

MUTINEER

# CANNONBALL

## MNAC 2004

As the 34 hour drive home recedes from my mind as the dominant memory of the Mutineer Nationals, all the great times we had in Fort Walton come back, filling me with excellent lifetime memories.

When the Fort Walton Beach, Florida was first announced as the site for the 2004 Buccaneer and Mutineer North Americans, I remember an exchange of emails with Rick Scarborough likening sailing in new and different venues like playing golf on different courses. Sailing out of the Fort Walton Yacht Club and racing for 5 days on the Choctawhatchee Bay in the warm gulf waters and the steady 10-20 mph winds was definitely a world class sailing experience, one I'd never get staying on the fluky lakes of Colorado. Being the third MNAC in a row that I've attended, it was like putting another notch on the tiller for another top notch venue, along with Lake Michigan and the Ware River just inside the Chesapeake Bay. Attending MNAC is more than competition; it's a chance to enjoy new conditions, sometimes ideal, sometimes quite challenging and different from our home waters.

Although there were 7 Mutineer boats on the water, there were 11 Mutineer owners present including 2 teams that had Mutineer owners as crew, and James Carr and Patti (?) who visited for the first few days. For the third year in a row I was tremendously impressed with the Mutineers and Buccaneers at the regatta. Friendly and helpful as hell on shore, and challenging and competitive but respectful on the water was the theme for the week. I speak with the experience of having met the most number of Mutineers at MNAC being the only Mutineer to attend all 3 of the past Annual Regattas, when I say I am continually impressed by the quality of people

who are drawn to this fine boat and who come to this event. I have positive things I could say about ever Mutineer who was in Fort Walton, but let me just mention a few:

Rey Garza. He has put countless hours into reorganizing and energizing the Class, and at MNAC he did "meet and greet", stuffed registration packets, flipped hundreds of burgers, and anything else he could to make the Mutts feel welcome. After 2 days of racing he was solidly in third place, yet he took the third day off from racing to join a foursome of Mutineers who chose to go for a picnic cruise. "Whatever benefits the class most" could be Rey's motto.

Adam Smith answered a Yahoo post to bring a boat to Fort Walton for 5-time past Mutineer champion Ernie French to sail. Adam, with no racing



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experience, brought his Mutineer from Alabama and offered it and himself as crew. He and Ernie spent any hours they weren't racing converting Adam's boat from a YMCA teaching boat to a competitive racing dinghy. Adam took a leap of faith to show up in Florida and humbly offer what he had, and was rewarded with a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish.

Ernie French took another leap of faith, showing up in Florida with unknown boat and crew waiting for him. With the parts he could carry on the plane with him, and borrowed parts and tools, he made modification after modification, repair after repair, and sailed Adams boat to a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish. His skill on the water became obvious. My crew and I would be sailing with focused attention, watching Ernie and Adam getting closer, then realize Adam wasn't hiking out like we were, he was bailing continuously. On one run we were surprised Ernie and Adam hadn't flown their spinnaker, and I found out later it was because they were using it as a top gasket on the centerboard trunk! Heaven help us when this guy has his own boat to prepare and can sail it without repairing and modifying on the water race after race.

John Allison may have had the fastest Mutineer on the water in Fort Walton. In the first race he had a solid 2<sup>nd</sup>, but misinterpreted the finish line getting a heartbreaking DNF. Then he had catastrophic breakdown after breakdown. He didn't sail a complete race until the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, when he scored 2-1-3 for the 3 races, the 3<sup>rd</sup> coming with a centerboard cap that was halfway off. And yet, his spirits weren't sour. He played guitar music late into the evening Wednesday entertaining us all with a light heart even though his score line looked like a train wreck at the time: DNF-DNS-DNF-DNS. John is a great guy and an excellent sailor. His record will show it in future regattas.

There were other heroes and great folks, even Buccaneers, but if I list them all, this will be so long you wouldn't read it to the end, so I'll stop with the accolades

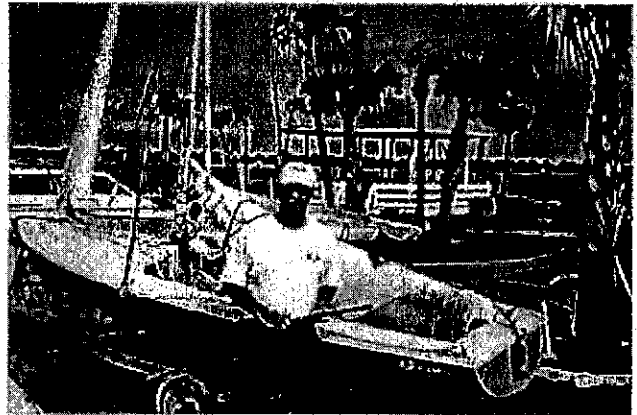
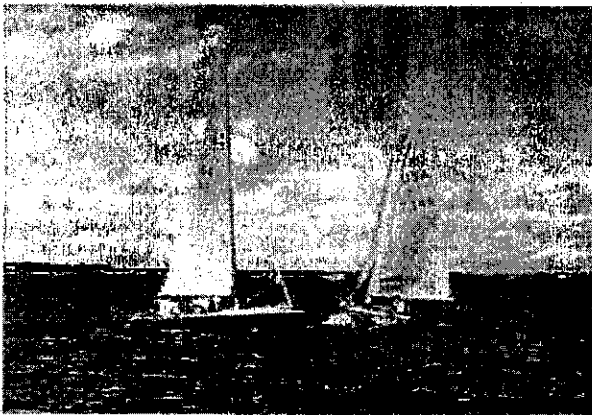
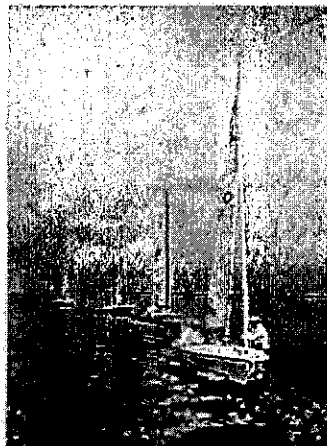
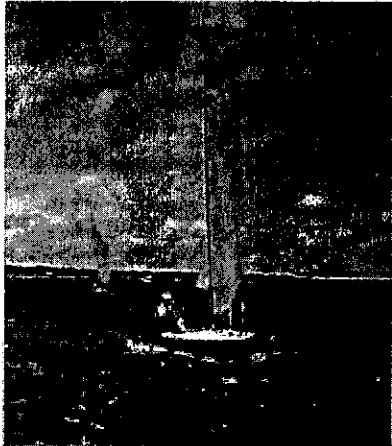
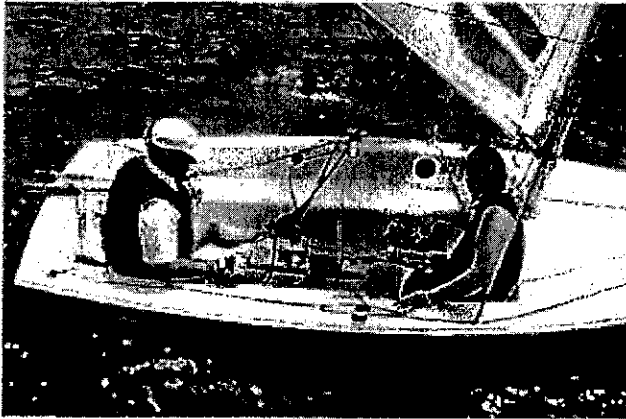
In general, the level of skill on the water this year was excellent. In many cases the determining factor in many races became boat integrity. With boats that



are 20 - 30 years old, and trying conditions with wind up to 32 mph, often the boat that held together won the race. Is it time for new Nickels Mutineers?

As was the case with the previous 2 MNACs, this was the highlight of my sailing for the year. Nothing is more exciting or rewarding than sailing in a fleet of like boats. After another year of mixed-fleet racing, it was great to start together, and be on the same tack beating to the windward mark with 3 or 4 boats all in a line, no obvious advantage to any one boat, looking for every little advantage you might be able to squeeze out of your sails, your boat trim, your steering. On one such port tack my crew and I stared through the windows of our sails watching Ernie and Bob for a quarter mile stay in an even line with us and each other. In another race, after 5 miles of sailing, we crossed the finish line so close to Ernie that each of us thought we had beat the other, and didn't know for sure until the results were posted. This is how we get better. This is how we refine our skills. This is how we learn new skills. It takes competition for us to challenge ourselves. This is why I race.

Gib Charles



# And the Winners are...

Place	Name.....	SCORE	Clas s	Numbe r	RC_1	RC_2	RC_3	RC_4	RC_5	RC_6	RC_7	RC_8	RC_9
1	Gib Charles	8		515	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
2	Ernie French	19		1	DNF	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	2
3	Gordon Brookfield	34		1462	3	4	3	3	DNF	DNF	DNF	2	3
4	Rey Garza	45		3216	2	3	4	4	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF
5	John Allison	46		54	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	2	1	3	DNF	DNF
6	Michael Boley	57		2216	DNF	5	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	4	DNF
7	Dan T Jones	64		1376	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF



First Place Gibb "Sexy Legs" Charles and Page Dinsmore



Second Place Winners Adam Smith and Ernie French (not shown 'cause he had to leave early!)



Third Place Gordon Brookfield and Robert DeRoock