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A NEWSLETTER FROM HAARSTICK SAILMAKERS

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In this issue:

- **Steve Haarstick Reports on Star Western Hemisphere Championship**
- **J24 National's – 4th for Haarstick Boat – Kris Werner**

This just in: 9 Month Pregnant Wife Wins District 7 Regatta

- **Longest Haarstick Customer Reports – 38 Years and Counting**
- **Call to Schedule Service Calls – On The Water Sail Evaluation – Free**

We'll help you get the most out of your inventory.

- **News at the Loft – Regatta's, Shirts, Service,**

Charlie Krylo Wins Oswego Hospice Regatta

- **J24 Used Genoa for Sale**
- **Summer Sailing Schedule**

Report on the 2008 Western Hemisphere Championship of the Star Class

Seneca Yacht Club, in Geneva, NY

-Steve Haarstick

Just as I had anticipated, it was a cold, windy, and, for the most part, overcast week of sailing. The tune up race on Monday was canceled due to high winds and SLEET!

Tuesday's 1st race began in a strong 18 knot southerly and temperatures in the high forties! I had 4 layers under my foul weather gear, and put plastic bags inside my topsiders (I hadn't yet bought boots for this series- what a dope!) In lieu of building new sails, I gave a major recut to my newest main and jib, which actually made a big improvement upwind. We were hanging in with boats in the upper third of the fleet, slipping a couple of boats to 16th on the last leg when the wind shifted 180 degrees to the north and died. After waiting around after the race, my cold feet convinced me to join others that were heading back towards the club. After the race was canceled, I passed more boats while drifting back to the club than I did all week and arrived 1st at the dock!

On day two the wind was out of the west at 15 or so, and cold once again. On a 1 ½ mile wide lake, this guarantees a shifty day of racing. As we only got in one race yesterday, three races were scheduled for day two- Just Great!! We had a good start in race one, weren't rolled as usual off the line, and sailed pretty well to a 9th place- our best finish of the week. A very poor start, combined with missing most shifts on the first beat, quickly put us back in the pack, in 23rd. Pretty disappointing, but it would get worse. Buried again off the start, I tacked to clear, but forgot that the starboard backstay was still made. As I let the main out and pulled the tiller to duck, the boom slammed into the backstay, we rounded up and hit the boat to windward. I hit him pretty hard, riding over his deck into his boom. I wasn't sure if I caused serious damage, but it was such a bone head move, and we were so far behind after I finished my turns that I decided to head in for the day.

Day three began with a cold rain, and, once again, a west wind. But this time I had the common sense to buy boots, and my feet thanked me for that all day. With a 15th and a 14th, this was my most consistent day of racing.

Finally, the last day of the regatta! For once, the sun was actually forecast to come out, but it was still cloudy and still cold for the 1st start. We got off the line ok and tacked, as the right side looked better. With two other boats, we really hit hard right, got a nice header and, after tacking, looked very good on the fleet to leeward. Why we might even get to the windward mark in the top 5 or 10 boats! Except that the windward mark was not to windward- it was well to leeward, by at least ¼ mile! There were very few boats behind us when we finally arrived at the first mark. We sailed ok after that to finish 20th, but pretty disappointing. I don't remember much of the last race, as it was our worst of the regatta. Not a good way to finish up! But it was finally sunny, and relatively warm, and I got a couple of good pictures taken of us sailing upwind.

The more that I think about it, the quote by Robert Scheidt, the 2007 Star World's Champion and 3 time Olympic Laser medalist, on the home page of the Star class web site rings true:

"There are so many sailors at a high level in the Star class and the way we sail these boats now is very physical. This is a boat for athletes, for the young."

Well, I'm no athlete, but still young at heart. In fact, I still get carded for beer at Wegman's!!

J-24 Nationals, Richmond County YC, Staten Island, NY, by Kris Werner

"This year the J-24 Nationals were held on Staten Island, sailed in the waters of Raritan Bay and near the entrance to New York Harbor. It was a homecoming of sorts for me, as I grew up sailing in the NYC area, and two of my crew are still living in the area. The 2009 J-24 Worlds will be held in Annapolis, and as such it makes the entire year of J-24 sailing ultra competitive, as everyone wants to qualify for the World Championship in their home country, and especially in a sailing town like Annapolis! With that said the Nationals were going to be as tough as they come, the list of pros and former National, North American and World Champions was a mile long.

My team consisted of Mike Mansfield (cockpit/trimmer), Nate Yeater (bow), Rossi Milev (tactics), George Dunnigan (middle/twings) and myself (driving). This was largely the same core group I have been sailing with for 10 years, so I felt like we had a very strong team. Before the event I had gone over just about every possible detail of the boat, equipment, crew, and sails, we were ready. Our boat speed has almost never been an issue, but consistently going in the right direction is another story. This is where having Rossi on the boat was a HUGE plus, a professional sailor and friend, he brings another level of preparation and intensity that I really respect. Typically I am used to being in the role of tactician and leader on the boat, however to really do well, I don't think you can drive a boat and successfully call the shots too. Whether you sail on a J-24 or any other keelboat with more than 4 crew, I think you really need someone whose sole purpose is to look around and keep the boat moving fast at all times. For me driving at the Nationals, despite the competition, was as relaxed as I have ever been. I did not have to worry about the rig tune, boat speed, or tactics, I just tried to get the best starts possible, and then "shut up and drive" as fast as I could. As our results showed, this turned out to be a very successful situation.

Day One (Friday) "Near Disaster"

Having had a light practice session on Thursday, our team felt ready for all conditions, well almost all conditions! Friday started off and the weather forecast was good for wind, but very poor for sailors looking to stay dry. Basically the whole day featured rain, heavy rain. Race 1 started off in about 15-20 knots, and as expected the first start was a general recall. The next start was let go and we had an outrageous start near the midline boat, we were probably a touch over the line, but nicely hidden and at full speed. We rounded the weather mark 3rd, then the

leeward gate third, but lost a bunch on the second upwind. Most of this was due to my poor rounding and being forced to sit in a bad lane for way too long. At the next weather mark we were 7th, and ended up finishing 8th. We had some rusty spinnaker sets, mark roundings, and gybes, which really cost us. Rossi was livid that we left 5 points on the table from our original position. Personally I was mad also, but an 8th out of 54 is really not such a bad way to start!

Toward the end of the first race the wind had really started to build big time, and for the start of the second race we had our blade jib, and it was probably blowing 25+.

We had another good start and rounded the weather mark in 6th or 7th place. The move was to gybe right away and we did. Instantly we were looking like we could pass 4 boats at least and move into 3rd, the problem was that we wiped out and shortly after our spinnaker exploded. This was really, really bad, as you can only carry one spinnaker, and not only did we have no spinnaker for 2/3rds of the first down and all of the second, but we would be in serious trouble without it, when 2 more races were scheduled! After letting 6 or 7 boats pass us on the downwind, we were hell bent to catch them back on the upwind. By some brilliant tactics and speed, we actually managed to round 6th again! For the entire downwind we struggled to wing the jib out and try to hold off as many spinnakers as possible. At the very end a boat had its pole out on the jib and passed us! With all the skill and brains on our boat, how in the world did we not think to wing the jib out using the spin pole!! In the end 6 boats passed us and we finished 12th. Again Rossi and all the crew were livid with our stupidity. The news that saved our regatta was that the RC had decided to send us in, as the wind was getting too strong and too many boats were having issues. By sheer stupidity and poor boat handling, we had left at least 12 points on the table that could have been saved, but again disaster had been averted and we were still in the hunt! Thank God they sent us in.

Day 2 Saturday "One crazy shift, and 3 great races"

Well, luckily I had brought a spare spinnaker that was in excellent shape, as we petitioned the jury and were allowed to use it. The first race on Saturday we talked about how we liked the pin end and the left side, but weren't absolutely convinced. They were running three boats for the line, a committee boat, mid line boat, and pin boat, the safe conservative move, when unsure would be to start at the mid line boat. Of course I decided we should win the pin. Well we didn't exactly win it but we were probably second at the pin end, with about 90% of the major players. Within 1 minute of the start the wind shifted about 60 degrees to the right. Long story short we finished 32nd.

Well we clearly needed to make amends after that finish and get some low scores. The next two races we finished first and second!! We were going real fast and sailing super smart. The final race of the day started off poorly, but we clawed our way back to a ninth place finish. We had sailed FOUR races that day in mostly around 15-18 knots, and we were exhausted, but very excited for a pretty solid day.

That night at the club they celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the class, and had a nice party, the beers tasted great after our day. After looking at the results we realized we were in 4th place, 1

point out of third. This meant we were in position to qualify for the Worlds, as the Zaleski's and Mark Hillman, who were first and second respectively, had already qualified and 2 berths would be given out. Qualifying was the ultimate goal of the event, and it was within our grasp.

Day 3 Sunday "Surprise finish"

Sunday the forecast was for lighter breeze and rain later in the day. With 2 races scheduled, even first place in the regatta was reachable for us. The RC had until 1300 (1pm) to start a race, and we ended up waiting for the wind until 12:45 to start the first and only race of the day. The entire time we were waiting for a race we were listening closely to the RC on their "secret" channel to see if we could get some valuable wind info. They were talking all about wind directions and strengths as the wind was slowly filling in. Needless to say we felt pretty strong about which way to go, although no one can really be sure. We wanted to be at the boat end and going left.

Unfortunately I left my worst start for my last and we had to duck a handful of boats shortly after the start, but we were on the left side. We rounded in decent shape, probably around 10th, but the third place boat was at least 8 boats behind, which was good news for us, as with only one race they were likely the only boat we could catch in the standings. All we needed to do was beat them by one place, and we could get third. At the end of the race we slipped a little and they caught up to finish right behind us, but we owned the tiebreaker.

As we sailed in we were really pumped to finish 3rd place at the Nationals! This was a very, very deep field of good sailors, and we had bested all but 2 of them. We felt the first and second place teams really sailed well and deserved to be well ahead in points, they are both top level teams which practice a ton and have won several regattas.

Once we hit the dock we quickly broke the boat down for transport and changed into warm dry clothes. At the club they had posted results and there we were in third place, nice work. Anyway it came time for the awards ceremony and they gave awards to the top ten, when they got to fourth place they called my name? I was a bit baffled and one of my crew spoke up to voice his confusion and displeasure. After a few seconds of awkwardness I shook hands with the Commodore of the club and regatta chair, and thanked them for a great regatta.

It turns out that two teams had filed for redress for an OCS finish in race 3, and the case was reopened on Sunday after racing. They ended up getting redress and it shifted our score from a 32 to a 34 for race 3, so we ended up 1 point back of third in the end. This was sort of an awkward situation as I did not want to seem ungrateful for fourth, obviously it is still a solid finish, but it sort of felt like getting your bronze medal revoked, perhaps it is the 1,2,3 mentality in sports and the Olympics that makes you think 4th is bad or something. Anyway, we could have sailed our race a bit differently knowing we needed a couple more points, and I thank God that it did not make the difference between getting the final World's berth. In the end the second berth at fourth place is really no different and I am just as proud of our team as before.

I would like to thank several people for helping me out in this regatta. There are so many factors that go in to a successful weekend of sailing, it is nice when all of your efforts and the efforts of

others finally pay off in a successful regatta. I think it is what makes sailing and racing so exciting and keeps you coming back to try it all again.

Thanks to: Travis Odenbach for working on the boat and getting it to and from the regatta, it was the first time ever I did not have to deal with towing the boat, everyone at RCR for giving me the time off needed to successfully compete during our busiest time of year, Sara and Kiki for watching Steven and being so supportive of the team, and my great crew for making me look good. Thanks to Haarstick Sailmakers for working with us over the past 2 years and getting us going really fast, and lastly Richmond County Yacht Club for putting on a great event and giving all the sailors a lesson in the "fugetaboutit" NYC style."

9 Months Pregnant, Kiki Werner Wins District Regatta at RYC

-Quick Recap from Kris Werner:

As for Districts, I think if I am not mistaken that Haarstick spinnakers were featured on every single boat in the regatta!

We had fantastic wheels with the main and genoa, again with the blade. A bit slower in the heavy air, Kiki could have used some help getting the main in and after all is 9 months pregnant!! Saturday we won all 3 races by more than 6 boat lengths. Sunday was pretty much just hang on and be conservative and safe with 20-25 knots and Kiki still on board.

Nice Job Werner's. All the best to the entire family and get some rest Kiki.

Longest Haarstick Customer Reports – 38 Years and Counting

Steve - I just wanted to thank you for the great sails and service that you have given us for the last 37 years!!

Your team is excellent, everyone knows boats and sails. Besides your self you have always had good sailors at the loft to work with. I think a list of people that you have worked with at Haarstick and what they have won would be pretty impressive.

Recently Doug told me that our customer file is one of the thickest ones he has.

I purchased my first suit of sails for a 505 in the winter of '70-71 when your loft was in Ithaca above Mcpherson's. I still remember you getting out on the trapeze to check out the main.

Through the years your sails went on our Interclub and two PHRF boats, a Viking 28 and now "Vitesse", an Express 30, which we still actively race. Some of our racing highpoints have been multiple wins in the Scotch Bonnet Light Race, a win at CORK, and then just last year a division first in the LOR300 double handed spinnaker fleet and a first overall in the spinnaker fleet team

championship.

We have had excellent racing success and your sails and advice have been an essential part of it.

All the best,

Bob Fields

Service Calls - On the Water Sail Evaluation and Trimming Advise

This is a service that most Sailmakers offer when asked by their customers. Some Sailmakers reserve this service for current customers but at Haarstick it is available to anyone at no charge. We won't come out to give you the "used car salesman" routine either. We will come out and give you a fair and honest evaluation of your sails and also help with some tips on how to get the most out of the sails you have. From Oneida Lake in Syracuse, through the Finger Lakes, along Lake Ontario and Lake Erie to Erie, PA, we are only a phone call away towards setting up a time to go out sailing with you.

We have about 5 Service Personnel on hand so setting up a time that is convenient for everyone should be obtainable. Most race nights and weekends fill up quickly, but most of the time sail evaluations and trimming tips are best accomplished when not racing. So if you have time during a weekday that can also be arranged.

Give me a call or drop an e-mail and I'll arrange to have a service representative go out for a sail.

Doug Burtner

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News at the Loft:

Congratulations to Charlie Krylo and the crew on "Seaweed"

For winning the Oswego County Hospice Regatta, by a large margin. It was a Shifty, light / heavy, flat / lumpy kind of day and Charlie kept his cool to pull off a 3,3,1 overall and qualify

for the National Regatta next year. Thanks for always using Haarstick Sails on your 24 Charlie and good luck at the national's next year.

BUSY, sums it up pretty well. Sails going out, sails (and sales) coming in. A few of the service personnel are out there 3-4 times a week with different customers and the boys on the floor are running at full bore to get all of your sails out on time, still around 4 weeks from the time of order.

It was busy weekend with Regatta's in Buffalo, Oswego and Rochester. Eric Christensen had a great day on a J/27 at the Buffalo Ice Breaker Regatta. He was with Paul Seitz and they ended up 1st in fleet with all 1st place finishes. Jon Faudree and I were in Oswego all day on Saturday and I did 3 Races with Pat Fitzsimmons on his Beneteau First 34 in Sodus on Sunday.

This Thursday I'll be heading down to Long Island for an Ensign Regatta. I am looking forward to sailing with past National Champion, Brian Simkins, and getting out with the rest of the Haarstick customers over there.

Eric will be around Buffalo on Wednesday night and Thursday and also up in Youngstown on Thursday.

I'll also be in Oswego next Wednesday.

Please give us a call if we are coming your way and can help in any way.

HAARSTICK SHIRTS ARE IN!!!

Stop by and take a look. We have wicking dry shirts in long sleeve and polo, as well as the old stand by...Cotton, in long sleeve and short. Many of you around Rochester have already commented on how much you like the long sleeve dry shirts and there aren't many, so stop by and grab one while you can.

Prices range from \$20-45.

We also have Hats and a fresh supply of Duffle Bags.

Hope to see you here. M-F 8-5

Doug Burtner

HSI Sales and Service
