

RIPS

Canadian Race Week



What once was the best kept secret in the Pacific Northwest is now out in the open as is evidenced by the sudden increase in racers during 2009's RIPS Canadian Race Week. Racing in Plumper Sound (RIPS) hosted a forty-five boat fleet to five gut-busting days of fun and hard racing competition August 15th to the 19th. Cloudy skies moved into hot, sun soaked, windy days that dealt up thirteen races for each of the four divisions making this year's RIPS one of the best ever.

If there was ever a regatta worth circling on your racing calendar, this regatta is definitely the first one. The newly renovated Port Browning's marina, set a landscape for fun and friendship renewals. Regatta organizers Alex and Sue Foley and David and Lynn Sutherland kept everyone busy with

beer tents, rum night, games, slideshows, and RIPS Idol talent shows. If you didn't get enough fun on the water, there was always fun to be had onshore.

Day one of this summer camp racing was a mixture of cloud and sun but with a steady wind of 8-10 knots easing to 5 knots by the end of the day. Principal Race Officer, Paul Ulibarri, kept courses true despite Plumper Sound's constantly shifting currents which, as always, eliminated any local knowledge. Both one-design fleets of J-80's and the M242's stayed close to each other's transom making every race

anyone's game, but with strong finishes by Jeremy Smith on *Joyride* tying for points with Sandy McMillan and Tim Knight's *Pepe* in Division 1, and Ken Holland on *Blackadder* in the Martin division. In Division 2, Alistair Elliot's *Melaque* finished with three bullets along with Division 4's *Ghost Dancer*, helmed by Larry McFadden.

By day three southeast winds clocked around to more northerly winds and again saw war on the water. Currents remained fickle and gained in strength as the week wore on. While some chose to dance close to shore, others found their way along the opposite side of the Sound. What worked once rarely

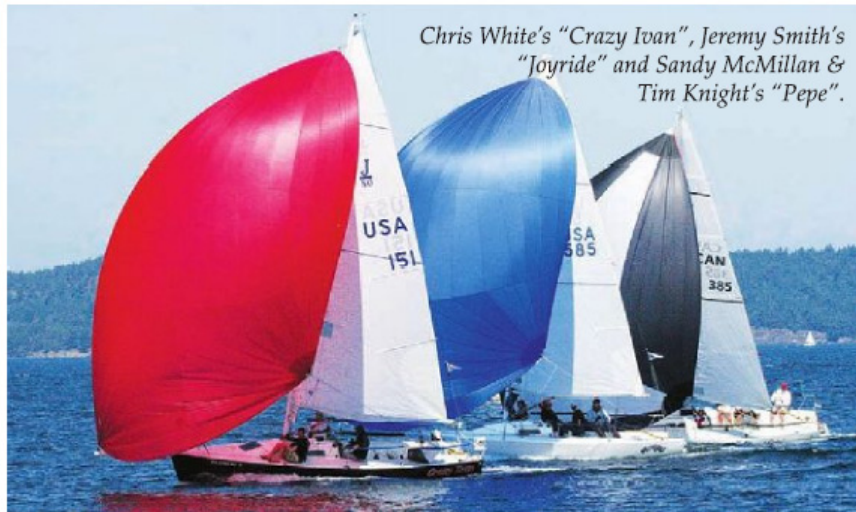


The overall prize of a First Nations carved war paddle was presented to Larry McFadden of "Ghost Dancer". L-R: Jamie Naismith, McFadden, Janice Brown & Trevor Coverdale.

seemed to work twice, which brought a lot of seasoned racers to shake their heads in frustration.

Day four was a similar story with currents and winds, but also a day of pushiness at the start. While radios kept racers apprised of the line at all times, it didn't keep Bruce and Penny Cameron's *Lily* from tangling with *Ghost Dancer*'s mast resulting in the top of their mast breaking and forcing them to end their efforts in the regatta.

In the final day of racing, counting a string of bullets, overall regatta winner for Division 4, Larry McFadden's *Ghost Dancer* was easily dominant for finding the right combination of wind and proper current. In other divisions, Jeremy Smith on *Joyride*, shared similar bragging rights, but *Melaque* obviously was having troubles doing the same in reading conditions as his leading points slipped behind Mike Woodward's *Radio Flyer* and overall division winner Colin Nichols' *X-S*. And always a tight division,



Chris White's "Crazy Ivan", Jeremy Smith's "Joyride" and Sandy McMillan & Tim Knight's "Pepe".

Blackadder shared in Melaque's frustration as his leading point spread over the four prior days of racing, fell consistently on day five to a third overall behind Chris Bligh and Richard Spooner on *Urban Daisy* and leaving Mike Clements of *Wicked* to walk away with the overall trophy for the 242 division.

While racing was always the main focus, different activities onshore kept everyone friends. Daily prizes were appreciated and fought over. Gracious sponsors, Okanagan Springs provided a beer tent for Saturday afternoon and RIPS Yachting Ltd. had a Rum Night the next evening. Racers partook of daily barbecues or had dinner at the pub. The 2nd RIPS Idol was held on Monday and was a mixture of talent both ear shattering and, once in a while, melodic and comedic. Sea shanties, parodies, guitar playing and the best rendition of a Smother's Brothers routine was presented by the *Urban Daisy* crew.

And if there wasn't enough laughing on Monday night, game night on Tuesday was just as riotous. Pies in faces, pudding dribbling down chins, and racers carrying racers around dry landmarks were a hit for families and friends. Another beer tent and a photographic slideshow by Through My Eyes Productions of the week's racing ended the evening quietly to get ready for the last day of racing.

It was a fantastic five days. An amazing race committee with volunteers too numerous to mention, excellent boats to set the marks and keep things flowing (provided by Cooper Boating), and a top notch race officer. So many thanks go out to the rest of the sponsors:

Bosuns Yacht Sales & Service, One 4 Yacht Fractions, Lewmar, UK Sails, Holmes Realty, True Value Foods, Caribe Systems, Thunderbird Marine, and Port Browning. Without their support, none of these memories would be possible!

Now running from Saturday through Wednesday, RIPS is already in the planning stages for next year's events. Registration is due by January of 2010. Please contact www.rips.ca

story and photos by Linda McDonald