



the Binnacle

Newsletter of the Lake Champlain Yacht Club, Inc.

Commodore: John Harris Vice Commodore: Steve Walkerman

January, 2005

Binnacle Editor: Muddy Bilges

<http://www.lcyc-vt.org/>



Sailing Ocean Planet to France.....

Bette Reuter

The beginning of our story started about 2 years ago when Ernie and I became avid Bruce Schwab fans, tracking him around the world when he entered and completed the *Around Alone Race*, a single-handed race with stops in a variety of countries. That was Bruce's shake down toward his ultimate goal of finishing the *2004 Vendee Globe*. The *Vendee* is a single-handed race, around the world, but non-stop and unassisted. Bruce was the only American contender out of 20 boats entered at the Les Sables d'Olonne, France, start on November 7th.

Bruce, a sailboat rigger from San Francisco who helped design the Open 60 class boat named "Ocean Planet" (OP), left her on the East Coast after the *Around Alone* which started and ended in Newport RI. Over the course of 14 months, working out of Portland (Maine) Yacht Services, he re-commissioned her whereby everything taken off or sanded off was weighed to see how much the boat was lightened. Open 60's plane, they are not displacement hulls. So only a foot of the hull resides in the water; there is a 15 ft blade for a keel, with a long missile bulb at the very bottom. OP is 60ft long, has an 85 ft rotational mast, and she is unstayed. It's odd to look up and only see her pole. Her main is 1800 sq ft; her spinnaker is 3000 sq ft. Just plain big. We did not use the spin because we were afraid of ruining it before the *Vendee*; we used a large genaker, a working jib, a small staysail, and had a main-sail with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd reef options. We used combinations of all the options in our trans-Atlantic trip to France.

Bruce was just the right kind of guy to invite to the LCYC change of the Watch, 2004, to share his worldly racing experience with us. That invitation began the lifelong friendship between Bruce and ourselves. It was at this time that Bruce learned of Ernie's marine canvas business. His eyes lit up with projects once he saw the canvas shop. As part of the re-commissioning project, Ernie built and installed fabric lee cloths for the new carbon-fiber storage structures (super light weight) for Bruce this summer. We spent many weekends, over in Maine, working on everything. I began as girl Friday and was quickly promoted. He needed a last minute stainless steel arch to house Race Mgmt required safety equipment, so Ernie built that also. Our biggest contribution came by way of connecting Bruce with an avid sailor and long-time CNCR client from Montreal who is

in the trans-oceanic shipping business. Bruce welcomed the donation of a used 40 ft shipping container for his pre-race overseas workshop as well as shipping the container, which housed support equipment and new carbon boom, over to France. All of the fun, the dedication, and the energy we shared lead Bruce to ask us (one week before he planned to leave- yow what a rush) to join him in the trans-Atlantic delivery of OP to Les Sables. Boats were required to be "on the pontoons" (the docks) at least 3 weeks before race start. Our task was to find a window in the hurricane/low-pressure systems churning up the Atlantic in time to meet the arrival deadline.



So, we scrambled to make the trip... We were scheduled to leave in the middle of September but had to delay one week due to hurricane Karl, our biggest threat. Based on weather models,

Karl would be on top of our heads in the middle of the Atlantic with 45 mph winds. Too much. With near state of the art electronics, which allowed us to download updated GRIB files via Iridium Sat phone, we were able to keep a close eye on

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Commodores Corner

Happy New Year to all. We are rapidly approaching the midpoint of the LCYC off season and unfortunately for the skiers amongst us, the snowfall so far this year has been about as encouraging as our Wednesday night winds were this past summer. Fortunately, between snowmaking and grooming the skiing hasn't been half bad so far considering. Now if we could only come up with a technically feasible and economical "wind making" system for Shelburne Bay. They did have indoor sailing at one of the big boat shows a few years back. Maybe some huge fans at the south end of the bay??? Probably not...oh well, just a thought. Speaking of people with passions for both skiing and sailing, as most of you have probably already seen in the Free Press, the venerable Gardiner Lane passed away just after New Years at 90 years young. While I always marveled at Gardiner out there still racing his J-24 in his late 80's and was aware that he was an avid XC skier and accomplished painter, sadly I never had the pleasure of personally really getting to know him. After reading his obituary and the full page article in the Free Press, I can only say that he most definitely set the standard for how to live one's life to the fullest. His level of energy, passion and giving to the community are already legendary. Clearly he will be missed by many people and organizations throughout Vermont, including LCYC. Lastly, I hope to see many of you at the Change of Watch Dinner on January 22nd. If you can't make it, it's only 4 months until Club Opening....see you then.

Golden Dazy.....from Bern Collins Dorothy Lost the Blooper—Who Won the Race?

Dorothy always wants to go on the Lady Skipper Race, and is amazed that more women don't take advantage of the opportunity to "drive the boat."

"I love to drive," she says, "I only feel like I win if I beat everybody on corrected, no matter what class."

Dorothy won the Lady Skipper Race before marrying Jeff, and again [several times] after marriage. So, both her maiden name and married name are on the trophy. One of her main competitors wanted to accomplish the same thing, and on the day of this particular race appeared close to realizing her goal.

"We were going downwind; we had the light half-ounce blooper up. Dazy had sets of half-ounce chute with matching blooper, a three-quarter-ounce chute with matching blooper, and so on. So, she had more than one blooper, to go with the spinnakers. What happened was we were going along and [the crew] had taken down the blooper. It was on deck [unsecured] and somehow slid off. It just fell off the boat. The next thing we know, we looked back and it was in the water and I still had the chute up. We're going downwind—doing at

least four or five knots.

"I said, 'You guys, if we are going to go back and get it, we have to get the spinnaker down. I can't just turn the boat with all these sails up, going downwind. I can't do it! I'm on the wheel. . .you guys take the sail down and I'll turn the boat around'. . .and, nobody took the sails down.

"Bruce, even, was looking at me, sort of incredulous, but he wasn't saying, 'We have to go back.' He [the owner of the boat!] was onboard and saw what was happening, but he didn't say, 'Oh, we've got to go back' I don't know what we were all thinking, but when we thought about it afterwards, it's: What were we thinking!?"

So, did Dazy win?

"YES!"

Racing Over the Years

Everyone agrees that the racing scene on Lake Champlain has changed over the years.

For Bruce there were a number of years when *Golden Dazy* "was top dog." Even in later years, however, when lighter and faster boats were winning, *Dazy* "kept them honest." At the Lake Champlain Yacht Club's annual awards dinner in October, *Dazy* was among the recipients every year.

Dorothy notes that, "The nice thing is that when *Dazy* was here, we had, for the most part, an excellent racing program. There was a strong A Class in the 1980's and into the 90's. It made for some very exciting racing. There were so many more races: there was the Conference series, the Isle St. Michel, Valcour I & II. There used to be two races sponsored by each club around the lake—Valcour, Malletts Bay, and LCYC—two long distance races, two-day races, two weekend two-day races. It was neat! We were out there for all those races. Now it has all changed. The LCRC [Lake Champlain Racing Conference] is now inactive."

Jeff remembers, "There were a lot of big boats of similar size and ratings to *Dazy* during those days. Frequently, there were ten boats in A Class. That was really good racing—exciting. For us sailing is also racing. We'd go out on the Wednesday Night Races right up to the end of 2002. The classes have been restructured for the 2003 season, taking scratch boats out of B and putting them in A Class, so the number is up slightly, to five or seven.

"It used to be the weekend races that were the important ones, whereas now it's the Wednesday Night Series at LCYC when people really turn out. When *Dazy* was first on the lake, those [Wednesday races] were just to Proctor [Shoal, just beyond Shelburne Point] and back, and no spinnaker. It really has changed."

As far as race preparation over the years, Jeff says, "It's more about getting the boat set up with crew. We aren't at the point around here where we're changing the sail inventory due to weather conditions. That definitely happens in other places, but we pretty much

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To France.....(continued from page 1)

the weather obstacles ahead.

We were 5 sailors. Ernie and I were on one watch, John from Portland ME and Mario from Key West made up the other watch. Bruce rotated throughout all the watches training his body to get REM sleep in 20 minutes. The day consisted of 5 watches: nights were 4 on/4 off and days were 6 on/6 off. The dogwatch changed from team to team every other night. Mario also served as land logistics manager for the team. John was a wooden boat builder who participated in OP's re-commission from the early stages.

When we left Portland's shores, late Sept 23rd '04 (from 43.39 N lat, 70.14 W Lon), we headed out around Nova Scotia, hugging the coast to be sure the remnants of hurricane Ivan would pass by harmlessly to our West. We kept Halifax as a bailout port in the storm should we decide to delay the trip further. Our path took us up the SE coast of Newfoundland (50W) allowing Jeanne to stall out long enough on the SE coast of the US for us to make our break away east, while we kept a vigilant watch on hurricane Karl in the mid-Atlantic.

The first 4 days of our sail were light wind and lovely blue skies. A high-pressure system was close enough by to provide favorable winds on the stern quarter. Then we went on to hit the great circle route to sail across on 9/28. At that point, we finally broke out of the high and ventured into an un-named North Atlantic low that brought fast sailing breezes, still favorable direction, with OP showing her surfing style. That's when we really started to move, every day faster and faster, to our peak speeds reached at 20 to 25W. All of our delay tactics successfully allowed Karl to pass safely to our north in front of us. We dove further south of east than our planned course in time to catch the southern edge of Karl's counter-clockwise circulation, which was pretty hot. We hit 31 knots on the knot meter, but 28.4 knots across the water on the GPS... That speed was not just gusts; we stayed over 24 knots for hours. Heavenly! Shooting down waves because we were planing was superb! Dreams do come true.(continued next month)

**Dazy.....(Continued from page 2)**

would have the boat set up for all conditions. But, we would definitely go through the process of organizing eight to ten people, getting the sandwiches made and the food organized. My mom did that for years. She had a great system for doing that—you develop systems for race preparations over time.”

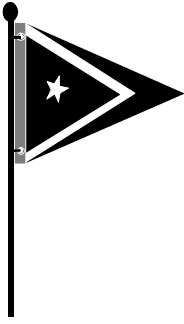
And, as Dorothy notes again, “We were very lucky from the beginning with *Dazy*. We had a core crew that stayed through twenty plus years. That’s huge.”

Bad Boat.....from Mike Barker-Tartan 34 #432

Have you ever bought one of those grills or bicycles from COSTCO that comes in a flat four-inch deep cardboard box reading “Assembly Required?” And have you tried to assemble the grill or bike without careful attention to the instructions only to find that the difficult contraction has to be laboriously disassembled to install the brakes or burner because the sequence included in the instructions was ignored due to “instructional arrogance?” This is WINGDAM’S lot after the Teakettle race. In her 27 years of racing she became an arrogant “know it all” regarding race instructions, a malady not unusual in “long-in-the-tooth” Tartans. Rounding marks to port became instinctive.

In the Teakettle race, the Race Committee posted course #22. It called for two roundings of race mark “A” off Appletree Point, the second rounding to starboard. WINGDAM blissfully left “A” to port, the usual side, on both roundings. Under the scrutiny of the Race Committee she lamely compared herself to a Shinto architect of temples. One column (like one mark), was always installed upside-down so as not to insult the gods by suggesting earthlings could attain a perfection only possible among the deities. The Race Committee immediately saw through this ruse commonly used by obsequious creatures of fiberglass, aluminum, and lead. Their sword of justice fell on WINGDAM like a 45 pound Bruce hitting the deck. She was disqualified by the Committee with the kind of satisfaction a firing squad officer feels when he yells, “Fire!”

You can imagine how WINGDAM’S crew felt. David, Pete, and I would be guilty by association with Tartan arrogance. To remove this stain on our reputations our only course is to do all we can to instill “instructional humility” in WINGDAM. It will be like teaching an old dog new tricks! Race instructions must be studied with humility, not arrogantly ignored. We want her to be like Catalinas, Hunters, and Pearsons. These fine craft take instruction far more kindly than stubborn Tartans. It will be a challenge made worthy by its difficulty.



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LCYC Classifieds

Join the Etchells fleet... USA 358 Mango Challenge is for sale to make room for a newer Etchells. Race ready. Contact The Reuter's for information.

For Sale... Fiberglass dinghy w/ varnished oars and bronze oarlocks (7' 11") fits in the back of a pickup; 2 hp, 4 stroke Honda outboard motor; used one season; excellent condition; both boat and motor cost \$2100.; asking \$1100. OBO; Peter Collins 863-4841

Wanted.....Upright freezer for the clubhouse. Contact Bob Turnau @ 985-3074



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