

Maine Lobster Boat

Racing Newsletter

Issue #1

2012

2012 LOBSTER BOAT RACE PRESEASON UPDATE



ROCKLAND: The Maine Lobster Boat Racing Association (MLBRA) gathered for its annual meeting at the Trade Winds Motor Inn in Rockland on 22 October. Following a great year of racing there was little discussion on new rules or class changes. It was voted on to make one class change for gasoline powered boats, but no rule changes.

The lobster boat race season started as usual in Boothbay Harbor in June and concluded at Eastport's Pirate Festival in September for a total of twelve races. Each of the races saw more entrants compared to the previous year, which was great. I was surprised that we only had 54 boats at the MS race in Portland when every entrant in each diesel class had a chance to win 100 gallons of fuel. This is a great race and one I would like to see build to 100 racers since it is all for a great cause.

There were two new races. The first was at Bass Harbor, which was run by Colyn and Wayne Rich of Bass Harbor. This was a very well attended event and by popular demand it will be held again this year. The other race, held in association with Eastport's Pirate Festival, was in its second year. I missed the first year due to another commitment. There are numerous fun events throughout the weekend with the lobster boat races being held on Sunday. Boats came from as far away as Beals Island and Jonesport and they all had a great time. They try to get Canadian boats to enter, but to date there have been no takers even though there is a separate class for them. There is now discussion among others from as far away as Penobscot Bay who are interested in attending this year's races. Even if Eastport is too far for some to bring their boat, they say they

will come by car.

The program, which is published in May, gives invaluable information about the upcoming races. This could bring in a lot more funding, but Johansen said that he needed help with getting advertising for it. However, what MLBRA does not want is to take away from race venues and their ability to raise the money needed to run their event.

The current officers of the MLBRA are president, Jon Johansen; vice president, Travis Otis; and secretary/treasurer Rachel Elward. It was asked if anyone else would like to run for any of the offices, but no one raised their hand. A motion was made that the slate of officers remain the same. This was seconded and all voted in favour.

It was thought that there was no need to make any rules changes for the upcoming year. It was suggested that we needed to police the rules that were already in place better. Race organizers will do spot check to make sure safety equipment is on board and that pot hauler are functional.

Next on the agenda was about the racing classes. A discussion was raised about a wooden boat being rebuilt in Bass Harbor. She is 26 feet and under the present rules, would not be able to run in Gasoline Class C, which has a length limit of 28 feet and over. A motion was made to lower the length limit to 24 feet in Gasoline Class C so that it was in line with Gasoline Classes A and B. The motion was seconded and all voted in favour.

It was then suggested that Gasoline Class D, Over 502 cid, 28 feet and over, natural aspirated, be brought back. Due to the cost of competing in the current Gasoline Class D, V8, Over 502 cid, 28 feet

and over, Turbos/superchargers, it has become cost prohibitive. To be competitive one would have to spend in excess of \$200,000. A motion was made to add this class back in, and this was seconded and all voted in favour. The Gasoline Classes will now be:

Class A, Four and Six Cylinder, 24 feet and over

Class B, V8, Up to 375 cid, 24 feet and over

Class C, V8, 376 to 502 cid, 24 feet and over

Class D, V8, Over 502 cid, 28 feet and over, Naturally aspirated

Class E, V8, Over 502 cid, 28 feet and over, Turbos/superchargers

It was pointed out that multiple carburetors and fuel injections would be allowed in the new Gasoline Class D, however, no other bolt ons would be allowed.

The tentative schedule for the 2012 season was listed as Boothbay, 16 June; Rockland, 17 June; Bass Harbor, 24 June; Moosebec, 30 June; Searsport, 14 July; Stonington, 15 July; Friendship, 28 July; Harpswell, 29 July; Winter Harbor, 11 August; Pemaquid, 12 August; MS-Portland, 19 August; Eastport Pirate Festival, 9 September; and Awards Banquet 27 October.

It was mentioned by several members that they do not want to add any more points races. Currently there are nine points races: Boothbay; Rockland; Moosebec; Searsport; Stonington; Friendship; Harpswell; Winter Harbor; and Portland. The only non-points race listed on MLBRA's schedule was the Merritt Brackett Races at Pemaquid. It was decided that this year we should also list Bass Harbor and Eastport on the MLBRA schedule and poster.

There has been some talk about another race in Southern Maine, but there has been no further communication during the winter on this.

As for the reality television proposals, the deal with Aura360 will come to an end in May. We have not heard anything from them for almost a year and it seems that they have not been successful in

putting a deal together. The last mention was that they had pitched it to the cooking and outdoor networks and were waiting for a response. Another offer has come from a person located in Los Angeles, but lives in North Yarmouth. He had a film crew at the Portland races, but again there has been no contact with him over the winter. It was thought that in the future any deal would not be longer than a year, which was agreed to by the membership.

The next item discussed was whether there was any need to have a meeting at the Forum in March. A brief discussion ensued, and the result was to have a room for about half an hour to hand out posters and sign up members for the upcoming year. There might be a brief meeting or discussion, but no changes can be made until the annual meeting in October.

The last item on the agenda was about creating a Maine Lobster Boat Racing Hall of Fame. This had been discussed over the summer and everyone agreed that this would be a great idea. It was asked for volunteers to create a list of the people most deserving. It was also thought that we needed to ask each museum and any other appropriate place if they would be interested in housing an exhibit on those honoured. Those volunteering for the committee were: Sari Bunker, Brent Davis, Bruce Engert, Jon Johansen, Wayne Rich, and Nick Wiberg. They will meet before the Forum and give an update on some of the nominees.

On a sad note Jerry Farrin, who organized the Merritt Brackett Lobster Boat Races for years passed away just after Christmas. Jerry was a great guy, enjoyable to deal with and run some of the best races on the coast.

With the season just four months away this is shaping up to be a big year.

Hope to see you at the Maine Fishermen's Forum in the Rockland Room at 0900 on 3 March.

**Your MLBRA dues are do for 2012 season. Please send \$20.00 to:
MLBRA, P.O. Box 710, Winterport, Maine 04496**

A Call For Support -

A serious fundraising campaign is underway. A Campaign Kick-Off Banquet was held at DiMillo's On The Water on February 10 which raised over \$10,000 and now the challenge is upon us.

If you haven't heard already, Steven Johnson's wife, Lynn, has been diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer. Her fight against the disease began before the Holidays with aggressive chemo treatments and constant hospital, lab and doctor visits. Like so many of us, Steven and Lynn had no health insurance at the time of diagnosis.

The good news? Lynn is responding well to treatment. She attended the Kick-Off banquet and is feeling healthy and strong. And, she is grateful for all the love and generosity that was shown at that event.

There's a long and difficult road ahead - more chemo and radiation - but first medical reports indicate she's going to be able to beat this thing. The other good news? Friends of Lynn's have been able to identify a health insurance policy that covers Lynn's pre-existing condition. Although premiums and deductibles are high, the policy will get the Johnson's the care they need.



The greatest news of all? Steven and Lynn have hundreds of friends. This is a call for support - hoping that you are able to make a contribution to this important campaign. We have set a goal of \$100,000 which will be administered through The Changing Tide Foundation. We believe that if we are successful in reaching our goal we'll have covered hospital and doctor's bills, relieved their stress, and put them both in a position where they may concentrate on getting well. The Changing Tide Foundation, 772 Island Ave., Long Island, ME 04050.