

2013 Gig Harbor MYC IOM Championship: Ron Blackledge Reporting.

The Gig Harbor Model Yacht Club IOM 2013 season has concluded and what a season it was. There were eight regattas, one each month March through October, held at the venerable Surprise Lake just outside Tacoma in the small village of Milton. The regattas are part of the Seattle Saturday Series shared with SMYC's Gene Coulon Marine Park on Washington Lake. Surprise Lake is a small, hidden and tranquil treasure (about three acres) surrounded by homes, the Surprise Lake Apartments and an old camp retreat. A very large and suitable L shaped dock extends well into the lake. It is an excellent site seldom troubled with weeds, chop and unwanted traffic. The wind is on the light side and tricky. Surprise wind shifts every which way but loose. Thus the name is Surprise Lake.

We were blessed with excellent weather the entire season. It never rained on us. The winds were steadier than normal and we were close to B rig conditions several times. It could be argued we had better conditions than big brother, Coulon Park. Turnout was excellent as we saw celebrity skippers from the peninsula as far away as Sequim, from the Seattle area, from as far North as Anacortes and as far South as Portland. Surprise was a haven for EC 12s many years before IOM's took over. The skill and experience of the local skippers is revealed each regatta with closely contested battles and crowded marks. And who came out on top.....our happy Italian, Joe D'Amico. Joe's V6/Coyote/Britpop edged out fabled skipper Kelly Martin's Topiko/V8 for the Grand Title. Joe is the Master of light air and one of Sequim's favorite imported sons. He also may be our most mature skipper. His social security number has only seven digits. Third on the podium was Larry Stiles. Good job Larry, I think you were the most improved skipper in 2013. Don't sell your Pikanto! Peter Sternberg and Steve Young rounded out the top five. And a special thanks goes out to Steve, Kelly, Ron Hornung and the others that set up the course, RD, clean the dock, etc. These guys make it easy. We just show up, throw our boats in the water and race. When it is over we head for an establishment with food and ice cold adult refreshments. It's a wonderful world.



Light air guru Joe DeAmico (center) at Surprise Lake in March on his way to being crowned 2013 fleet champion. Joe campaigned three different boats in 2013, and has settled on the BRITPOP with splotchy paint as his preference. Bob Wells photo.

On another very positive note we grew the fleet. The new skippers include Rick Shattock who actually lives at the Surprise Lake Apartment Complex. And then we have all the new boats. In the last twelve months we have added BritPOPs, Lintels, Cheinz's, V8's and another Fraktal. From humble beginnings we have one of the more state-of-the-art-fleets in the country. However, if I may make an observation, it appears the pecking order is unchanged. Maybe we are sailing better as a group with the newer boats but it is the same guys taking the bullets and podium. If only money could buy me a bullet.

The season was not without incident. Surprise Lake has a dark and mysterious past. Notwithstanding the hidden and dilapidated Camp Crystal Lake sign at the old camp retreat, the April regatta witnessed the disappearance of Steve Young's Arrival. It sank within seconds only thirty feet from the dock. Steve thought it must have been a loose deck patch. Later it was disclosed by one of the skippers (Hornung), after his fifth IPA, a dark hand from the deep grabbed it. Steve hired a scuba diver for multiple dives, dragged the bottom with hooks and enlisted friends with electronic search devices to no avail in the search. The boat has yet to be found in the murky depths. Disappeared? Steve has finally given up and replaced her with his new Cheinz. Residents living along the Lake have reported sporadic sightings of a phantom model yacht sailing at night under the full moon. In fact and the reports over Halloween have the RMG winch squeaking occasionally from lack of oil...

With Season 2013 in the books, what can we expect from Season 2014? You heard the predictions here first:

- ◆ We will see twenty boats at the line.
- ◆ GHMYC, SMYC, DPMYC and OMYC's joint bid to be Challenger of Record for the America's Cup will be accepted by Oracle Racing.
- ◆ Jerry Warren Brower's Fraktal will remain in the box on his couch.
- ◆ Perennial Corinthian Sailor of the Year and oh so quiet and reserved Byron Pimms will make his first protest.
- ◆ Steve Young... quite the ladies man.... will be incarcerated for stalking the crew of the Volvo 65 Ocean Race Team SCA.

- ◆ Scott Thomas will be our Grand Champion by default opting out not to sail and instead being awarded PRO/RD points for each event.
- ◆ For prohibiting marijuana use at club regattas, GHMYC and SMYC will be sued by the ACLU (Recreation marijuana is now legal in Washington State!).
- ◆ Kurt Wells and Peter Sternberg's camping gear will dry out.
- ◆ Joe D◆Amico will finally put a finish coat of paint on his splotchy Britpop.
- ◆ Ron " No Bullets◆ Hornung◆s new IOM design ◆21 Grams◆ will be the break out boat of the year, sailed to victory by Brad Gibson at the European Championship and make Playmate of the Month
- ◆ Mike Pearson will not sail a loaner
- ◆ After snagging weeds nine consecutive races, breaking his standing record of eight, Kelly Martin will snap and spend his remaining days at the State Hospital in Lakewood
- ◆ Bob Wells◆ IOM Newsletter will receive funding from Sailing Anarchy and Mad Magazine to go into print. The popular newsletter's circulation will exceed that of the Pulitzer winning Sequim Gazette.
- ◆ The Cougars and Beavers will play each other in the Skippy's Peanut Butter Bowl in Topeka, KS.

Thank you all for the good times