

The Racing Sheet

Downtown Sailing Series wraps up seven great years

Elliott Bay, Wash. - It was another gorgeous summer day on August 12 which was only fitting as that was the final race of the seventh annual Downtown Sailing Series. As tradition has it, the final race of this 10 race summer tradition is also the Rutten Race in memory of our fallen friend, Tom Rutten. And what a final race it was! Over 100 boats in the two divisions, racing and cruising, came out in near perfect conditions to enjoy the beautiful sunshine, 85°, and in the best Tom Rutten tradition sail in shorts and short sleeve shirts. Something you can't enjoy very often on Puget Sound.

As usual it was the tireless efforts of Dwight Jones and the entire Elliott Bay Marina staff that made it happen and made it so much fun. Where else can you go racing with the backdrop being the spectacular Seattle waterfront, finish at a world class marina and then enjoy free hot dogs, soft drinks, beer and wine. Plus results are available immediately and the prizes in those sailbags can easily total over a \$1000.

Of course none of this would be possible without the sponsors who



Photo Above: The mark rounding at the Seattle Aquarium mark can always be a little crowded however the number one rule is: Have fun, no protests and no collisions allowed.

Photo Below: The racing fleet is intercepted by OrcaMan as they approach the first mark at the grain elevators.

All DTSS Photo's by David Hoffman with many more available at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/davidahoffman/>



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have really stepped up every year and continue to significantly raise the bar. Big thanks this year to BMW Seattle, Trinchero Wines, Boat Insurance Agency, and Seattle Boat Show.com who also made it possible for over 500 people who had never been boating to get out on a sailboat to see what boating was like in the incredible Pacific Northwest.

Then there are the nightly sponsors for each of the 10 races who supplied the prizes and some cases live music to help set the mood for the evening. This year's sponsors were all repeat offenders from last year so you now know how successful it is for them to participate in this amazing event. So starting off the year was Elliott Bay Yacht Sales, followed by Neil Pryde Sailmakers, YachtCare at Elliott Bay Marina, Sperry Topsider, Fisheries Supply, CSR, Emerald Harbor Marine, Palisade Restaurant, and wrapping up with Puget Sound Dive. In addition, there was free beef from A & J Meats up on Queen Anne.

There are never any losers at the Downtown Sailing Series which pretty much makes everyone who sails, a winner. However we do need to recognize a least a couple of exceptional performances. In the racing class the fastest time around the course this year was turned in by that earthbound rocketship, *Dragonfly*, skippered by Pat McGarry who went around the Elliott Bay Marina to the grain elevators, down to the Seattle Aquarium, back to the mark west of EBM, and then to the start/finish line in an amazing 27 minutes flat. WOW! The fastest cruiser around the same course was Beth Bazley's *Santa Clara* who turned in a time of 32.06 minutes.

Winner of the 2010 Rutten Cup, awarded to the boat that most personifies the Tom Rutten attitude towards enjoying Thursday night by participating in every race, turning in consistently great times and above all else, having fun, was the Catalina 36 *Evergreen Dream*, sailed by Bobbi and Bruce Campbell. A very popular selection judging by the reaction of the crowd.

No event would be this successful without the hard work of a lot of individuals, especially the team at Elliott Bay Marina, with Dwight's wife Amy and Paul cooking the hot dogs, the wine girls Logan and Leah, the beer pourers Brian and Jeff, race committee Spencer and Brandon, the set-up and take down crew Kelby, Keri, and Lori, procurement

and logistics Elliot, and last but not least the chief Downtown Sailing Series organizer and ringleader, Kat Kiebel. In addition, Joe Giesbert and Larry Lattin supplied the sponsor

boat. The Race Committee boat which helped set marks and act as communications liaison with Seattle Traffic was staffed by Jim Brown, with able assistance from

the Master Mariner himself, Tom Sweeney.

Needless to say, a great time was had by all and you can expect another fabulous event next year. -BH

Sublime, Lady Too win inaugural STYC Down the Sound race

Puget Sound, Wash. -

It's hard to dispute the enthusiasm shown for the Sloop Tavern Yacht Club's Opening Day single or double-handed Race to the Straits. The last few years have had over 100 boats sign up to race. So why not replicate the Straits' success with a summer crossing in the other direction?

Down the Sound, an STYC event to be held Seafair Weekend proved that Seattle sailors can never have too much of a good thing. The inaugural race featured 27 single or double-handed boats, with the first start being Dennis Palmer's Coronado 27, *Sublime*, just before 8:00 a.m.

With the starts spread out for almost an hour and half, and a big

Photo below - With a rumor that due to inclement, non-summerlike weather no fun was to be had in Gig Harbor, Slooperman made a surprise appearance to "ensure beer and justice for all." Photo by Paul Kalina



Dan Randolph's Nefarious at the finish line just north of the entrance to Gig Harbor. Note the current on the buoy. Photo by Kirk Utter

flood tide getting underway, it looked like if the wind held it should be a quick one. A light southerly greeted the boats but fortunately held long enough to get them out into a building flood.

The later starting boats were starting in better current, and quickly started to move through the fleet. Dan Randolph's Farr 30, *Nefarious*, while one of the latest starters was first to finish, crossing the line just north of the entrance to Gig Harbor around 2:30pm.

In Gig Harbor, most boats moored at Arabella's Landing. Arabella's has a great building with a deck at the top of the dock, where a party was held with beer and wine, along with a terrific meal catered by Mike Tunney and Susanne's Bakery & Deli. Later, results were shared, along with great stories about lead changes, and how much fun it is to do a pursuit race.

Once you cross the start line, as the handicap is taken into account based on the starting time, every boat ahead of you is beating you. At one point in the evening, Slooperman even made an appearance to "ensure beer and justice for all."

Sunday morning, a light southerly was still present, but so was that flood tide. The early starting boats this time saw a change in fortune, as they were able to make tracks north before the max current. The late starters also had lighter breeze this time around, and a slightly longer time to wait for the northerly to fill in. Contrasting the race machine that was first to finish on Saturday, Sunday saw Damon Darley's San Juan 28, *Lady Too*, cross the finish line first just after 3:30pm.

The Down the Sound race was sponsored by Quantum Sails, Ballard Sails, Northwest Yachting, 48 North and KAMgear. - Nigel Barron

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Terremoto! takes line honors in Vic-Maui Race

Kinetic corrects out for Overall Honors

Lahaina, Hawaii - "Challenge - Adventure - Teamwork!" is the Vic-Maui motto. Add to that tales of perseverance and courage, high performance sailing and navigational challenges and you have the recipe for an adrenalin-rush race - Vic-Maui 2010. Regular blogs and emails from most of the fleet allow us to put together a detailed picture.

Looking at the weather picture shaping up in the days before the start, there was a clear sense that this was going to be a fast race, and race participants weren't disappointed. This year's line honors elapsed time of 11d:15h:20m:49s recorded by Scott Burbank's speedy Riptide 35 *Terremoto!* ranks in the top third of fastest elapsed times in the history of the race going back to 1968, twenty-two races in all.

Terremoto! at a compact 35 feet is by far the smallest boat to win Vic-Maui line honors, and her time ranks up there with elapsed times set in previous races by 50, 60 and even 70-foot sleds. Not telling what could have happened if the big guys had come out to play this year!

But of course mixed-fleet racing is about more than line honors and elapsed times. It's corrected times that count for the standings and the overall winner this year was David Sutcliffe's Beneteau 47.7 *Kinetic*, with a corrected time of 10d:23h:01m:19s (elapsed 12d:12h:12m:23s, just twenty-one hours behind *Terremoto!*) The winner of Class 2 was Chris Hui's Southern Cross 39 *Sonsie*, with a corrected time of 11d:19h:38m:37s, good for a third place finish overall. *Terremoto!* was second in Class 1 with a corrected time of 11d:12h:46m:57s, and Gunnar Jonsson's C&C 44 *Turicum* took second place in Class 2 with a corrected time of 12d:11h:08m:56s, sixth place overall.

The 2010 fleet was divided into



The Terremoto! crew - (L-R) Susan Burbank, Scott Burbank, Alex Simanis, Skyler Palmer

two classes, with two separate starts. The first start on Thursday, July 1 was for the boats in Class 2, comprising Dan Matthieu's C&C 39 *Black Watch* (handicap rating 110), Stuart Briscoe's Jeanneau Sun Magic 44 *Pyreneenne* (100), *Sonsie* (160) and *Turicum* (89). Two days later on Saturday July 3, the faster boats in Class 1 hit the starting line. Class 1 boats were Pierre Cote's X One-Ton *Delicate Balance* (68), *Kinetic* (58), Jim Innes' Beneteau 49 *Red Shella* (65), Al Bartlett's Hunter's Child HC50 *Starlight Express* (48), and *Terremoto!* (4). Both starts got off on time at 10:10 am PDT.

Early in the planning for this year's race, the decision was made to go with a staggered start format to try to get a disparate fleet to the finish line in a smaller time window, reducing the time spent waiting for the wrap-up party in Lahaina. The decision was vindicated as the finish times window was just over two and a half days.

The race began with the usual beat out Juan de Fuca Strait and some of the fleet taking a full day or more to

transit Duntze Rock at the western end. But the excitement started from there. Northerly winds filled in with wind speeds in the 20 knot range, gusting to 30 and 35, with 10-20 foot seas. Reports of fast reaching conditions and boat speeds exceeding 15 knots for some started to come in.

It was now time for the navigators to earn their keep. Not for nothing is Vic-Maui known as a "navigator's race." As always in Vic-Maui, the navigator's choice of the route to sail is the key to the race. The big hurdle to overcome is the North Pacific High, a large region of light or no wind. The High shifts and moves and often sits atop the Great Circle route, the shortest possible distance to cover on the course. The position and expected stability of the Pacific High determines how far south boats will head before turning to the west and Hawaii. It's always a trade-off and it can be a gamble. Sail close to the Great Circle and shorten the distance, but run the risk of running out of wind; or sail south in good winds but with a longer distance to cover.

The normal route in many previous Vic-Maui races, including particularly the 2008 race, has seen the fleet stay relatively close to shore for a much longer distance, reaching well into California latitudes before making the break toward the west. But 2010 was the year the navigators could roll the dice on a more direct shot at Hawaii.

The forecast position and stability of the Pacific High and the resulting wind patterns allowed the fleet to make an early push westward much closer to the Great Circle route. Hunched over their computers, navigators endlessly analyzed the weather GRIBs and ran course optimizations using their tactical navigation software. But in the end, the final call has to be made by human beings, the navigators and skippers. And the gamble paid off.

But trouble lay ahead. Crew injuries, fatigue and gear failure took their toll, with one retirement (*Delicate Balance*) from the race. There numerous inspiring stories of courage and teamwork under adversity.

But not all was adversity. Consistent 200+ nautical mile days were reported by the lead boats. By the half-way point, *Terremoto!*, leading the pack, had even overhauled the Class Two boats which had started two days previously, with *Kinetic* nipping at her heels.

Reaching the halfway point is a special time for Vic-Maui racers, calling for some celebration. Most of the boats put on a special halfway dinner featuring a great meal with a little time for revelry. This is often the only time during the race that the entire crew will have the opportunity to share a meal and companionship together, as the watch cycle can keep them on different schedules. With warmer weather as the boats approach Hawaii, the foul weather gear gets stowed and the

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shorts and T-shirts, as well as sunscreen, get broken out.

Also around the half-way point, the Pacific High was passed and the boats were getting into the Trade Winds. Steady northeasterly winds in the 20's, with 10-20 foot rolling waves make for a fast ride once the boat gets surfing. Boat speeds of 18+knots were reported by *Terremoto!*: "What an awesome ride!" and *Turicum*, a heavy C&C 44, also reported hitting 18 knots.

On to the finish. As the finish line approaches, crews know that it can be a struggle to retain your concentration and focus. Light air sailing in the last few days compounded this difficulty. *Turicum* on July 13 at 396 nm out:

"By morning the winds had lightened and all around us were benign

weather cells bringing minute amounts of moisture and occasionally much welcome respite from the now consistently high temperatures. We have changed to a lighter spinnaker and continue to make a presentable five to six knots in only slightly more wind. Everybody on board can sense a building anticipation of making landfall but you try to let that occupy only the smallest recess of your consciousness since anything can happen at any time and our attention must remain on the immediate task of sailing the boat intelligently and efficiently".

Vic-Maui 2010 finally wrapped up with a grand celebration at the Awards Banquet in Lahaina on July 24. - Mark Gray

Photos by Gaylean Sutcliffe



Kinetic's happy crew - (L-R) Greg Westerlund, David Sutcliffe, Graeme Sutcliffe, Sebastian Moes, Jeff Sutcliffe (in front), Gordon May, Bill May, Peter Moes, Adam Thomson.

Tir Na nOg wins light air Shaw Island Classic race

Friday Harbor, Wash. - The 40th Shaw Island Classic hosted by the San Juan Island Yacht Club on Saturday, August 7 had the potential of being one of the most challenging in the event's history with forecast winds of 17 knots and a nearly 10 foot tidal range creating a flooding current of over two knots at Reid Rock. However, with no wind developing the fleet was basically hove to. A rumble could be heard as far up town as Vic's as the skippers alternately cursed Thor or pleaded for wind.

Of 68 starters only one boat tech-

nically finished the race. *Tir Na nOg*, a Tartan 37 co-skipped by Bill Fraser and son Kirk Fraser of Shaw Island claimed trophies for 1st (and only) to finish, 1st overall on corrected time and 1st PHRF B Division.

The Shaw Island Classic race is unique in that there is no fixed course. The Sailing Instructions are quite simple: Start from Friday Harbor, around Shaw Island either way, and back to Friday Harbor. Shaw Island is the only mark and the Sailing Instructions caution against hitting it. If one does hit the island a 360 penalty turn is not required.

A split start led by slower classes followed 15 minutes later by the faster classes helped ease the start line this year. The weather, however, was a disappointment with rain, fog and wind under 5 knots. Most with local knowledge chose to go counter clockwise figuring on riding the counter current on the north side of Turn Island and then catch some breeze coming up San Juan Channel to take them to Up-right Channel. Most of those boats hit the flood off Turn Rock - and that was all she wrote.

Bill Fraser, the winner and 30 year veteran of this race, said, "I could see early on that this would be



Yes there was rain and yes at times there wasn't much wind but all that made for a simply more challenging race than usual.

a mid course race." (Race Instructions provided that if no boat completed the course by the time limit of 1800, finishes would be taken at mid-course). He could see the trouble that other boats were having with the light wind going counter clockwise, so decided to go clockwise with the flood current up San Juan Channel and take his chances bucking the current in Wasp Passage. - Moon Doggie, Great White, and Norm nodded Hankin Point and were 300 yards from mid-point

when the time ran out. *Redline II*, *Temptress*, *Sea Puppy Paradigm Shift*, *Mistral*, *Skedaddel* and *Timette* were just behind them.

Orcas Island sailor Wally Lum sailed his 40th consecutive Shaw Island Classic race and could share some tales of wind and weather. Afterward, racers warmed themselves back at the Yacht Club and enjoyed a hearty lasagna dinner prepared by the SJYC's 1st Mates. - Peg Gerlock, SJYC Fleet Captain
Photos by Marc Fontana

Photo below - Econo-Juan was busted by Puget Soundkeepers for illegally harvesting kelp from the San Juan Islands Marine Preserve. The fine is expected to be in the multi-thousands of dollars.

