

Sailing is Freedom



Newsletter of the Disabled Sailing Association of British Columbia

Fall 2011

2011: Season in review

The Disabled Sailing Association of BC (DSA) turned the heat up on the summer season after a decidedly stormy start.

Frankly, June was an awful month to be running a sailing program, with rain, strong winds and uncooperative tides – and the early part of July wasn't much better.

But, thanks to a hard working summer staff, we logged a record-breaking August, to bring the number of sailing experiences up to 840 for the year.

Also, during this time, DSA sailors were able to participate in various regattas – the Jericho Classic, New Beginnings, Waves, Cascadia and Integration regattas, not to mention Mobility Cup held in Hamilton, ON this year. There were regular race clubs held on Sundays, and the perennially popular Bowen Island trip.

DSA looked to future sailors by hosting a children's day and supporting the City's Passport to Play day, which enabled people with disabilities to try different sports and activities.

None of this would have been possible without the dedicated volunteers that give their time, advice and enthusiasm.

Info: www.disabledsailingbc.org



Feel the burn: Vancouver's Gerry Burns racing solo in this year's Mobility Cup, held in Hamilton, ON.

'Feel the rush' in DSA sailboat

Sailing is both a leisure pursuit and a high performance sport – but it can be more than that. Adaptive sailing changes lives.

Gerry Burns, of Vancouver, knows his passion for high performance sailing comes as an antidote to the dark days spent coming to terms with a high-level spinal cord injury – and that he would never race motocross or surf again. Ironically, adaptive sailing offers him the best of both worlds.

"Sailing is my greatest new passion," he said. "Since my disability I'm finding there's so much still possible.

"Surfing used to be my greatest passion, but sailing is the greatest time you can have out on the sea. I'm feeling the rush to be able to do it independently.

"When you are racing, and you look down the line and see boats running 20-wide just across from you, barely apart from each other, and everybody is going for it. . . those are the memories you will look back on later in life.

"I used to race motocross and it's the same competitive feeling – it's so intense. Spray was flying and waves were smashing over the boat soaking us, but all we could think of was being the fastest."

Gerry tried sailing for the first time last year, deciding to enter the 2010 Mobility Cup more as a learning experience than anything else. This year he set himself a real challenge, moving up to the Gold Fleet, to battle it out amongst the more experienced solo sailors.

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DSA: sailing opportunities for people with disabilities



Clean-up crew: Shelane, Phil, Leanna, Gina, Pedro and Joanna from Deloitte.

Many hands make light work

A group of volunteers scrubbed down Disabled Sailing Association's boats to close the season in style.

The team, from the Vancouver office of Deloitte financial consultants, offered to help get the fleet ready for winter storage. Under the Deloitte Impact Day all employees spend a full day volunteering for local non-profits.

It was part of Deloitte's national day of giving back to the community, said organizer Shelane Wiseman.

DSA program manager Stephen Hunter praised the group: "They did a great job – they scrubbed and washed all the boats, so we can put them away clean. It will make things that much easier for the staff coming in next year."

Mobility Cup 2011 runeth over

Cont from Page 1 – *Feel the Rush*

The move paid off, with Gerry finishing a respectable 16 in a group of 20 more experienced sailors at Mobility Cup 2011, which was held in Hamilton, ON.

At times, luck favoured him, and he'd romp home ahead of scores of competitors; but then he lost a day's racing when his shroud came undone on the start line in a strong wind.

His main lesson was how the fastest people on the course positioned their sails and managed the lines ("I was blown away by how fast these guys were.")

Admitting he is unable to wait for another opportunity to race again, Burns is counting down to the start of the 2012 DSA season.

"DSA is awesome. I'm thrilled to be a part of it. It blows my mind to be able to do it. I'm learning and improving as a sailor all the time. It's the greatest feeling."

The DSA operates a fleet of eight fully-accessible Martin 16 sloops from Jericho Sailing Centre. The boats have a clear racing pedigree, but are also used for recreational day sailing and learning opportunities.

2012 ahoy!

The 2012 sailing calendar gets under way with a series of pre-season social events for sailors. Program administrator Eric Molendyk will run these sessions, for novice and experienced sailors, at GF Strong Rehab Centre on the last Thursday of each month, beginning January 26. Info: www.disabledsailingbc.org

Child's play

DSA makes sailing accessible for all ages, and every year holds a kids' day to promote sailing to children. June's event, in conjunction with adapted hiking society BCMOS, saw 13 TrailRider excursions and 19 sailing experiences. Event funding came from the *Vancouver Sun* Children's Fund.

Volunteer

If you can volunteer next summer to enable people with disabilities to sail, call 604-688-6464 ext. 117.



DSA's boat donation project now has its own website

www.dsaboatdonation.org