# Challenge, Camaraderie Are Yacht Race's Allure

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don't have any control over the wind, so you have to take what you can get. This race was slower, but average, if you think about it, because we've been spoiled the last couple of races. It didn't matter what it was like, because we all had a blast being out there on the water. We look forward to this race all year, and we'll be back next weekend for the Port Huron to Mackinac race."

The crew from Bill Martin's *Stripes* was a perfect example of team bonding.

"I think the camaraderie was great on this boat, because we were all having a good time, joking around with each other, but taking it seriously when necessary," crew member Dan Knight said. "Even then, we were having fun at the same time. If you're sitting around getting mad that you're not moving, it's not going to be any better. It makes it fun for us to all be together."

*Stripes*, a GL70 boat, had 13 crew members and finished fifth in its section.

Another boat with experience was *Fine Line*, a Section 2 yacht with a crew of 14, some of whom sail as Goats, a title bestowed on sailors with at least 25 races under the belts.

One member of the Island Goat Society is Eric Haglund, who has been racing since 1978, although this is his first race aboard *Fine Line*, which finished third in Section 2.

"It's something that you've done and you look back and say to yourself, 'Wow,'" Mr. Haglund said of the Island Goats. "It's a milestone that I've always hoped to achieve, and it definitely hits you after the fact. It's just a privilege to be able to sail, because it's fun and enjoyable, and the races are ever-changing, with no two ever being exactly alike. It's always a different experience. Sometimes you get lucky, and sometimes you don't."

The race is challenging in its own right for all the boaters, Mr. Haglund said.

**Some of the crew members from *Fine Line* at the awards ceremony. The 46-foot boat placed third in Section 2 and seventh overall in the Chicago-Mackinac trophy group. Top row, from left, are Jim Simmons, Heidi Patton, Laurie Montplaisir, Travis Funk, Walter O'Sullivan, and Eric Haglund; bottom row, from left, are Matt Nicholson, Tom Edman, Rich Montplaisir, and Jeremy Kaufman.**

"People say to me, 'Oh, you've done the Mac? That's incredible.' They are impressed with it, and it puts you in your own elite group," he said.

Jim Simmons, a four-year crew member with *Fine Line*, was one of the many sailors who said this race is broken up into parts. His theory consisted of four sections of the race: First, it is a drag race up the lake. Secondly, it is a technical race once the boats pass the Manitous. Third, it is a breacher around Grey's Reef, and finally it becomes a technical race again between the Mackinac Bridge and the finish line at the Round Island Lighthouse.

Eric Seaborg, a 28-year crew member aboard *Perseverance*, said the weather was one of the biggest competitors this year, forcing many sail changes and a crawl through thick fog.

"Although nothing out of the ordinary happened and nothing particular really stands out," he said, "we're all really happy with our finish. We won our division and finished in the top 20, overall."

But things don't always go as planned. The 10 crew members aboard *Daybreak* had to retire just moments into the race when crew member Mike Betzel injured his knee.

Another member of the crew was seven-year-old Peter Chatain, sailing in his first Chicago-to-Mackinac race, wearing the sailing cap of one of his grandfathers. Both grandfathers are Mackinac veterans.

While Mr. Betzel was taken to the hospital, Master Chatain went for a swim with his mother, Kimberly, and then the crew sailed up to Harbor Springs before coming to the Island for the celebration.

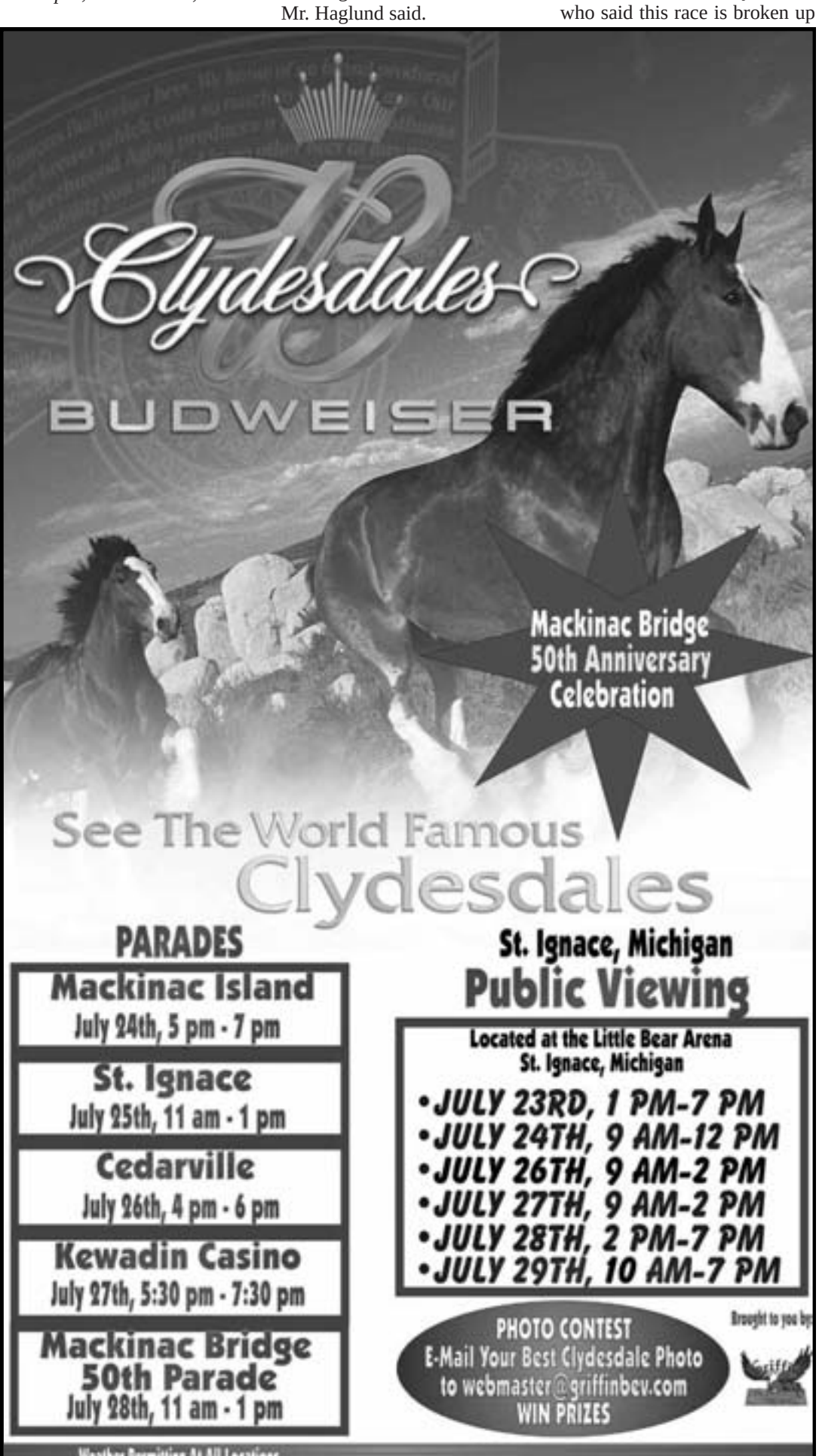
"This is just our practice run, our mulligan," Mrs. Chatain said. "We'll be back next year."

By then, her son will have had three weeks of sailing lessons at the Chicago Yacht Club behind him.

Jack and Jim Toliver sailed on *Vanda III*, the third boat in their family. They have been sailing all of their lives, introduced the sport by their father. This is their first year together in the Race to Mackinac, so they were learning, too.

"It is a test of endurance, a test of focus, and a test of desire with a crew," Jim Toliver said. "We had a few core guys that are the intensity guys who never really turn off. We were fortunate to have them."

*Vanda III* came in third place in the competitive J109 section, and the eight crewmen were thrilled with the result.

A party for all of the racers and their families was Tuesday, July 17, in the Tea Garden at Grand Hotel.

Winners are posted at www.chicagoyachtclub.org.