

# **LOFT LINES**

A NEWSLETTER FROM HAARSTICK SAILMAKERS

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## NEWS FLASH!!

Congratulations to Keven Piper and his wife Sonya! They are the proud parents of twin girls Charlotte and Petronella, each weighing 5lbs 9oz, born on Thursday, March 25.

Keven owns and operates Haarstick Bay Sails, the Canadian production and service loft located on the west harbor waterfront of Hamilton , Ontario . The loft building is a historic site that was originally built by W.W. Grant Sailmakers in the 1860's to service many of the Great Lakes tall ships until the turn of the last century. In 1985, Hank Nyhof bought and rejuvenated the old sail loft building and started up Bay Sails. By 1993, Bay Sails joined Haarstick Sailmakers to make available the best quality Haarstick products and services to Canada . By 1999, Hank was planning to go cruising on his C&C 44 and sold Bay Sails Haarstick to Keven Piper who was finishing up his thesis at McMaster University while hanging around the loft. Keven grew up in Port Dover and worked at a ship's chandlery and as a yacht broker for Bridge Yachts for 10 years while sailing whatever he could. Keven, a former Capri 25 owner, will be racing his Shark "Hammerhead" for '04 in the growing RHYC Shark Fleet, and has been crewing aboard J35s for the last few years.

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Good luck to Brendan Benson and Keith Burhans next week, as they will be sailing in the 2004 National Hospice Regatta, April 16-18 in Annapolis , MD. Keith won the Rochester Hospice regatta last August, and Brendan won the 2003 Oswego County Hospice Cup Regatta to qualify

for this major event. Keith is a nationally recognized Sonar sailor, and Brendan sails a J30 out of Oswego Yacht Club, and has won many regattas on Lake Ontario over the years.

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Tim Kinsella has just bought a new Beneteau 40.7, and is joining the Rochester fleet! We are very pleased that Tim has selected Haarstick as his sailmaker, and we are all extremely excited about this project. Tim has been a top C&C 35-3 sailor since 1988, and a long time Haarstick customer. Rumor is: another 40.7 is soon to follow. Should be a great summer on the water!!

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Spring has arrived in upstate New York in its usual fashion: COLD, GREY, and WET: Perfect weather for getting in the mood for sailing. In preparation for the upcoming season, we have assembled an excellent team of loft service personnel to assist our customers. I have listed them below, with a short bio of their sailing experiences. Please don't hesitate to call us! In addition, to warm you up, I have included a report on the Ensign Midwinter regatta in Florida by Jon Faudree.

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**HAARSTICK SERVICE PERSONNEL:**

Jon Faudree – Sailmaker/Service:

Jon grew up locally in Fair Haven NY, and has spent most of his life in the sport of sailing, both teaching and competing. He started racing at 9 in Fair Haven's Jr Sailing program and crewing for former J/24 class president, Hank Killian. He began skippering the family J/24 at 15, winning several club championships and local regattas. Moving to the Laser, he was the 1997 gold medal winner for the Empire State Games. Jon raced in College at both New York Maritime College and Christopher Newport University . His list of sailing experience includes many types of Dinghies, as well as Thistles, Lightings, J/22s, Melges 30s, J/35s and Benetau First 40.7s.

Jon has been involved with Haarstick Sailmakers for 10 years, building the sails and representing the company on the water. He's a US Sailing level 1 and 2 certified sailing instructor. Has been teaching Jr. sailing on and off for 11 years, and was Area B's junior sailing Bemis and Smythe cup coach. He spent four years coaching the Varsity Sailing team at Christopher Newport University , as well as running the Newport News High School sailing program in Virginia . Jon has also been a Judge for the college sailings MAISA championships.

Jon is available anytime for sail trim assistance, seminars, or just to answer any of your sailing questions.

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#### Doug Burtner- Sales/Service

Doug is our Sales Manager, and has spent most of his sailing career in Ensigns at Canandaigua Yacht Club. While he has mainly been on the bow, in the last few years, he has been trimming and driving, and was part of the Ensign 856 team that has consistently finished in the top seven for the past 5 national championships. In 2000 and just recently, they won the Ensign Midwinters at Dunedin , Florida . (See article below). He has sailed on several offshore PHRF boats: bow and trimming on a J/44 and Peterson 34, main trim and tactics on a Tartan 10, Beneteau 40.7, and C+C 40. He was also part of the crew, trimming spinnakers on the Sertl's J-35 "*Das Blau Max*", when they placed first in the PHRF fleet on the 2003 Freeman Long Course. Doug has a great personality, and is a pleasure to have on board.

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#### Colin Ranney- Sailmaker/Service

Colin joined the Haarstick team in July last year. He has been sailing since a very young age, and while he still looks young (in the editor's opinion), he has extensive experience in small keelboats of all kinds, especially J24s and J22s. As part of the crew of Rodger Voss's J24 "*Spirit*", they placed regularly in the top 5 at all the major District regattas. He has extensive experience both on the bow and trimming sails. He also has had helming success, driving "*Spirit*" to first place in the Lake George Corinthian Yacht club series in 2000. Colin was also a member of the Canandaigua Ensign Team 856, and helped them to place first in the Canandaigua yacht club series. Colin has had the opportunity to sail on a wide variety of boats, and works hard to improve his sailing skills.

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#### Todd Schumacher

Todd has had extensive experience as crew and skipper on Stars and offshore boats. He was my Star crew last summer, and this winter helped me to win the Grand Masters title in February at the Coral Reef Yacht Club's Star Masters regatta in Florida . Since we started sailing together, I have seen my results improve significantly. Todd is an excellent sailor, and a pleasure to sail with. He currently owns an Evelyn 25 (with Haarstick sails) which he races out of the Genesee Yacht Club. Todd is very interested in helping our customers with all aspects of their sailing programs.

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#### J-22 and J-24 ONE DESIGN NEWS:

We are pleased to announce that we will be working with Kirk Reynolds this summer to further develop our J-24 and J-22 designs. Kirk is a long time sailmaker in Skaneateles , NY , and a long time Star friend and competitor of mine. Kirk actually began his sailmaking career at Haarstick Sailmakers, way back in the seventies when we were in Ithaca . We are very excited to be working with Kirk, and look forward to a successful program.

We also have Jim Barnash joining our J-22 development program. Jim has an extensive list of results in the highly competitive J-22 class, and was the 2003 winner of Rochester Yacht Club's most prestigious trophy, the Madge Cup. Jim will also be available, to help our customers with their J-22 rig setup and boatspeed questions.

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Finally, the WARM WEATHER Ensign Mid Winters sailed in Dunedin , Florida , March 17<sup>th</sup> – March 20<sup>th</sup>. We were going to post this on our Ensign web page and just link to it, but ran out of time. They won this regatta in convincing style, counting 9 out of 10 races with a 3,1,1,1,2,2,1,1,1 for 13 points total, 7 points ahead of the second place boat. They were the only boat in the regatta with Haarstick sails. Here in its entirety: Jon's report.

Last week, Doug Burtner and I sat in our favorite watering hole sipping on a couple rum drinks, outside the snow was once again falling. It was depressing to see the snow, when only a couple days before we were enjoying the warmth of Florida . We both made the comment that we had just sailed in the best regatta of our lives. It wasn't just the results, but everything from the crew work to the weather. Never before had either of us seen three days of perfect conditions, temperatures 75-85 degrees and winds between 5 to 15 knots. Living in Rochester New York really makes you appreciate the good weather and good times.

The topic for many sailing articles is regatta preparation. It is critical that you go into a regatta knowing that everything is set to give you the opportunity to win. For us, the 2004 Ensign mid-winter championships is probably the most confident I've ever been for having a boat and crew that was able to win. The "White lady of Irondequoit" is as fast as any Ensign in the country. Although our mainsail and spinnaker were two years old, and our Genoa was a year old, we knew that the shapes were still near perfect. We had a group of very talented sailors on board, and each of us was confident that the others would do their job as well or better than any other boat. Gunnar Richardson was our mainsail trimmer/ tactician, Doug Burtner- Team Captain/ sail trimmer, and Drew Tompkins was our Monkey on the bow. So the regatta would come down to our ability to get the boat around the race course.

Doug and Drew drove the boat down and had it setup, ready to sail when I arrived on Tuesday night. I can't stress enough how important it is to have a team captain that can take care of all the problems that might arise, so the rest of the team is able to concentrate on just sailing the boat. Wednesday was our practice day, and something that I desperately needed. With just a handful of times actually steering an Ensign, my main concern (maybe the rest of the team also, I never asked) was weather I could start the boat, and get it around the course without hitting anyone. Gunnar would not arrive till that evening, but with his many years of Ensign experience, we were confident in his ability to just jump on the boat and perform. Doug, Drew and I decided to spend a maximum of two hours practicing, careful not burn ourselves out before the regatta even started. We had perfect breeze of about 8 to 10 knots, and spent the first hour and a half doing tacks, sets and jibes. We did several stop and start drills to work on our timing for starts. The last half hour we spent speed testing with two other boats. Our speed and point was outstanding in the conditions, and we decided that confidence was up and we should end our practice on a high note.

After picking Gunnar up at the airport, we discussed our game plan for the next three days. The consensus was to be conservative; it would be our main theme throughout. Conservative starts, no "flyers" tactically, stay away from other boats and NO Protests. The first day of racing we would shoot for top three and decide later if we would have to turn up the heat. We knew that our biggest competition would come from the two past midwinter champions, the Plessner's and Kelly's on *Blackhawk*, and Zeke Durica and crew on *Artful Dodger*, but we were ruling no one else out.

After a good night sleep we were the first boat off the dock and first to the racecourse. The day started out with perfect conditions with 8 to 12 knots from the North East and temperatures that would reach 85. After several trips up wind, we decided that the right side had a little shift that way, and that we would try to take advantage of it.

I still get very nervous before every race, and have found that handing the tiller off to someone else before, and immediately after every race helps me to retain my concentration. I try to spend the last couple of minutes before any start with my head down and eyes closed to clear my head of everything. When the warning gun is fired, I take back the tiller and make final preparations for the start.

For the first race, the committee boat was slightly favored, and we decided to avoid the bunch up at the boat, and just look to get a clear start around the middle of the line. We had a great approach from the port side of the line and set up perfectly. I think I got a little too excited and by using too much of the leeward hole we had created to accelerate, we ended up with *Blackhawk* right below us. It didn't take them long to pinch us off and force us to tack. Zeke had started at the favored boat end of the line, and he, along with several other boats, crossed ahead of us. Not about to panic, we headed to the right side of the course, looking for the shift we had found before the start. We found it, and rounded the weather mark in fifth. Our crew work was excellent, and with the chute up and flying before the boat in front of us, quickly drove past them. Our "Maxi-runner" gave us the ability to sail lower and faster, and by the leeward mark we rounded in third. The next two legs offered very few chances to make any gain on *Blackhawk*, who was second, and *Artful Dodger*, who controlled first. We finished a solid third, just like we had talked about. We knew we had the speed, crew work and tactics to compete, but I couldn't let the team down with bad starts.

Race 2 was a perfect example of having absolute faith in the crew. I was very fortunate to be sailing with this group of guys, as they allowed me to just drive the boat. We had a good start right in the middle of the line, and came off with plenty of clear air. *Blackhawk* and *Artful Dodger* were caught up with the pack at the boat end of the line. It was the last I'd see of them for the windward leg. I focused completely on the tell-tales, and didn't look around until we were at the weather mark with a sizeable lead. When Gunnar said "tack," I would tack, when he said "foot for speed," or "go into point mode," I would. We had our first win and our confidence was up.

Race three was a strange one. The wind had died slightly, was becoming unstable, and we began seeing some very large shifts before the start. The land was heating up, and we weren't sure what would happen if a sea breeze filled in. The wind looked good on both sides of the course, but the middle had significantly less breeze. Once again, we started in the middle of the line, but looked to work the left side. The fleet split, with half following us left, and the others following *Artful Dodger* and *Blackhawk* to the right. Having our two main competitors on the opposite side of the course, made us nervous. They were both local boats, and we didn't trust that we would out smart them in this breeze. We took the first sizable shift from the left to consolidate. At first, it looked like the left had paid off, but to our disappointment, we saw the boats on the right side getting lifted, and lifted big, with breeze. About the time we reached the middle of the course, the shift from the right came in, and we tacked. *Artful Dodger* and *Blackhawk* were about a hundred yards off our beam, and now laying the weather mark. We were in trouble, big trouble, but we managed to remain calm. Our luck was about to change: The closer we got to the weather mark, the more we were lifted, and the two leaders were now over standing. The wind had shifted about ninety degrees: we were laying the windward mark and rounded in first. It was the day after St. Patrick's Day, and some of the "luck of the Irish" had rubbed off on us! We were afraid that the race would be blown off because of the huge shift, that now turned the race into three legs of reaching, but it wasn't, and we held onto our lead to win our second race. More importantly *Blackhawk* finished 4<sup>th</sup> and *Artful Dodger* 5<sup>th</sup>, giving us some much needed points on each.

The wind ended up shifting a full 180 degrees, and the racecourse had to be completely shifted around. For the fourth and final race of the day, we were determined to prove that we weren't just lucky, and deserved our two previous firsts. While the race committee scrambled to reset, we made some very important trips upwind, and found a consistent left hand shift on the windward leg. Again our middle of the line start paid off, while several boats including *Blackhawk* fought for the pin end and were pushed over early. We drove to the left side, trying to be the first to the shift we had seen. As the other boats tacked off our hip, we were left all alone, and able to take full advantage of the lefty. It worked, and we spent the rest of the race covering the fleet to win our third race of the day.

Day one's racing was over. We knew there were six more races left, and the regatta was far from over, but we decided to enjoy the moment and celebrate a little with a cigar and a couple of beers for the hour sail back to the docks. That night Bud Rohrer, our benefactor, had noticed downwind that our stern was dragging making us a little slower than normal, and we needed to move our weight forward. It was an important observation, and one that would help over the next two days.

Day two was another gorgeous day, but as we arrived at the race course there was no wind. As we drifted around before the race, we noticed we had a friend following us. Just off our transom, drafting our wake, was a three-foot shark. He followed us for a half hour, so Drew named him Sparky. I figured Sparky was a good mascot, but the rest of the crew quickly informed me that it was a bad omen. That was not what a paranoid, like me, needed to hear before the start.

The wind finally filled in from the north. Gunnar and I talked about a similar day, two years ago, when he was driving and I was trimming, the left was the place to be. But, we still had to get off the line clean. The plan was to do the same thing as yesterday: don't do anything stupid! We made our usual approach from the port side of the line, and as we reached the middle of the line, the wind started to die and switch left, favoring the pin. With a boat directly off our windward hip, this was the time for a quick decision. There was a minute and a half left, we had plenty of time to make a move. We could either, head him up and hope he would tack, so we could both get to the pin, or jibe away. Instead, I did neither, and hoped our windward friend would tack. I no longer was in control of our start, a very bad idea! We were pushed all the way down to the committee boat. With only fifty seconds left, I decided to jibe. Another bad Idea! We were now about four boat lengths from the line in a dying breeze, and dirty air. I was furious with myself. While coaching in college, this was my biggest pet peeve, and I constantly told my team to never jibe away from the starting line that close to the start.

After a couple deep breaths to clear my head, and the rest of the guys telling me we would get it back, I relaxed and zoned into the job of driving the boat. We finally crossed the starting line on port tack about a minute after the start. To be honest, I have no idea how Gunnar did it, but somehow he found a lane of clear air, and called some great tacks. I was so focused on making the boat go fast, I had no idea where we were on the race course. When Gunnar called for our tack for the layline, I was amazed to find us in second, where we stayed until the finish. I wish I knew what he saw to get us there, but he's quite simply a tactical wizard.

For the 6th race, determined not to have a repeat of our previous start, we won the favored pin end. It was our best start up to this point, but with most of the fleet just off or hip, we were unable to tack. The boats that were able to get away were able to get in phase with the big lefty that had come in. The “Sparky” omen was about to bring us some more bad luck: by the time we were able to get on port tack, we were solidly in the middle of the fleet. We rounded in sixth place, and started our recovery. We closed the gap enough downwind, that we were able to take advantage of several small shifts on the upwind leg, to move into fifth. For the final leeward leg, we keep our weight forward, and with the breeze now around ten knots, our “Maxi-Runner” chute powered us downwind. Doug Burtner did a phenomenal job trimming, Gunnar called all the right jibes to keep us in phase, and Drew didn’t miss a beat on the bow. We squeaked out a fourth place right at the finish line. It was another hard fought come back, we had lost a couple of points to both *Blackhawk* and *Artful Dodger*, but it would be our throw out, as long as we didn’t do it again.

Race 7 we still opted for the conservative middle of the line start, and we found ourselves in forth at the windward mark. Just like the previous race, our excellent crew work got our spinnaker up quickly, and we moved into third. Again, we made significant gains down wind, and by the end of the second leg, we were right behind the second place *Artful Dodger*. Gunnar, the wizard tactician, made some beautiful calls upwind. We not only moved into second, but also stretched out to a five-boat length lead over the now third place *Artful Dodger*. *Blackhawk* sailed a great race with no mistakes, and took the bullet, and we were pleased with our comeback.

For our 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> races we went back to our safe midline start. The breeze was a steady 8-12 knots and I found it much easier to judge time on distance in the better wind. Both races we got of the line well, and like the three prior races, I was completely focused on driving. I really had no idea where we were on the course, but had absolute faith that Gunnar would get us to the right spot. We hit all the right shifts, and sailed fast to win the final races of the day.

With the firsts in the last two races we knew that we could keep our fourth in race six , throw out the final race, and still win the regatta. Many of the boats had shown up with sails straight out of the box, but our speed with our older Haarsticks was great. The crew work was amazing, Gunnar’s tactics were dead on! The pressure was off, and we could now really celebrate with a couple of beers for the long sail in.

That night we had a great team dinner with Bud, who we couldn’t thank enough for giving us the opportunity to sail. We were joined later by the *Blackhawk* crew of Beua and Dede Plessner, and Dave and Chris Kelly, who we also owe a special thanks for giving us all a place to stay. They were our fiercest competition on the water and our best friends on shore.

For the 10<sup>th</sup> and final race we were still out to win, even if we didn’t need to sail, but we wanted to be careful not to interfere too much with the other boats. There was still a tight race between the *Blackhawk* team and *Artful Dodger* for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. On the long sail out we decided to pretty much stick with our same strategy that worked so well before. With the wind at 15 knots, we had the best start of the regatta, hit the first shift, and once again found ourselves in first at the weather mark. The wind started to become a little fickle downwind, and three boats,

that included *Blackhawk* and *Artful Dodger*, rode large puffs down on top of us, and by the leeward mark, were right behind us. We took the first right hand shift we got to get away from the competition, and let them battle it out. As we converged half way up the leg, they had both past us with a significant shift from the right. Gunnar got us to the right and back in phase. At the 3<sup>rd</sup> mark we were comfortably in 2<sup>nd</sup> right behind *Blackhawk*. It was a two boat race now, and we decided we'd make a push to go for first. Trying for a little payback for the first leeward leg, we sat on our friends, the Plessner's and Kelly's all the way downwind, closing the gap and rounding just inside of them at the mark. We tacked onto port hoping that they'd stay and cover Zeke, but they didn't. Thus began a fierce tacking duel that lasted to the finish, and a leg that I'll remember my whole life. I later told Dede that I wished it had gone on forever. The advantage to being the trailing boat in a tacking duel is that you control when you tack, and if you make sure you wait and tack on a shift, you can make out. Once again Gunnar made some excellent calls, and Doug worked with me trimming to keep the boat moving. The breeze was dying, and we needed to constantly trim the sails to change gears, he didn't cleat the jib once. Drew, whom I refer to as "Deck Slime", constantly moved from side to side, helping me drive the boat up and down in the shifts and tacks. We all worked together perfectly, like we did all week, and with the last tack to the finish line, finally crossed ahead and into first.

It was a perfect way to finish a great regatta. We had won six out of the ten races by sailing as a team, sailing conservative, and not getting into any protests. In fact out of ten races we had only one close port starboard, opting to duck any other time it was close, and one time when we had to talk to another boat. We kept our nose clean and just sailed fast.

Once again I want to thank Bud Rohrer, the Plessner's and Kelly's, and everyone at Haarstick Sailmakers who worked a little harder to make it possible for Doug and I to take the extra days off and go sailing.

Jon Faudree

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Please send me any comments you have, good or bad- I appreciate your interest, and support.

Steve Haarstick