953.
photo: Philip Krueger

into the arena to meet the lions. And like lions, the sailors roared and threw beer into the air when they saw what was being presented to them. This developed so rapidly that some of the parents of the teenage girls were still there, and we had the spectacle of angry parents dragging weeping daughters away from their new 'boyfriends' whom most of them didn't want to part with. The elderly

musicians who werer brought to play Polish folk music didn't have a chance to set up, let alone play. What a scene.

The girls were removed and the Poles settled down to serious drinking. Once the sun went down they tore down the barrier fences (and anything else wooden they could find) and made a huge bonfire... later in the night, the sailors

begin wandering around and could be heard singing dirty Polish sailor's songs (fortunately in Polish) as they staggered here and there... it was a long time before they were rounded up from where they'd drifted... ditches, fields, people's back yards and herded or carried back to their ships.



Huron Jewel, 78' wood and epoxy gaff rigged schooner, launched 2018. photo: Garry VanGelderen

What a glorious debacle.

In the morning the city of Rochester turned out again to see us all off. The entrance to the harbour was again solidly packed with cheering spectators; each ship getting a special roar from the huge



Just a few cooks preparing the feast for the Tall ships crews! photo: Gloria Nowak Millar

crowd as she motored out and began pitching in the swells.

Pitching in the swells... the west wind and reliably been building all weekend and Rochester being quite east along the south side of Lake Ontario, was getting the full effect of the 180 mile fetch. It was like real North Atlantic weather... we transitioned from summer and glamour to cold and rough in an instant. I recall hearing a wail from one of the Polish ships as she felt the first waves... oh those poor guys, I thought. Hung over, crapulous and exhausted, beginning the long beat to windward heading back down the lake.



John and Richard rounded out the Tall Ships BBQ event with a great set of musical favourites. photo: JR Brook

