

2016 Windmill Mid-Winter Regatta Clearwater Sailing Center, FL March 12-13th



First, let me say we were proud to be representing the Hoover Sailing Club for the first time! Everyone was talking about the up-coming regatta season and several long distance boats are fully committed, and others are considering the trip, to compete at HSC and the Midwestern's. HSC has a great reputation in the Windmill Class and we are looking forward to being part of the club.

After years of wishing and hoping for the hockey gods to produce an "off-weekend", and our wishes being ignored, now that both of our boys are out of the house, we were finally able to attend the Mid-Winter regatta this year. Nancy and I loaded up the gear and prepared for weather ranging from freezing to hot and were greeted by 'just-right' 75 to 80° sunny weather! Even considering how mild the winter has been here in SW Ohio, this was greatly appreciated! And, it blew stink for both days making the 1,000 mile drive there worthwhile!!

The event officially opened on Saturday with a skippers meeting that included the announcement of a new Windmill fleet in Erie, PA. Pat Huntley recently joined the class and bought a new Johansen Windmill #5703 and with his wife Janet they have developed a fleet of 6 boats in Erie (they are hosting their coming out regatta August 13-14th). Congratulations to them, and we hope to see many of you there! After the brief meeting, we were on the water for five races...

The Clearwater Sailing Center is a beautiful spot with two launch ramps and "flat" water on the inside of the bay and "open" water available with a quick sail under a causeway and into the gulf. All the races were staged inside the bay just off the club's beach, making access to the race area super easy and convenient. Dave Ellis, past National and District Champion, was the PRO along with support of two crash boats; they did an excellent job arranging square lines and a simple windward leeward race course that resulted in races lasting about 25-35 minutes. Given the wind conditions, this time was plenty to separate the fleet.

Saturday the wind started at 12-14 knots and then built through the day to about 18 knots. Five races were run, back-to-back, and you can see in the results that the conditions created challenges for everyone; we all had our good races and our not so good races. Wind was fairly stable, with oscillations of about 10-15°, and outside of random puffs, it was fairly easy to get into a rhythm and keep the boat moving. In the first race, we realized our boat speed was going to be competitive and we focused on sailing clean...but there was no catching the winners Ethan and Trudy Bixby who, once again, made winning look easy. They (5700) are featured in the foreground of this image and we (5705) are where we spent most of the week following them. Saturday finished with a simple lasagna dinner on the deck and a few adult beverages followed by ibuprofen for most.



On Sunday, we were on water first thing and the wind was already blowing 15+ knots and everyone was depowered to the maximum (thanks to Ethan's openness at a post-race debriefing on Saturday evening everyone was well versed regarding various boat and rig adjustments that can be made to help keep the boat in control in heavy air). We won the start of the first (and only) race Sunday and were able to sail over Ethan and Trudy leaving the line...but when he cleared our stern he proceeded to work his way 10+ yards to windward of us...it was an amazing display of skill! They rounded the weather mark in the lead once again and we all followed around another leeward-windward lap. By the time we got

back to the top mark, the wind had built further and on the final downwind leg of the race everyone was full-on planing. Our last 300 yards were wide open - we were planing already when a puff hit and spun several boats out...we were all the way in the back of our boat and it was jumping off the wave tops...we had the pole out and the board up...it was crazy! Thankfully we were able to finish without crashing!

Locals Colin Browning and Eric Mann finished 3rd overall, followed closely by class President Ralph Sponar and his wife Sandy. Winning the man-miles award, was Roy Sherman (flew from Washington State) and his crew Eric Francois (flew from New York) in 5th place. The Huntley's sailed very well too; unfortunately they were not able to sail Sunday which dropped them out of the top five. Another regular at HSC events was local St. Petersburg competitor Lon Ethington and Meg Gimmi, great hosts for Nancy and I for the weekend, who sailed well but had a couple capsizes that hurt their overall result. The event had two new windmillers participate: Dave and Lainey White recently purchased a beautiful wooden boat #5530 (sister ship to Alan Chauvenet's boat who frequently attends HSC regattas and who was impressive in this event completing all six races with his daughter Christina) and Nathaniel Plant and his wife who sailed the class boat #5701 (which is for sale). It was great to meet these enthusiastic sailors, along with the other locals, and we all enjoyed having the great competition and comradery!

On the 'Funny Story' side of the event we offer these tid-bits:

- We had a mark rounding which we agreed to never discuss again which resulting in our losing our tiller extension and swamping the boat...see Race 5 result.
- Colin silently fell out of his boat while landing Sunday...which left Eric questioning what Colin was doing as 'they' appeared to be crashing into the leeward pier? He soon realized there was no one on the helm and as the boat crashed in the gale, Eric made a beautiful 10 point dive into the bay (seriously, he pointed his toes and left no splash). The high-school laser sailors about to head out thought this was great and applauded with gusto!
- Lisa Fath, sailing with her son Jake, came across our lost tiller extension...and inexplicably to us, and Jake, and seconds later inexplicably to herself, she tried to throw the extension 40+ yards back to us. The standard greeting between us is now officially, "See-Ya!" ...as in, we'll never see that extension again.
- Alan Taylor was sailing with crew Dalton Cox who is a photography and video buff...they were rolling GoPro in slow motion mode when they crashed spectacularly. We are all hoping for great video of that!
- Trudy Bixby did let on that everything was not as tidy as it appeared to be...apparently Ethan frequently exclaimed, "Uh-oh", "whoa", and made similar statements during the event (she didn't turn around to see why).

Final Results:

| Place | Boat | Name | Total | Race 1 | Race 2 | Race 3 | Race 4 | Race 5 | Race 6 |
|-------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|----------|-----------|
| 1 | #5700 Silly Wabbit | Ethan Bixby & Trudy Bixby | 5 | (1)(1) | 1(2) | 1(3) | 1(4) | 1(5) | 1(6) |
| 2 | #5705 Sailfish | Chris Demler & Nancy Demler | 12 | 2(2) | 3(5) | 2(7) | 3(10) | (10)(20) | 2(22) |
| 3 | #5252 Bella | Colin Browning & Eric Mann | 17 | 3(3) | 2(5) | (7)(12) | 4(16) | 3(19) | 5(24) |
| 4 | #5702 Hummingbird | Ralph Sponar & Sandy Sponar | 20 | 6(6) | 6(12) | 3(15) | (7)(22) | 2(24) | 3(27) |
| 5 | #3446 Nome | Roy Sherman & Eric Francois | 29 | (DNF)(17) | 4(21) | 6(27) | 10(37) | 5(42) | 4(46) |
| 6 | #5586 Beauty & The Beast | Allen Chauvenet & Christina Chauvenet | 37 | (9)(9) | 8(17) | 8(25) | 5(30) | 7(37) | 9(46) |
| 7 | #5701 Windmill | Nathaniel Plant & Sheila Plant | 38 | (13)(13) | 7(20) | 5(25) | 8(33) | 11(44) | 7(51) |
| 8 | #5703 graffiti | Pat Huntley & Janet Huntley | 39 | 5(5) | 11(16) | (DNF)(33) | 2(35) | 4(39) | DNF(56) |
| 9 | #4028 Elvis | Lisa Fath & Jake Fath | 40 | (11)(11) | 10(21) | 4(25) | 11(36) | 9(45) | 6(51) |
| 10 | #4955 Sojourner | Lin Robson & Erin McKee | 41 | 4(4) | 5(9) | (DNF)(26) | 9(35) | 6(41) | (DNF)(58) |
| 11 | #5070 Pig Headed | Lon Ethington & Meg Gimmi | 47 | 7(7) | (DNF)(24) | 9(33) | 6(39) | 8(47) | (DNF)(64) |
| 12 | #4922 Wimpy | Dede Plessner & Bo Plessner | 70 | 10(10) | 9(19) | (DNF)(36) | DNS(53) | DNS(70) | DNS(87) |
| 13 | #4886 Sea Scout Ship | Alex Brown & | 71 | 12(12) | (DNF)(29) | DNS(46) | DNS(63) | DNS(80) | 8(88) |
| 14 | #4051 Hurricane | Alan Taylor & Dalton Cox | 71 | 8(8) | 12(20) | (DNF)(37) | DNS(54) | DNS(71) | DNF(88) |
| 15 | #3650 Miariah | Bob Poston & Susan Poston | 78 | 14(14) | 13(27) | (DNS)(44) | DNS(61) | DNS(78) | DNF(95) |
| 16 | #5530 Windcatcher | Dave White & Lainey White | 85 | (DNF)(17) | DNS(34) | DNS(51) | DNS(68) | DNS(85) | DNS(102) |

Sincerely,

Chris & Nancy Demler

Windmill #5705