

MNC Commodore's Report

It's been two weeks since we arrived home from an amazing week in Alabama, and I thought I had better offer my view as Commodore of the Class.

First of all, as everyone has already said, this group did a super job of putting together a great week of racing and socializing. It was obvious that Bea, James, Tate and everyone else put a lot of time and effort planning and seeing that everything was done right. As an officer, I knew traveling to this event that everything was taken care of I would be able to concentrate on the racing without on shore worries of things that would need to be done. I was not wrong.

Two of the biggest concerns in racing, are the weather, and will the PRO (Principal Race Officer) run the races in a manner that gives us a true test of skill on the water. The weather is the only factor in sailing that cannot be controlled. Our PRO Keith Kuhlman, however did an outstanding job of trying to set perfect lines and courses with ever changing conditions. He understood what we were trying to accomplish in having good races for the top boats, but also helping the majority of boats learn and compete. I know that some classes would of called races off after the start due to major wind shifts like we had, and that a couple of races were drag races, but everyone sailed hard and didn't complain. We got 11 races in when some classes would off struggled to get in 6.

For all of you that could not attend, you can see by the scores and from the pictures that the racing at all levels was close. What you cannot see, was how close. The top four boats were inseparable, and had Tate and Rick breathing down our necks waiting for a small error. Right behind them, and sometimes ahead of us were Jim and Margaret Davis, and of course Bob DeRoeck and Rey "Hitch Pin" Garza sailing the infamous "G's Whiz". If we are ever to have a Mutt Museum, two boats that have to be in it are "G's Whiz" and "Lara-Lee".

Looking at the scores, it would appear that with only 2 points separating 1st-3rd after 11 races, that the racing was very close. But again, what you can't see is the whole truth in the racing. David Chadwick and Greg Bennett led at probably the first mark more than anyone else in all the races, but in shifty and changing conditions it is difficult to be the leader and try to cover and stay ahead of four boats going different directions. They were very fast and sailed well enough to win this regatta. I think Gib and Hunter would agree with me in this evaluation. I look forward to future sailing against these guys and am glad we are attracting this caliber of sailor to the class.

Our class is blessed to have someone with the ability of Hunter Riddle and his wife Suzanne join in and compete with us. Hunter's experience showed in the fact that he won the most races (5). Don't feel sorry for him that he was in an old green boat, as it was the lightest boat by 15 pounds and had to add weight. It's scary to think how fast

he would have been with good sails! (I don't care who you are that was funny!!)
Seriously, if you want to go faster, call Hunter at Schurr Sails and he will get you up to speed.

Gib Charles sailed a great regatta but he was "Lucky". Let me explain. When Gib arrived, and we hugged (good friends don't shake hands) I could tell that he had been working out (as in rock). At 54, he had been in the gym. Out of his vehicle jumps a 20 year old unemployed sailing enthusiast named Mike Ruwitch. Knowing Gib doesn't work (retired), and finding out Mike doesn't work (yet), I'm thinking maybe these two have been out practicing 8-9 days a week. Once on the water, it was evident Gib didn't pick him up on I-70 in Kansas on the way.

Gib explained at the awards banquet how he had dedicated the last 16 months of his life, (since the 2008 Nationals) to making himself a better sailor. He showed it on the water. I have heard many times in sports over the years how someone got Lucky. What I have found in any sport is that the "Luckiest" competitor is the one who puts in the most time in practice, learning, and effort in becoming the best they can be. They earn what they achieve. Gib and Mike deserved this years Championship and did an outstanding job earning it on the water. With only two firsts, their consistent scores showed how to win in a very competitive group. The best are "Lucky" for a reason. Congratulations Gib and Mike, 2009 National Champions and winners of the "Battle in Bama".

The B Fleet was simply a disaster. These people were walking around the parking lot on Monday and Tuesday morning acting all lost and unknowing. The minute we have the first practice race they beat most of us A Fleeters. Sandbaggers. Actually what happened is exactly what I have been saying for the last 4-5 years. You will underestimate your ability and that there will be people of all ability's to compete and learn from.

When you look at the scores you can see that everyone was in the hunt in a lot of races. David Rowe drove down from Michigan with his crew Cheryl Caudill, and finished just behind Patti Bennett who sailed with different crew and had several races in the top 6. Ed Hurst sailed well in the last half of the regatta with sails he made. Susan Wilson and Kerrie Serpa sailed well and I think will be a force in the future, as will Chris Scott and his wife KK who had two thirds on the windy last day. In his second Nationals, Dave Zale drove down from St. Louis alone and picked up crew to finish in a close 6th just 4 points ahead of Chris and KK. Brad Osborne and son Cameron made a last minute decision to come and join us. After a slow start in the first three races, they finished with scores including (4) 2nds and a 3rd to finish in the hardware for 5th.

If you don't think 1 place in one race can make a difference, you can see that out of 11 races only 1 place separated 3rd and 4th. Ginette Hughes and Barb Short won the 1st race and sailed a great series to finish in 4th just 1 point behind Bea Pecou and Allyson Lewter. Bea showed she could perform on the water as well as performing with all of

her duties off the water. Bea and Allyson took the basic information I shared with them on winds shifts and used it on the course to battle Martin and Marvin going into the last day. Jerry Thompson has beaten his crew Greg Parker physically for years preparing him for the windy last day in which they picked up two bullet's, a 2nd, and a 5th to finish second overall. Who say's flogging the crew is not a motivator!

Marvin Jansen showed the group that flogging your boat also works. The last morning in contention for the B Fleet Championship, Marvin decides on his way to the ramp he needs to go the bathroom one more time so he turns around, taking the boat with him and forgets about the trees between us the bathrooms. (as a class we should submit this for that gotta go... gotta go... commercial) Needless to say the mast comes down. Fortunately a small piece of line was being used to hold it up and it just broke. They were able to retie it and pop it back up. In fact Marvin was so fast in getting it back up I suggested he rename his boat.....VIAGRA! Martin Cassanova and Marvin Jansen sailed a great series to win the very competitive B Fleet.

The awards Banquet at a Mutineer Nationals has become a special time because of the special awards.

I'm not talking about just any special award. TV has the "Emmy's", Movies have the "Oscars", Sports has the "ESPY'S", but we have the best in the "Vinnie's" . To win a "Vinnie" is special. If you win two.... you're "Special".

Vince Jones did another outstanding job in creating this years "Vinnies".

Now for next year. Where? When? Doesn't matter.....don't miss it.

Headin' for the gym,

Ernie French, Commodore

Mutineer 15 Class Association