



# the Binnacle

*Newsletter of the Lake Champlain Yacht Club, Inc.*

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Commodore Macdonough Race 2021

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## Special Edition: The Commodore Macdonough Race



*Image curtesy of Tom Porter*

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The Spinnaker Fleet Leaving Shelburne Bay  
*Photo curtesy of Thomas Porter*

## Redhead–(Sabre 36) Charlie VanWinkle

The downwind start of the Macdonough race was a virtual drag race out of the bay with the eight boats in the JaM Fleet doing their best maneuvering, adjusting, and tweaking of their whisker poles (or makeshift adaptations). Aboard S/V RedHead we were doing our best gyrations, looking at what the other boats were doing and trying to decide who was gaining an advantage over the fleet. Ease, trim, ease again, should we set up the preventer? Yeah, good idea. The odd year course was sending the fleet up around Valcour first, then down to Diamond Island and back to the “C” mark where we started. Leave everything to port except R2 at the end and you’re done.

As we left the bay, the wind shifted slightly, and crewmember Peter and I decided we should take the whisker pole down. I got fancy new jib sheets this year to make us look fast, but the new lines necessitated putting a loop on the jib clew. An easy place to attach the whisker pole, to but kind of a pain to get it off. Pete found that out when he needed two hands to undue the whisker pole it fell apart and half of it went overboard. I looked down for a minute when this was going on and looked back up on the foredeck and thought “wow he got that pole away fast.” As Pete walked back to the cockpit, he pointed behind me holding half the whisker pole in his hand. I turned around and saw the other half of the pole floating behind me. That would have been the third whisker pole the lake would have claimed from me. Wait a minute, isn’t it floating? Sure enough it was! With the long downwind ahead of us I asked the crew if we wanted to go try and get it. Everybody was game, Pete was on the foredeck with the boat hook, and new guy Tim was in the cockpit working the sheets. I turned the boat around to head back to rescue our floating asset, CRAP! The preventer was still up.

Having rescued the pole from the fingertips of Poseidon we rounded Valcour and headed back south towards Diamond Island. Winds were consistent in the 13- 15 knot range with the lake showing off and on signs of whitecaps on the way south. We found ourselves in the company of a group of vessels battling for third place, S/V Morning Star Again and S/V Schuss (a J30).

Strategically we would do a tack and the other vessels would follow. Since we had a three man crew this year, we decided to do multiple tacks south down the lake to try and gain an advantage, tire the other guys out, or just mess with them a little. The skipper having asked the crew to do too many tacks in a row, decided to make it easier on them and would point the boat into the wind just after a tack so they could pull that 155% Genoa into the rail.

One time the skipper turned a little too far into the wind and backwinded the headsail. Rather than letting go and pulling it around again, we did a 360 on the spot. Pete dubbed the move a “Crazy Ivan.” We did a couple more Crazy Ivan’s heading down the lake. Until we got to the narrows just north of Diamond Island. Overall, we averaged between 5.5 and 6 knots of boat speed on the way south.

Until a couple of years ago not very many of my crew had ever seen Diamond Island during the daytime, and I am sure the same could have been said for some of the other boats. The wind always seemed to do funky things in this area and the crew stated to think the stretch of

real estate between split rock and Diamond Island, was the Bermuda triangle of Lake Champlain. Bounded on west by steep palisade like terrain, even on a moonlit night they created a dark ominous presence. The east was not so bad with a flatter landscape along the edge of Point Bay and extending flatlands to the fields of Addison County. No matter what kind of fury the wind was delivering on the broad lake, Diamond Island always seemed to dramatically different, like it was in another dimension. If it was blowing south on the broad lake, it was blowing east in the triangle, if at all. Boats almost always were becalmed in this area. Very light winds over a lake that was like a flat mill pond meant that you took advantage of, and held onto any type of wind and momentum you could capture. In years past we often drifted for 45 minutes or more as we got closer to the island.

The Macdonough 2021 version fell into a similar pattern, winds on the broad lake were south at 15 knots forecasted to increase to 30 as the evening progressed. As we passed split rock and entered the narrows, the wind was coming from more of an east-southeast direction wind to it pushing us westward along the ominous wall. The deeper we got into the triangle, the lighter the wind. At one point we were reading 80 feet of water on the depth gauge maybe 20 -30 feet from the shore. So close that a dog belonging to one of the homes on the cliff and barked at us. We ghosted along the western wall at 2.5 knots for a while, keeping one eye on the depth gauge with a flashlight on the shoreline. When the depth gauge hit 30 feet, we decided to get away from the wall tacked eastward into the bay. We continued east until we hit the lay line for the island and tacked back south again.

How far south you go around the island is basically dependent on one thing, your nerve as a skipper. The underwater terrain on the south of the island rises gradually from below the surface creating a nice shallow water beach until it breaks the surface, whereby creating the island. It is always dark with that funky wind, and just to add to the drama, eerily quiet. All you can hear is the tic, tic, tic of the waves or ripples created by the light wind hitting the hull. While the island itself has a weather station on it, along with a full-blown flashing white light navigational aid; but there is nothing in the water that tells you how close to go. As we were on the south side S/V Schuss (the J30) tried to cut to our inside making some headway on us until they abruptly turned south, nerves shot, presumably looking for deeper water. They followed our stern light and took a more eastward tack while we headed dead downwind towards the broad lake.

We exited the narrows at split rock and the wind was picking up as promised. We put the pole back up and started making 7.5 knots as we headed north (this is fast for our cruising boat). At one point we looked eastward thinking a lightning storm was about, but the wind and weather only didn't support that theory. We were able to deduce it was the Grace Potter show at the Shelburne Museum, as our crewmate George was texting us from the show telling us to enjoy the ride back home. Must be what normal people do on a late summer evening. Although I am sure it was a great show, I know George was wishing he was with us. We finished just before midnight. Congrats to Steve Unsworth, John Stetson and the crew of S/V Morning Star Again for the victory!





The crew of Schuss with Slingshot behind.  
*Photo curtesy of Cameron Giezendanner*

## Schuss-(J-30) Cameron Giezendanner and Crew

### Keeping us grounded

This was our first season racing and many of the crew's first season sailing. It was truly amazing to be able to participate in so many great events from Plattsburgh, all the way south to Point Bay, culminating in the Commodore Macdonough! We really didn't know what to expect never having raced at night, or for more than 10-15 miles in a stretch. The team had fairly modest expectations, beat one boat and let the LCCS chips fall where they may. In all honesty, I don't think we ever really intended to compete in the series' championship but, after a fun weekend in Plattsburgh at the Mayor's Cup, getting our first points in standings pretty much made it official. We had a blast sailing and competing in different areas of the lake we've never been before.

The Lake Champlain recreational forecast had called for some higher winds later on in the evening so I made a goal to round Diamond Island and run with the wind before it increased dramatically. The forecast to start with south winds 10-15mph leaving Shelburne Bay seemed right in our wheelhouse. Our first 'Spinnaker Start' was fairly uneventful; I was concerned with timing. We have a tendency to be somewhat early to the line and consequently starting downwind, I was concerned about being able to apply the brakes. We actually timed it fairly well, slipping down the line just a touch without sacrificing too much speed. Most of the

fleet chose to run downwind immediately. Morning Star and Schuss had similar ideas reaching a bit further to the east. I took our line deeper east and I felt this paid off with easy speed leaving Shelburne.

Leaving the bay and starting the run north to Valcour, our intent was to stay to the east as long as we could keep with the leaders making progress to the north. This was great fun, with spirits high, we traded the lead with Slingshot near Colchester Reef a few times finally able to gain an advantage, slipping over on top as we reached over towards Valcour. This strategy was paying off, we were going to round Valcour in the lead! Already planning my next move around the backside of Valcour, somewhat familiar with this area, this is where our plans unraveled.

My gut said head inside the RN with Talisman. We clearly had right of way at this point. Slingshot was taking a more conservative line outside. I knew the RN marked the rock shoal north of the island, yet for some reason in the heat of battle, I decided to go north around the can thinking it was also the more conservative choice. As I took a line around the RN, keeping it to port on a heading leading me away from land, it became clear rather quickly I had made a serious error. I guess it was many things that led up to this dumb mistake (are not all navigation errors, dumb navigational errors?). Racing and the competition, familiar waters, too many things going on at once (traveling with a navigator is novel idea!) all conspired in my poor decision making. My mind was already well into the channel between Valcour Island and the NY mainland....THUD! Most likely this is the worst sound a sailor ever hears. One large thud and a smaller skip on another rock and we were actually still sailing along, in the lead no less. Quickly the crew began inspecting for damage pulling up floor boards, the engine cover, front compartments. The hull seemed okay. We were not taking on water, no stress failures were apparent so we decided to keep sailing on. I was in a bit of shock and disbelief at this point; we we're entering the channel heading south now. We were still in the lead but I had completely lost all focus at this point and I started making tactical errors immediately.

I prematurely tacked a couple times, letting Talisman by without a challenge. By the time we reached the south end of Valcour Is., Talisman had passed, Slingshot had caught us and the rest of the field was pulling up even. My mind wandered, entirely not in the game at this point, thoughts of sailing home to Mallets Bay with my tail tucked between my legs cluttered my thoughts. That's not me, that's not Schuss, I felt I'd let the crew down if we quit and we all agreed continue racing. We followed Talisman out into the broad lake and this was a mistake. Beating into 20 knots from the south and 3' waves in my current state of mind was not the best strategy. Talisman, being a heavier boat, seemed to cut through the mess and Slingshot clearly made a better choice for a J30 and made great progress south on long port tacks, taking advantage of much smoother water on starboard tacks. We floundered in the waves on the broad lake beating into the wind letting Morning Star and Red Head slip past.

We kept with the motions, making our way south and kept Morning Star and Red Head within sight, albeit from pretty far behind. Talisman and Slingshot were all but specks, one

on the eastern shore, one on the west. At some point past Four Brother's Islands nearing Charlotte with the sun setting and the day fading, I think I was finally ready (not entirely) to stop beating myself up and put the mistake behind us. The wind had subsided a bit and I noticed as we kept getting closer to Split Rock Mountain that we were actually gaining on the fleet. The advantage Slingshot had on the western shores had lessened and we followed Morning Star closer to the eastern shores. With the wind from the south and maybe ever so slightly east, we pushed far to the east coming through the narrows at Split Rock to get the best heading wind angle to Diamond Island. At this point it was dark and we lost track of where anyone in the fleet was, but we could see we were still gaining on navigation lights tacking south. I gambled a bit, stayed on a long port tack and crept close to the cliffs on the western shore. We occasionally got a nice lift and almost made it Diamond island on one tack.

The Diamond Island light flashed, there she was broadside. We caught Red Head! Schuss tucked in behind her as we rounded the island. We quickly rolled over into a reach and were able to sail over top. We stayed on a reach until I felt we had sufficiently pulled away. We poled up the genoa, turned to the north, and set our sights on our next target the stern light in front. We jibed the main and genoa around Charlotte to have a quicker run slightly east towards Shelburne point. It was clear that the boat in front was taking the wider more western approach to rounding Shelburne Point. I decided to once again stay close to land, inside Rock Dunder, and cut off some distance. At this point with my navigation skills shaken, almost zero confidence in my mobile charts, we relied on eyeball navigation and a spotlight as we neared the more potentially dangerous areas. We were really quite surprised when Slingshot radioed in to the race committee rounding the point. We had made up a lot of ground. By the time we were rounding the RN heading back into Shelburne Bay, we had nearly caught the stern light we were chasing since Diamond Island. It was Morning Star.

Heading into the bay, Rogue sailed by and without much idea where exactly the finish was, we followed their lead. Although beating into the southern wind headed home, there were not too many options here. We made it to the line without much fanfare other than pinching a little too much at the end. We quickly lowered sails and headed over to our guest mooring and fired up the grill. We were all ready to have some downtime and a hot meal. We were all happy to be back on the mooring ball and thankful to be done before those winds started whipping overhead later on.

We feel especially lucky to be able to compete in these events, grateful that we even could finish the race and relish the idea of doing this again next year! Team Schuss would like to thank MBBC, LCYC and DIYC for hosting these 'open' events.

Hopefully with bruised ego, some epoxy, fiberglass and new bottom paint, Team Schuss can join you next year.

Sincerely Grateful,

Cameron Giezendanner and Crew 'Schuss' #294

## Talisman-(Peterson 34) Les Velte

Well the Macdonough was interesting aboard Talisman. Two of us had just read the book Valcour about the battle of Valcour between the British and the Americans during the Revolutionary war. Rounding Valcour we of course had to tell the rest of the crew where the American ships were anchored for the battle, where the Royal Savage was destroyed and how the American ships escaped. Kind of a reenactment.

The rest of the sail down the Lake was an amazing upwind leg. Sun set was beautiful. The weird part was that we were the first boat to Split Rock (Spin and JAM) and it was still light! We saw there was no wind beyond Split Rock; that calm milky looking water. As we past it, we sat. We did not get to Diamond Island until after dark. Seemed like an eternity. As we rounded we saw a JAM boat behind us, and then a ways up toward Thompsons Point the first Spin boat past us. Weird rounding Diamond Island in the Macdonough with no one around!



*Photo curtesy of Les Velte*



## Morning Star Again-(Catalina 320) Steve Unsworth

There always seems to be a lot of excitement in the Macdonough race. In past races we have tried to have a big meal on Saturday night: spaghetti, salad, bread and wine. One race, when sailing downwind in heavy wind outside of Essex, New York, and flying a spinnaker, we broached, also known as the “death roll”, and managed to put spaghetti on the cabin ceiling!

Another year, I remember sailing around Valcour Island and seeing the boat in front of us move up in air. I thought that odd, until I heard a loud bang, and we hit the same ledge they had.

This year’s Macdonough held its own challenges for us...

John Stetson and I now co-own and race on Morning Star...Again, a Catalina. We sail in the Jib and Main class with a small crew. We planned on having four crew for this race, but on Friday night one person had to cancel on us, so we sailed this difficult race, in strong with winds, with only three of us on board. In the pitch darkness it’s hard to see wind changes, sail shape, and telltales, and now our only pair of young eyes wasn’t with us!

The voltage regulator on the boat has been having some issues, and we’d bought a replacement, to install later. Apparently, our GPS was getting extra voltage, and once we’d started the race we found out that it wasn’t working. So, no proper heading, no proper position, and the boat location was wrong. Heading downwind to Valcour Island we nearly hit Colchester Reef! Thank goodness we saw waves breaking and headed away. Sailing at night without a working GPS at the helm is a challenge, especially when the hand-held was low on batteries. Luck (or good planning?) had John bring his iPad along, and Navionics helped keep us going.

In strong winds on Saturday night, we were sailing downwind when the jib sheet holding the whisker pole came off the winch. This caused the whisker pole to be released, and slammed it into forestay, breaking it in half. This certainly put us at a disadvantage in the race.

When you sail at night it is hard, if not impossible, to see your competition. We really had very little idea how we were doing in the race. On Saturday, exhausted, we finished at 11:41 PM. On Sunday we were happy to learn we won the race!



Morning Starr.. Again as seen from Schuss  
*Photo curtesy of Cameron Giezendanner*



## Osprey-(C&C 35 MK1) Tom Porter

This year was a personal record time for Osprey, and one of the most fun. Highlights were:

- The downwind start and sprint out of Shelburne Bay with the whole fleet jockeying for position.
- Wind and waves building as we passed inside Colchester Reef and headed to the corner by Providence Island. We hit at least 9.5kts down a wave through here though it calmed a bit as the lake narrowed past the ferry crossing.
- Rounding Point La Roche just after 2 pm. We headed upwind with about a 300 yard lead on Tres Amigos and Lil Bot with the small jib and full main in 18-22kts. It turned into a 50 mile match race with Tres Amigos.
- Tacking up the islands, over towards Colchester, over toward NY north of Schuyler and close by Ferris Rock.
- Losing track of who was who in the dark.
- 20 degree starboard header coming toward the Converse Bay allowing us to flip over on port laying Split Rock and seeing the leaders heading north along the Vermont shore.
- Gorgeous night with shooting stars and the Milky Way bright across the sky.
- Rounding Diamond Island a bit after 11 pm setting the chute and jibing in toward point bay then out west of Sloop.
- Crazy hectic dousing of Chute by Charlotte when the breeze and waves really started jumping up.
- Hitting 9.4 knts down a wave with the #3 jib and full main.
- Wild tack up the bay with a reef and #3. The apparent wind hit 29kts before we found the finish line 1:47 am.

## Sundance-(Pearson 37) Tom Glynn

We began monitoring the weather forecasts for the weekend of this year's Macdonough a week out. Every day we'd check Windfinder, the Lake Champlain Recreational Forecast and the Weather Channel along with any other forecast we could find hoping for one that called for moderate wins in the 10-15 range and clear skies for Saturday and Saturday night. But all week long the consistent theme was heavy air Saturday evening into the night. None the less we made the usual preparations. We made sure we had plenty of beer on board, propane for the galley stove, extra flashlights and batteries, multiple GPS's, and went over the rig to be sure that nothing had loosened or come undone over the season that might cause problems mid race. Individually, we each updated our PFD's to include lights and whistles as per LCYC's requirement. Lastly, we pulled off the boat the cruising sails and my granddaughter Katie's toys, books bedding that make Sundance her camp on the water. We were as good to go as an aging crew and boat can be. If only the weather would cooperate.

Saturday morning arrived with the forecaste for clear skies and south winds in the 10 to 15 range to take us north to Laroche Reef. It looked liker a beautiful "chamber of Commerce Day". But, what would the night bring? The forecast now was winds building in the evening up to 25 to 30 with gusts over 35. This called for a cockpit strategy conference. I recalled being told when I was learning to fly that " the only weather you have any control over is the weather you choose to take off in". We were in control at that point. We needed to assess all the weather data we had and make our call.

Jim had done some route planning and set up a spread sheet with projected ETA's for critical waypoints on the way up and back south. They showed that with the forecast winds Sundance should round Laroche Reef and that we should be back off the entrance to Shelburne Bay south bound right around dusk. The forecasts were all showing good sailing right up to dusk but that the winds would start to build as night fell with the serious stuff coming late at night. We figured we were all adults, and we could make good rational decisions. We agreed to start the race and keep a close eye on the forecasts and make the entrance to Shelburne Bay our "G / NO- GO" point on the way south.

With a good down wind start we sailed Sundance under her big blue chute on a reach out of the bay. As soon as we could we bore away to a run headed for LaRoche Reef. Sundance was enjoying the fresh breeze, but her IOR vintage hull can get squirrely downwind as she speeds up which can make for some very physical time at the helm. When we'd had enough rolling from side to side, we called for the Blooper. As soon as that was set she quieted right down enough to open up the beer and we settled in for a great sleighride north. We were making 8.5 to 9 knots pointed right at the mark and having a ball as we watched the J70 and the Sea Scape who were in our class zip from jibe to jibe ahead of us. We figured if the wind held, we'd catch them on the beat back south.

As we approached La Roche Reef we dropped the blooper, raised the #1 and dropped the chute to round the mark and headed south. Going to weather Sundance's IOR hull with its long

over hangs comes into its own as she heels over and her water line lengthens. Soon we were doing 7 knots and slicing through the waves as we watched the J 70 and the Seascope drop behind us.

Now Sundance is very particular about which headsail she flies. As the wind gets over 13 knots true we have to start thinking about a headsail change. We had anticipated that and set up for an inside peel to the #3. We raised the 3, tacked and lowered the #1 with barely a change in speed. Now we really were moving yet the boat was handling with finger- tip control and we could break out the sandwiches we had for a late lunch. Our chili dinner was planned for around 8:00. There was only one problem—The weather forecast.

We had been checking the forecast about every half hour and it never changed. Overnight winds 25-30 with gusts of 35+ LAKE WIND ADVISORY IN EFFECT. We were going to have to make a call in a couple of hours. Oh, did I mention that the Weather Channel forecast for the 4:00 to midnight stretch was typed in RED. You have to figure when they do that, they want you to take them seriously. But, meanwhile we were still enjoying what was probably the best day of sailing of the season and we're leading our class .

We took turns at the helm not because it was as tiring as it had been under spinnaker without the blooper but because we wanted to share the beautiful ride. We passed Colchester reef on the outside then Ferris rock and Schuyler Island. Our GO/NO- GO point was coming up quick. To complicate the decision, for a brief while the wind dropped, and we were tempted to say "lets keep going we're in the lead and the forecast is wrong". But, then the wind started to build again and just as we got off the entrance to Shelburne Bay we were seeing 18 – 19 knots true.

Now, that's a condition Sundance loves. Under full main and #3 we were scooting along fast and comfortable and stretching out our lead though we knew we'd need it against the asyms coming back. It was time for another crew conference. What did we want to do? Keep going or bear off and sail into the bay. The call was quick and unanimous. We had just enjoyed a fabulous day of sailing. We had started with a plan. The forecast had never changed. If we kept going, we would be seeing some severe conditions during the night. Remembering what I said about the weather you have control over, we called it a day. With that we made the turn for red nun 2 and home, calling the race committee to let them know we were withdrawing from the race.

We enjoyed our chili dinner in the club house, had Sundance packed up and back on her mooring, and we were home in bed by 10:00

So, when I look back on the 2021 Macdonough, I'll remember it as the year an old boat and older crew leaned to think of it like streaming a movie where you're free to watch the parts you like and skip what you don't.





*Gravity Wave as seen from Osprey-Photo curtesy of Tom Porter*

## Gravity Wave-(Seascope 24) Will Nye and crew Micum MacIntyre and Josh Scheidt

Pre start we were thinking most of the fleet would start on port at the boat end to get a long jibe first, possibly laying RN2. So we set up for that and were surprised to be one of the only boats down by the committee. With lots of Starboard traffic we wound up being forced to jibe and favor the East side of the bay.

Once clear of RN2 we settled in for a quick ride up the lake. Speeds built and by the time we were near Colchester reef we were surfing with speeds generally in the 10-12 knot range.

We had a short battle with Rogue at the reef but let them pass. We tried the low mode they were using but it didn't suit our boat so eventually we heated up.

Off Valcour we were hitting low 13s on the surfs, with one wipeout after a jibe. Dual rudders have amazing grip though, so it wasn't long before we were back on our feet.

We made a tactical error near Reef La Roche and went too far east, sailing into less pressure. This handed considerable distance to boats around us.

After the rounding we reefed the main and settled in for the long leg ahead. We favored the VT shore for some wave relief until Stave island where headed across to the NY side. We shook out the reef near Ferris rock only to put it back in just to the south of 4 brothers. We then shook it out again near Essex.

We managed to avoid the Essex hole for the most part but did encounter light winds near Diamond Island. We shook out the reef again and rounded the island. Shortly after we raised the spinnaker and short jibed out past Split Rock. The wind increased and soon we were sailing along at 10-12 knots again.

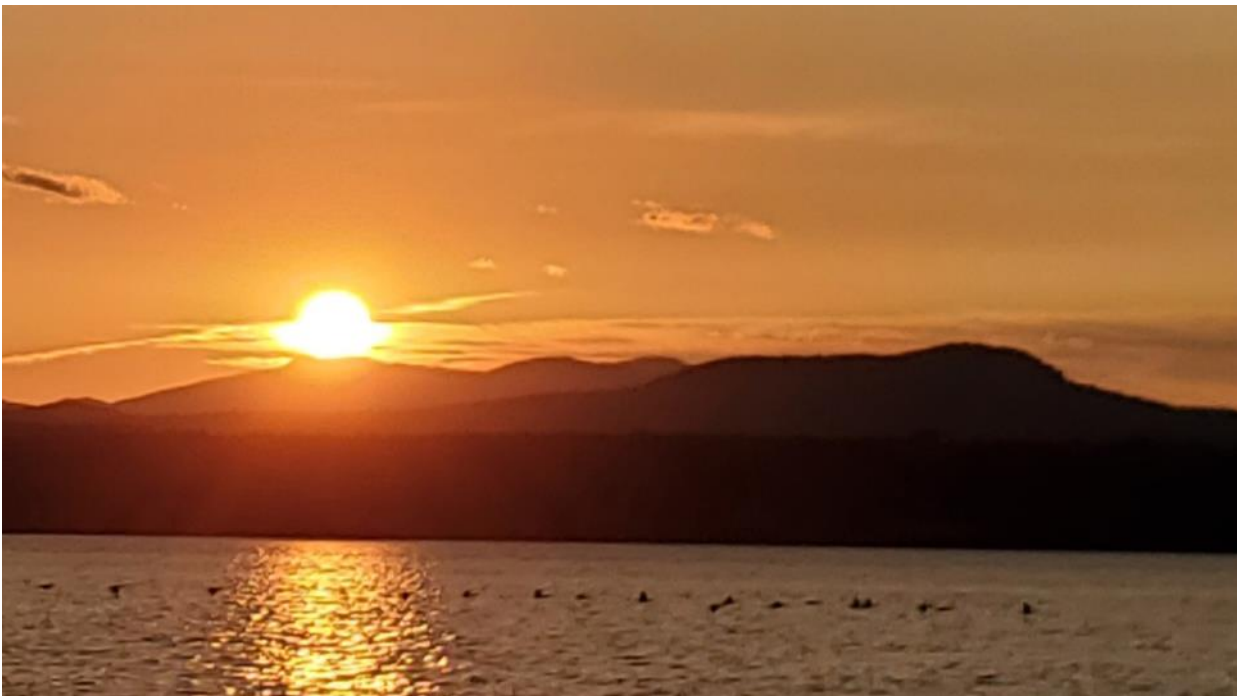
We jibed to get away from the VT shore and things quickly got very sporty. While sailing at 12 or so knots a big puff hit and the boat took off at 17.1 knots. We were eating up distance toward Essex fast so we jibed again.

Boat speed on the new jibe was not as good and we were having trouble controlling the boat. The rudders were extremely loaded all the time. We dropped the spinnaker and to avoid having any crew forward we just pulled it down the companionway.

We took off down the VT coastline constantly navigating past the various rocks, reefs, and points. Speeds were 12-13 knots with a few bursts into the 14s.

In the lee of Shelburne point we reefed again. Once out of the shelter we were blasted with very high winds and some of the biggest waves I have seen in the bay. On the beat we kept getting knocked down. It was very difficult sailing.

Near the finish we had another boat not far away that I really didn't want to be too close to, fearing a wipeout. As we approached the finish on Starboard we got knocked down one final time and drifted past the pin. Once on our feet again we sailed a few more boat lengths before our final tack to the finish. This time we stayed upright and made it through.



*Photo courtesy of Les Velte*

## That 70 Show-(J-70) John Hill

This was my first year sailing and skippering for the McDonough. That 70s Show was a fun ride to Point Au Roche and we learned that we could make distance on larger boats by sailing higher and getting the j70 on a plane while surfing the waves on the broad lake.

The long beat was a major challenge for us and we ended up reefing our main to try and keep the boat flat. The wind shut off for us when we rounded Diamond Island and we were becalmed for about 10 minutes. Fast-forward 30 minutes (around 1 am) and the wind built to approximately 30kts. Our crew of 3 accelerated to blistering speed and hit 20mph with our spinnaker up skipping from wave to wave. We broached on our jibe over by Essex NY but were able to recover and get the boat sailing again. As the wind continued to build our fatigue set in and we tried our best to keep the bow from plunging into the backs of waves in the dark. Finally, the wind became sustained at 30kts and we were unable to recover from a broach. Our crew was clinging to the windward lifeline for what seemed like 10 minutes and we made the call to douse the spinnaker. In a frenzy, we gathered the sail as it sucked under the hull. I abandoned the helm momentarily to aid the crew in pulling the sail onboard.

We sailed the rest of the course under main and jib. After we finished and sailed to the LCYC dock, we reflected on the experience and concluded that our bodies were in shock. We were happy to have completed the race and even happier to have arrived to shore without any major injury. Sailing the McDonough on a j70 was thrilling and exhausting. I'm so thankful for the opportunity to participate and for my crew adapting to the challenging conditions we faced. Cheers to the race committee for putting on an unforgettable event!



*Photo curtesy of Tom Porter*

## Ariel-(J-105) Tony Lamb

We have been sailing shorthanded most of the season and this McDonough was to be no exception. I needed another hand who had experience sailing in the dark on the lake. Fortunately, Ed Colomb was able to fly up from South Carolina for the race. That made four of us.

We chose a safe starboard start but found ourselves above Red Leaf. Neither one of us want a luffing duel, but they wanted clean air and I wasn't inclined to let them pass. I wanted to jibe and they didn't. So there we were two reluctant competitors somewhat locked together for a while.

Once we jibed over inside the bay it was a long run up to Plattsburgh on one jibe. The passage near Colchester Reef put most of the fleet in a long line. It was fun watching the small sport boats tack all the way to New York and then back with a gain and then all the way to Vermont and then back with a bit of a loss. Tack, Repeat, Tack, Repeat. I feel like if we did 30 miles in a straight line to Point Au Roche they must have done three times that.

It was really a comfortable run up the lake. Nostalgic to see Sundance with a blooper up.

We were near Rogue until we rounded the can at Point Au Roche. Then we noticed they began to pull away – slowly at first. By the time we reached the ferry, it was clear they were going higher and faster –never a good thing.

I continue to be amazed at how comfortable the J-105 is to sail. My old Beneteau 36.7 generated great power that you felt, especially as the wind built. Spinnakers were white knuckle affairs as the wind built. Not the 105, even upwind. We beat up the lake and while the wind seemed to be in the upper teens, the waves did not build and the ride was comfortable. The fleet spread out the further we went.

My hand held gps was on the fritz and so we relied on the one mounted in the companionway. With its small screen I had to rely on the crew to read and relay what it showed. It turned dark just beyond the Charlotte ferry and the wind began to lighten. As we entered the narrows it became very light.

I was surprised by how many lights there were on shore. It may be a function of how early we down there, but I think that there are more houses with more people staying “at camp” longer these days. It did not make it any easier to navigate or find the wind.

We found ourselves doing 2 knots along the shore south of split rock. Wanting more wind but nervous about tacking away from what we had. I could see boats along the island who seemed to be moving as slowly or even slower. We overtook Bando-laro, a Nonsuch 26c. Being us, we took the time to introduce ourselves and chat about the race and their boat for a few minutes. They were from Mallets Bay Boats Club and this was their first Macdonough. Very happy to be there-seemed like nice folks. We



then tacked out of their air for the island.

The wind was weird as we rounded and then we raised our chute, and immediately became becalmed. Down chute. Then two other boats joined us. Classic narrows situation-three boats all on same tack and all headed in completely different directions. After a few minutes (and a few choice words) the wind began to fill. We had agreed early in the day with a forecast of up to 30 knots we would decide down there whether to fly the chute. It quickly built to 8 or 9, so up went the chute-what could go wrong.

As we went up the lake the wind continued to build. One shaky jib in much heavier air near Quaker Smith and we were headed home. All of the lights made navigating more complicated. One light I watched for a while and thought was a masthead, suddenly turned and accelerated turned out to be an airplane.

As we closed on RN2 the wind built even more. As we prepared to lower the spinnaker I asked where RN2 was. The answer was one that should strike fear and panic in any skipper- "Don't worry about it, it is over there somewhere." I am not happy with that nun even with three spot lights on it- "Don't worry?".

With only four of us on the boat and the wind up I was nervous about having anyone on the foredeck for the spinnaker takedown. As stable as the 105 is under sail, the asym can have a mind of its own during take down. So I decided to have the crew take it down into the cockpit. As Ed says, "First time ever, and in the dark." He has said that a lot about things that I do on the boat. Things went well until the person on the spinnaker halyard let it run. We do not have a stopper on the halyard. The spinnaker was now in the water.

However, we did not shrimp. I do not know why, perhaps God gave me a pass on this one. It floated lightly on the surface. Dean, long time crew, commented that it was the easiest retrieval of a spinnaker over board that he had ever experienced. Since he has been with me for almost 20 years he should know.

We headed up and made good time and had only two tacks up the bay to the finish.

Special thanks to Luis Garcia, who has done the work of three crew all season.

We appreciated that Race Committee being on station.

Our post-race tradition is to have breakfast at Denny's. Given the pandemic we should not have been surprised that it was closed.



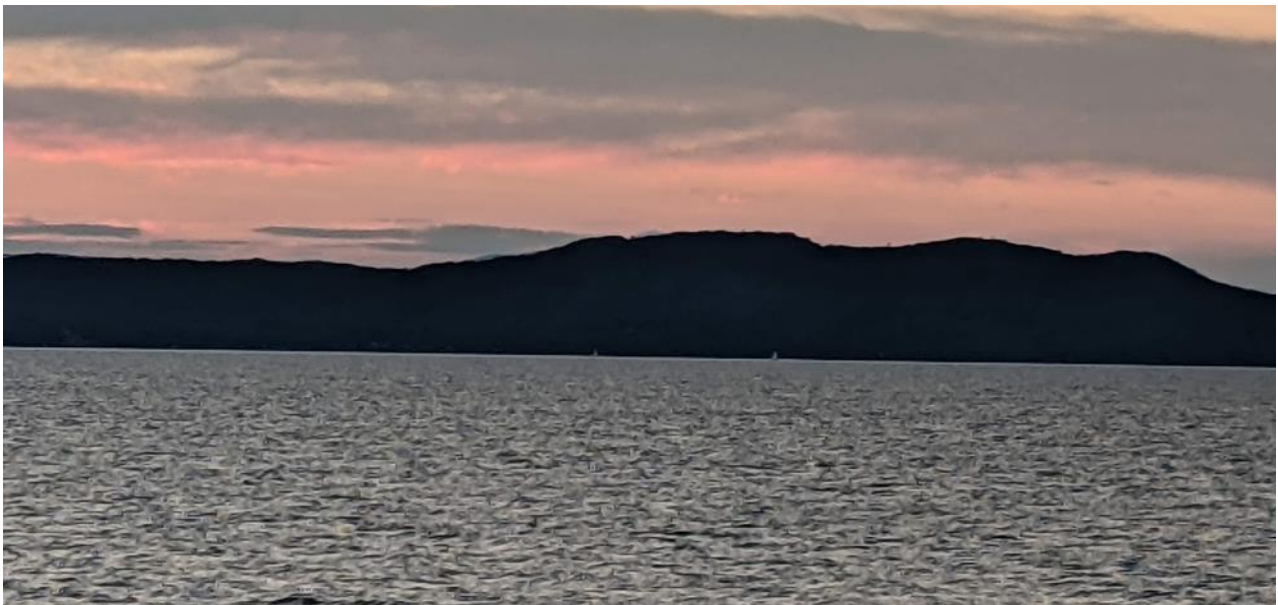
*Photo curtesy of Tom Porter*

## Red Leaf-(J-120) Alec Brecher

Aboard Red Leaf things started to get exciting on the last the spinnaker leg to Shelburne Point when - as forecast - the wind built to the 20s. We calculated that we could be behind Odin by 11 minutes and sighting her around Diamond Island we felt we were in the hunt. Rogue however we needed to beat by 51 minutes – and that appeared not be happening. But as we escaped the doldrums of Split Rock into the broad lake and Red Leaf started climbing over her bow wave – 10, 11, 12s on the speedo – things were looking up.

Near the Essex ferry the crew executed a hairy but flawless jibe and alas the tactician (me) had overstood the jibe mark so we had to carry the chute on nearly a beam reach back to Shelburne Point. Somewhere off Quaker Smith as the puffs pushed the speedo into the 13s, the hull started groaning and the trimmer calmly briefed the crew on how to hang on in a broach. Several of us will admit to a mild tingling sensation at this point.

Many thanks to the race committee for being on station in the wee hours as we all finished a memorable race. And I feel especially grateful to all the crews for staying aboard their vessels in the night. Heads are long out of sight at 13 knots.



*Photo curtesy of Tom Porter*

## ODIN-(J-111) Kjell Dalhem, Skipper

I have a love/hate relationship with the long distance races. It is good to spend an extended period of time on the lake with a great group of people and tackle challenges. But I also have memories of feeling that we are doing well, then being stuck in a hole with boats passing us on either side.

This year the forecast of strong winds was promising. We were short in crew, with defections to the National 24 Championship, so at the start we had the #4 headsail up. In a long race the start should not be important, but to go out in the right direction in clean air helps the psyche. We often have more problems getting in and out of the Shelburne Bay than the local sailors, but this time we did fine.

The spinnaker run was fun. The shortest course distance is inside Colchester reef. In the years prior to GPS I avoided that area like the pest, but now it is relatively stressless. Continuing north we felt we were doing well. South of PtAuRoche we stayed on the rhumb line and the wind calmed down. Behind us we saw the J-120, which had been fairly far behind, closer to the New York shore going fast in a good breeze. We did manage to get around the PtAuRoche mark in decent shape.

We were now on the long beat to Diamond Island. Being concerned that the #4 head sail would not give us enough power, we had changed to the class jib during the spinnaker run. The next few hours were very pleasant. We were at times overpowered with not enough weight on the rail, but we were glad that we had the bigger head sail. It was a little difficult to remain focused on driving during the beautiful sunset over the Adirondacks. Earlier in the day I had observed a great sunrise over the Green Mountains on the way to the start. In the past we have been becalmed by going too close to the New York shore south of Split Rock. So this time we decided to go further east, only ending up in a hole. We did eventually get back into good air, and the rounding of Diamond Island was much easier than usual. No parking lot this time.

The spinnaker run up to Shelburne Point was great in nice steady air, and with GPS there was no challenge in locating RN2. The wind had picked up, but we were able to get through the bay to the finish without changing to a smaller head sail. We were done before 11PM, quite a bit earlier than most years. At the finish we thought that we knew roughly where the J-120 was, but as usual during the night, we had no idea of where the rest of the fleet was. With the big rating spread we figured that we would have to beat the J-105's by an hour and a half. Later when we heard on the radio that Rogue was passing RN2, we realized that they were definitely closer than that.

We had originally planned to bring the boat back to Plattsburgh after the race. The forecast was for wind increasing to 30 Knots. We therefore had sense enough to tie up at the Burlington Community Boat House, and plan to come back to pick up the boat during the day. After we had tied up there, we found that the exits were locked, but Andy, a former utility

worker, easily climbed the fence and we got out to get to our cars.

Except for a midsummer overnight race in Norway, this was the most pleasant long distance race that I have participated in.

Thanks to LCYC for organizing the McDonough and the other races.





## Odin -Ed Trombley, Crew

Let me start by repeating what I have said to anyone who will listen.... I do not like over-night sailboat races!

Usually I am a mess for almost three days from the lack of sleep. This year's (2021) race was altogether different, though! I was sailing with Odinn, somewhat short-handed with six people total. We were treated with a super-solid south wind of 10-20 knots right from the start to the finish. So; a spinnaker start in front of LCYC and making the weather mark at Point au Roche by early afternoon!

This did mean a LONG beat all the way to Diamond Island, but it went well and we were there by around eight o'clock at night! Fantastic! Even though we blew the spinnaker set with a huge, tangled mess of knots in the air, we got out of there like a shot aimed north toward Shelburne Point via Quaker Smith. Unless something awful happened, this meant I would sleep in my own bed in relatively normal hours (for me!).

The only worrisome thing was the forecast building to over thirty knots! This meant a really difficult spinnaker takedown at the point in pitch black conditions, always a confusing and dangerous thing to do.... So I was worried about this the entire way north, with the boat powered right up and flying along.

Here is what happened up at Shelburne Point at the very end- we sailed into a windless hole right at the exact moment! It made the transition a snap and we got everything put away and the jib back up and flying... then the wind popped right back up and we were off!

Finishing this race at the club by I think 10:30? Was a record for me, for sure.

Having a couple beers, putting the sails away, all a pleasure knowing I wouldn't be waking up on the rail at 5 am with the sun coming up and miles to go.... FANTASTIC! Bye, bye Commodore Macdonough race.

## Rogue-(J-105) by the Crew

The Macdonough fleet left Shelburne Bay in a nice southerly that built into the mid-teens and stayed there all day, which quickly propelled the fleet north to Point Au Roche. Aboard Rogue, we had a skeleton crew, carrying just five (normally it's more like seven or eight), as number of our regulars had other commitments. The crew included owners Gene Cloutier and Matt Fisher, along with Noah Dater, Dave Powlison and Doug White.

While we were not surprised to see boats like Odinn, a J111 and other big boats surge into the lead, nipping at their heels were a pair of smaller boats—That 70 Show (a J70) sailed by third generation LCYC member John Hill and crew, and skippered by Tanya Miller, and a Seascope. Both planing boats, it was fun watching them keep pace with the big guys. We sailed alongside the Seascope for a number of miles, pulling ahead of them at times, and then, when they went onto a plane, watched them surge ahead. Meanwhile, the J70 was sailing iceboat-like angles to keep their speed up, and it worked, all the way to Point Au Roche, where they were the fourth boat to round, ahead of us, with just Odinn, Red Leaf (a J120) and Souvenir (a C&C115) ahead of them. We rounded just behind the J70.

Sailing south, with Diamond Island our next turning point, waves created by the 12- to 15-knot breeze rapidly separated the fleet, and the planing boats dropped back. After Cumberland Head, we debated whether the New York side or the Vermont side would pay. We could see Odinn and Red Leaf well ahead, and they were clearly playing the Vermont side. We finally concluded that we'd get a little wave relief on the west side of the lake, plus we wouldn't gain any by just following the leaders, we headed to New York and stayed there until almost at Willsboro point. Then it was back to the east side of the lake, hoping for the usual big lifts along the Vermont shore, which indeed materialized.

At dusk, we could see a few boats behind us, but it was tough to tell whether they were part of our fleet or part of the JAM fleet, which sailed the short course. However, it was clear one boat that was slowly grinding us down. By Split Rock, we finally identified it as the X-46, Endo X. We got around Diamond Island around 9pm, squeezing just ahead of them, and once downwind, rapidly separated from them.

We were fortunate to have some breeze all the way around Diamond, which isn't always the case, and although the wind was only single digits through the narrows, once the lake opened up, we started at least 15 knots, with gusts to 20, which made for a fast spinnaker ride back to the end of Shelburne Point.

We knew we only had two boats in front of us (Souvenir had dropped out just after rounding point Au Roche), but we had no idea, nor did we really have time to think about, how close we were to them.

Two long tacks up Shelburne Bay, and we finished just after 11:40pm. It's always great to finish before midnight, and that alone left everyone with smiles on our faces. Other than crossing the line third, there was no discussion about how we did on corrected time as we quietly and efficiently put the boat away. Maybe that was a good thing, as the next day, when the re-

sults came out, we discovered we had finished over a half hour on corrected time over Odinn, winning the Macdonough Race. For us, it was clearly one for the record book!



Rogue with the white spinnaker as the fleet leaves Shelburne Bay  
*Photo curtesy of Tom Porter*

## Commodore Macdonough

PRO: Scott Fewell, Doug Friant ; RC: ;

### JaM Fleet

Start 2, Course: Short Course North, Wind: S >15

Rank	Fleet	Boat	Class	Owner	Club	PHRF	Finish	Corrected	Points
1	JaM	Morning Star Again	Catalina 320	Unsworth/Stetson	LCYC	168	23:41:38	12:02:49	1
2	JaM	Slingshot	J/30	Martin	DIYC	141	23:21:54	12:15:10	2
3	JaM	Talisman	Peterson 34	Velte	LCYC	120	23:16:23	12:35:23	3
4	JaM	Bandolero	Nonsuch 26C	Furr	DIYC	216	1:27:23	12:44:07	4
5	JaM	Schuss	J/30	Giezendanner		138	23:49:58	12:45:59	5
6	JaM	Red Head	Sabre 36	Van Winkle	LCYC	135	23:52:47	12:52:28	6
7	JaM	Valhalla	Beneteau First 310	Taylor		168	1:29:15	13:31:11	7

### Spin A Fleet

Start 1, Long Course North, Wind: S >15

Rank	Fleet	Boat	Class	Owner	Club	PHRF	Finish	Corrected	Points
1	Spin A	Rogue	J/105 ODR	Marti/Cloutier/Fisher	LCYC	90	23:40:28	13:46:48	1
2	Spin A	Odinn	J/111	Dahlen	VSC	39	22:52:10	14:12:13	2
3	Spin A	Red Leaf	J/120	Brecher/Bolger	LCYC	48	23:09:08	14:16:58	3
4	Spin A	Ariel	J/105 ODR	Lamb	LCYC	90	1:02:15	15:12:54	4
5	Spin A	Endo X	X-46	Balcar		27	23:54:24	15:46:02	5
6	Spin A	Souvenir	C&C 115	Meyerson		66	DNF		7
7	Spin A	Muse	J/37c	Friant	LCYC	87	RC		7.4

### Spin B Fleet

Start 1, Long Course North, Wind: S >15

Rank	Fleet	Boat	Class	Owner	Club	PHRF	Finish	Corrected	Points
1	Spin B	That 70 Show	J/70	Hill	LCYC	117	2:06:54	15:36:35	1
2	Spin B	Gravity Wave	Seascope 24	Nye	LCYC	120	3:19:54	16:44:54	2
3	Spin B	Sundance	Pearson 37	Glynn	LCYC	105	DNF		4

### Spin C Fleet

Start 1, Long Course North, Wind: S >15

Rank	Fleet	Boat	Class	Owner	Club	PHRF	Finish	Corrected	Points
1	Spin C	Osprey	C&C 33 MK II	Porter/Knox	LCYC	138	1:47:32	14:45:57	1
2	Spin C	Tres Amigos	J/30	Schulz/Keydel/Williford		138	2:04:46	15:02:41	2
3	Spin C	Lil'Bot	Santana 2023R	Erdoes	DIYC	168	3:38:05	15:47:18	3
4	Spin C	Hollandia	C&C 35 MK I	Meyer		129	3:19:14	16:29:24	4
5	Spin C	Raven	Dufour 31	Friant	DIYC	201	DNF		6



## Scuttlebutt (Editor's notes)



This is the third time that we have had an edition of the Binnacle dedicated to stories about the Macdonough.

The request for articles was simple. "I am putting together an edition of the club newsletter focused on stories of the Macdonough." No other guidelines, except photos appreciated.

I really appreciate all of those who responded and feel that there are some great stores.

I was reminded to suggest this while taking the boat down to Point Bay for the Diamond Island race. As Luis and I motored-there was not wind-each time we passed a point, an island or a mark I was reminded of a story from a previous Macdonough (or Lake Champlain Race).

I started racing on the Lake and doing Macdonoughs in 1976 or thereabout. I probably missed at least half a dozen in those years so close to 40. Add in about 25 Lake Champlain Races and that is a lot of stories about long distance races.

New members of the club sometimes ask what the biggest changes I have seen in the Club. In terms of these races, I sound like a parent who walked twenty miles in the snow, up hill both ways to school. But it is no exaggeration that the addition of GPS has significantly changed some of the challenges of the race. Early on we used navigated point to point-using the navigation lights placed to assist the barge traffic bringing oil to Burlington. (No, I am not talking about whale oil-that came by wagon.) You would work your way from the Diamond Island light to the light on Spit Rock to the light on Quaker Smith to the light on Juniper and then, if going north to the light on Schyler Island, Ferris Rock etc. if going to Shelburne you would turn at Juniper and for the lights on the breakwater.

The barges that ran up the lake at night bringing oil to Burlington were always memorable. You could almost feel the deep throbbing sound of the tugboat pushing the barge up the lake. It did not take much imagination to realize they had little maneuverability and were going to go where they wanted and it was up to you to figure out how to get out of the way. I remember motoring at night down towards Whitehall when one rounded a bend in a very narrow stretch. I headed towards the side of the channel only to see my depth sound go from 15 to 12 to 9 to 4 in an instant. I quickly realized I was aground. But that realization also meant that the experienced tug captain was not going to come where I was. (A quick rock of the boat after the barge past and I was shortly out of the soft mud at the side of the channel and on my way.) Imagine dealing with the winds down by Diamond Island and having a barge go through the fleet. I think they stopped running the oil to Burlington by barge in the mid 1980's-a part of the "good old days" that is not missed.

My habit, particularly on the Lake Champlain Race was to stay awake until dawn and then go below for some rest. On one race that happened as we headed north from Split Rock. Lying there listening to the sounds of the boat and the crew, I suddenly heard "Look over there!! Is that a moose?" My immediate thoughts were that they were either smoking something they shouldn't or we were some place we shouldn't be. Climbing up on deck, I looked over and there, half way between Essex and Charlotte was a moose with a full rack swimming towards Vermont! To top it off at a race in Mallets Bay the following week there was a boat named "Moose Abeam"

Peace,  
Tony Lamb  
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