



British Columbia Multihull Society

January 2016

Welcome to the New Year. Boat show season is upon us, a sure sign of spring! May will be here before we know it, so don't delay, get your spring maintenance and preparation organized so you can enjoy the full sailing season on the water.

This is an off year for the Vanisle360 race, but if any of you are feeling particularly adventuresome, they will be running the R2AK (race to Alaska) again this year. This is just the race for you if a broken engine is your excuse for not getting out on the water. Not only are engines not required, they are not allowed. <https://r2ak.com/>

If you are not feeling so adventuresome (or if you just love your engine), The BCMS will be hosting three sail-ins again this summer and there are a number of local races to challenge your boat and test your skills. In this newsletter issue, Rae Simpson writes about one such event, the Round the County race held in November each year.



Pub Nights @ *Rusty Anchor Pub*

Captain Cove Marina

6100 Ferry Road, Ladner, BC @ 7:30 PM

February 16, 2016

March 15, 2016

April 19, 2016

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Mustang Round the County 2015

Rae Simpson - December 1, 2015

Mustang Sally, my ProKennex 380 catamaran is on the hard and I'm working hard to get her race ready. Last week, in a moment's inattention, I crashed into a dead head and stove in her starboard bow. An application of underwater epoxy closed the hole, but serious sailing is out of the question until fixed. Constant monsoon rainfall leaves 4 inch deep puddles of water around and under the boat. My feet are wet. My sweat won't evaporate and it soaks my undershirt. The sweat mixes with my rain dampened coveralls to give me the shivers. I'm cold, dirty wet and miserable.

I've committed to the Round the County race but it is proving tough to get there. The work list is getting shorter, but the endless rain and cold is delaying the paint and the fiberglass work on the bow. I'm pushing Bellingham's Seaview boatyard to get the bow repair done, and myself to get the other work done. But it is a slow and frustrating process.

Crohn's doesn't help my attitude. For a few days, I seem to spend ¼ of my time on the toilet and ¼ of my time wondering where the closest toilet is, and if I should be running for it. Am I crazy considering a race when my guts are so pathetic? Push that thought away! Away! AWAY! I'll be fine. Keep the spirit and keep on keeping on. Days later the weather breaks and the Crohn's settles. Sharon and Stu come down to Seaview to help get the final coat of bottom paint on.

Seaview completes bow repairs and it is looking 110%. I can splash her on Thursday afternoon, which gives a one day window for shake down on Friday. The odds are looking better to make



the start line. Friday morning and my crew arrives. We stow the boxes bags and coolers of food and snacks. Enough to feed two crews. We can race for Hawaii - someone cracks. Wayne, Stuart, Tim, and Eimear light up the day with their enthusiasm. Off we sail, bound for Orcas Island's West Sound.

Most of the crew lacks heavy weather experience on Mustang Sally and strong winds are predicted. When the wind pipes up to mid-teens, I call for a single reef, then a double. Shake the reef and put it back in again. Good practice. While demonstrating how to rig the topping lift, my favorite hat is knocked off into the water. Time for that overdue man overboard drill. A couple of passes and we drag my soggy felt fedora back on board. The hat will never be the same, but we are confident we can execute a rescue if needed. Good use of a fedora!

The reception dinner at East Sound Yacht Club is friendly, boisterous and generous. I'm proud as a piper when Wayne points out the multihull division winner's plaque that shows Bad Kitty as the first winner in 2003 and Mustang Sally as the 2004 winner. 11 years later I'm back to give it another go. I'm feeling excited about the prospects with the predicted strong winds. An ocean crossing cruising cat like Mustang Sally needs strong winds, no mistakes and some luck to be competitive in sail boat racing.

It is Saturday morning and we are off early heading for the start line at Lydia Shoal in Rosario Strait. The wind picks up and the sails power up and soon over power the engines. Engines off, then a single reef, then a double as the wind jumps to 20 knots, then 30 knots. Sally settles down and romps effortlessly toward Obstruction Pass where we pick up Jamie. Jamie makes a quick bold jump from the dock to the boat as we barely slow down to grab her.

The starting area is a pandemonium of broaching boats, white caps, and streaming wakes. Many boats are rounding up repeatedly, some barely in control as the crews wrestle with full mainsails in the bigger gusts that are hitting mid 30s. Some elect for a reef, but I'm surprised at the number of skippers going with full mains. More balls than brains. But, we know - balls can be the winning ticket, or a ticket to a broken boat.



Sally is moving fast but smooth and steady, not diving into the waves as she will when over powered. Our tacks and jibes put us on the edge of control. Sally wants to round up, but as long as everything and everyone clicks, it is all good. Shaking one of the reefs would give us more power, more speed but less

control. Capsize potential. Once we get going down wind at say 8-10 knots the apparent wind should drop to 20ish. But, checking the wind speed, it bounces up to 37 and I decide the reefs are right for now.

I hope to give the racing multihulls a run for their money on PHRF in this big breeze, but I am pleased to have a like competitor. Another 38 foot cruising catamaran, a Lagoon 38 named O'BenAnnas is here to race. We see O'BenAnnas in the prestart, sailing under full main and no genoa. It will be fun going head to head. The first and second starts get away without issue, but a serious injury aboard another boat delays our start. We lose track of O'BenAnnas. Then as the horn goes for our start, O'BenAnnas is nowhere to be seen.

We hit a good starboard tack start crossing the line some 10 of seconds after the horn. Fine for a long race in these conditions. We are running deep downwind with the big wind driving the boat speeds to large single digits. Shaking the first reef and heating it up to a better angle, we are soon broad reaching even faster down Rosario Strait toward the middle of Lummi Island.

As the wind eases some, we roll out Black Stallion, Mustang Sally's A4 kite. Boat speed climbs to double digits. The wind eases as we approach Lummi's shore and we jibe away. Some trepidation before this jibe as the new wind angle does not look great. But the big winds allow a narrower jibe angle than we are used to. We are able to reach speedily down the course toward Sucia Island and the turning point at Patos Island.



The wind gusts up again into the 30's so we roll the kite and pull out the genoa while maintaining speed and course. It might have been these gusts that helped spell disaster for Dragon Fly. Dragon Fly is another catamaran in our division. A beautiful formula 40 pure bred racing machine. Over the VHF radio we hear that they have turned over. Dragon Fly is very fast and was too far ahead for us to see, but I understand that after running off in a big gust, one of her bows submerged after catching a kelp ball and it was ass over tea kettle. We happy to hear the crew is recovered and safe.



Rounding Patos we jibe over to a close reach with wind now in the 20's gusting up 5-10 knots. We begin picking off more boats from the earlier starting divisions. I need a break and look for a fresh helmsman. Stuart is ready to go. With Steward on the helm and Tim trimming mainsail, their teamwork is precise and effective. Tim eases the main in the gusts to keep the boat on course then drives the boat forward in the lulls by hardening. Eimear is keeping the genoa perfectly trimmed for speed.

It is awesome to watch the joy on their faces as Mustang Sally picks off one boat after another. We are charging down the course on Sally's favorite point of sail. The grin on Stuart's face as he hangs onto the wheel working his way past other boats is worth a million bucks. No one cares that we are being pounded by waves splashing over the bows. No one cares that a cold wind driven rain is slashing down in our faces. We are having a blast.

Light duty time for the bow man, skipper and windward trimmer. On goes the tea pot and Jamie serves up hot tea and stew to keep everyone warm as we charge westward down Boundary Passage toward Stewart Island and Turn Point.

As we approach Turn Point the boats ahead and close to the island are standing up straight, showing us where the wind isn't. We shake the last reef and split the difference between the boats with little wind and those that still have good wind. A contrary current hits us as we turn the corner. The current tries to throw us northward when we want to go south. The wind fades away to 10 knots then 5 and with it advantage and any hope of correcting over the faster boats.

Surprise! Is that O'BenAnnas ½ mile ahead of us? It is! How did he get there? Visibility has been off and because of the rain. But still, how he got ahead is puzzling. It is a big race course, so I shrug and shout “let’s go get him guys. We have caught up to him and now we will get past him”.

The winds diminish to almost nothing. Progress is painful. SOG bounces from zero to 1.5 knots and back again. Our wake is miniscule. I’ve come home from nights of boozing and debauchery on my hands and knees, crawling faster than this. We chase every little puff of wind, changing sails, screecher, back to the genoa, then launch the big light white asymmetrical kite as a puff of wind ruffles our tell tales from the west. But the puffs come and go like wispy dreams in the night. O'BenAnnas is covering us, tack for tack. We close the gap to about ¼ mile, but can’t seem to haul him closer. Time seems to stand still after O'BenAnnas finishes as we ghost along through the last quarter mile and over the finish line.

Roche Harbour is rocking with excitement when we arrive. Enthusiasm erupts after that wonderful day of hard sailing. Everyone is full of smiles and wants to tell their stories of excitement and bravado. Roche has supplied barbeques, a huge tent, live music and free beer for the all sailors. The place is vibrating.

The skipper of O'BenAnnas, introduces himself and some of his crew. As he congratulates me for sailing a good race, I put on a grin, hiding my disappointment and return the compliment saying “ah - but not as good as you mate”. I’m a bit confused, but then happy when he explains that the race committee allowed him to start with the first divisions. We were actually the faster boat! More to celebrate!

Everyone parties into the late evening but our ladies, Jamie and Eimear go harder than the guys. Exhaustion overcomes Mustang Sally’s mortal men who hit their bunks with hopes of being fresh for tomorrow and the second round of racing around the County.



Sunday morning blues baby! Today's race is going to be tough in a different way. Gentle puffs of wind appear and fade at the start line. Wonderful, we have a contrary current too. My throat tightens as I watch Martha in the first start. Martha is a beautiful 80ish foot classic schooner. She looks awesome slowly pulling toward the start line flying every bit of sail she owns. Martha gets within spitting distance of the start line when the wind fades and the current carries her backward.

I try to position Sally so we can reach down to the start line and hopefully have enough momentum or pick up a puff of wind to carry us across the start line. But the boats from the first two starts are moving so slow that they can't clear the starting area. Many are carried back behind the line by the contrary current. That limits our options and fouls my start plan. I use the engines to stay close to the start line, but as I shut them down there is zero wind and a contrary current. When the horn goes to start our division we are moving backwards at about 50 feet per minute.

We try hard to get some forward motion. A few weak short lived puffs of air lure us into optimism and continued efforts to optimize the sails and move the boat. Keeping the boat pointed in the right direction is a challenge. After 25 minutes of thrashing about, there is still no wind and no signs of a change. We are now 1/2 mile from the start. Time for a cup of tea, a time honored Tristan Jones technique for just these situations. The 30 minute starting time limit expires as the kettle begins to boil.

It is a DNS for Mustang Sally in day two of the RTC. After the fun of yesterday it really doesn't matter much. The good news is I should be able to get everyone home in time for dinner and we will have a pleasant motor sail through the spectacular heart of San Juan County. Enthusiasm aboard is unstoppable as we motor sail through Roche Harbour and the San Juan's south of Orcas Island. We drop Jamie off at her car which she has left near Obstruction Pass. This time we dock the boat and carefully help her off with all her gear. Jamie will catch the ferry home, while the rest of us will sail the remaining 25 miles to Blaine.



Wayne spots an odd configuration of boats on the horizon and we identify it as Dragon Fly under tow. They are heading south under tow with crew aboard, while we are going north. Crossing over to view her closer, we see they have recovered the boat sans mast and will no doubt be back to race again.



Aboard Mustang Sally we have a crew of multihull sailors at their best - always thinking up newer and better ways to sail. Tim and Wayne come up with a clever double slotted configuration for the genoa and screecher. This configuration, just off the wind, powers the boat up to 5 knots in 6 knots of breeze. Cool!

The sail home is laid back, comfortable and productive. We dock in Blaine just after dark as Eimear serves up a hot lasagna dinner. Today's sail is the perfect contrast to yesterday's wild and crazy ride.

Here is a link to some cool video from aboard Mustang Sally during the race. These were taken by Stuart Kerr: <https://youtu.be/7W782yBab4o>

Renew your membership in BC Multihull Society for 2016.

The cost remains at \$35.00 and there are many ways to pay:

1. Visit the BCMS website (www.bcms.bc.ca) and click the *contact us* tab. Fill out the renewal form and pay via paypal.
2. Make out a cheque to BC Multihull Society and mail it to the membership director Stu Kerr. His address is: 19897 36A Avenue, Langley, BC V3A 2R8.
3. Come to the BCMS pub night (@ the Rusty Anchor pub 7:30 PM) and give Stu either a cheque or cash.

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