



Francis Stokes motoring MOONESHINE to the starting line. Francis won both legs of the race averaging almost 7 knots on the singlehanded portion.

The Bermuda One Two

by Bob Lush

I first heard about the race after finishing the last OSTAR (Observer TransAtlantic Single Handed Race) in Newport Rhode Island. It was the brainchild of veteran sailor-author-designer Jerry Cartwright and is the only singlehanded, saltwater, event of any stature on the east coast.

The idea was intriguing in that the first leg, from Newport to Bermuda, was to be singlehanded and the return was to be doublehanded. I suppose the greatest incentive to making a fast passage was that you could spend a few extra days in Bermuda which must rank high on the list of wonderful places.

There were just a few problems to overcome before I could think about entering; how do I explain to my wife that I want to go and do something stupid again; what do I use for a boat; and how could I possibly afford it? I'm still not sure how it all came together but without an understanding mate it would not have got off the ground.

In looking for a suitable boat the two main criteria were CHEAP and FAST. From experience I was sure that no small stock boat could stand up to the

pounding of the Gulf Stream so it was a prerequisite that I establish a rapport with the builder so that extensive modifications could be carried out during construction. The three boats that I considered most likely for the task were the Tanzer 22, the Alberg 22 and the Shark 24. The Tanzer was surely fast but with the factory in Montreal I could not establish day to day contact during construction. The Alberg plant was close enough, Belleville, but I felt she was more of a cruiser; certainly more comfortable, but a little slow.

I had never sailed a Shark before but their reputation for speed and robust construction is tremendous. I contacted the designer, George Hinterhoeller who had recently resigned from C&C, and although far from overwhelmed by the idea we discussed modifications and he agreed to custom build a Shark for me. Temporarily without facilities (he has since opened up a new plant in St. Catherines) she was to be built at the Niagara Nautic factory outside Niagara on the Lake. We argued daily, me for strength and he for lightness, but the end result was one of the finest pocket ocean racers imaginable.

I originally planned to name her *Northern Spirit*, which I thought summed up the whole affair pretty nicely, but the first time I saw the bare hull I knew she was too small for such a pretentious name. She was more than small; she was tiny - *Poco*.

With me doing the painting and varnishing (which explains why there's paint in the varnish and visa versa) and one carpenter helping George *Poco* was built in a month. I sailed the required 100 mile qualifying cruise a few days after launch and a few days after that we were off to Newport.

For those technical minded here are some of the major alterations.

Poco has a solid wood interior (no glass liner) and instead of the usual V berths there is a full width chart table. The mast is a heavier section and a seven-eighths rather than three-quarter rig to eliminate the jumper struts. The forestay was moved right to the stem & the mast a foot aft increasing the J measurement by almost two ft. The standing rigging is three sizes over standard, with double backstays, and the upper and lower shrouds have separate chainplates. She has positive floatation, in the form of styrofoam, fore and aft which prevents her from sinking - even if badly holed. The standard hatches were replaced with water-tight Atkins and Hoyle deck hatches which proved inconvenient to use but added immeasurably to peace of mind. Halliards and reefing lines were run back, on deck, to the cockpit. The small sail inventory was specifically designed by John Dakin at the Hans Fogh loft to suit the expected reaching conditions and although not as close winded as a

standard Shark she has the power to shoulder her way through the ocean swell. It sounds rather alarming but I used the standard Shark rudder for a lee board, to keep me in my berth, and steered with a makeshift tiller directly through the self steering gear. The sail inventory consisted of one huge tri radial spinnaker, a storm jib (reported to be the smallest sail that Foghs' ever made), working jib and a 150% genoa. The triple sewn main has three sets of jiffy reefing points. The pulpits and stantions were all welded, at the bases, through bolted with backup plates and had double life-lines. As I had broken a teak grab rail during the OSTAR I asked Rig-It industries to fabricate ones of stainless as well as handles either side of the main hatch. To beef her up, forward, there are two extra bulkheads as well as horizontal stiffening in the bow. The transom and lazarette are greatly strengthened to take the loads imposed by the Honda outboard and the self steering gear.

The trip down the Hudson-Erie system was, as always, interesting. I have made the trip many times and by making notes on the original set of charts we now know where all the best anchorages are (as well as the beer stores, Pizza joints, friendly clubs and gas stops).

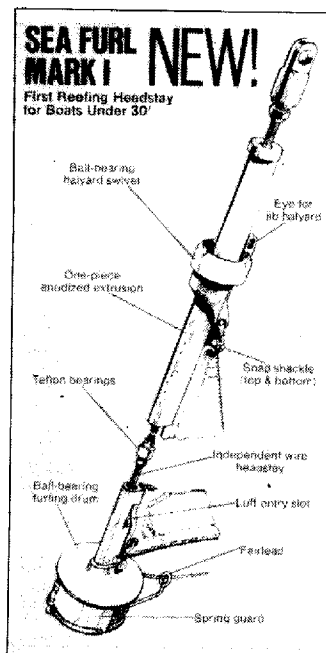
One day on the Hudson, as the tide turned against us, we rafted onto the famous *Clearwater*. She is a Hudson River sloop built by folk singer Pete Seeger to be used as a floating ecological classroom in an attempt to clean up the river. At almost 80 feet she takes bus loads of school children for sails. I had heard that she was going to make a trip to the

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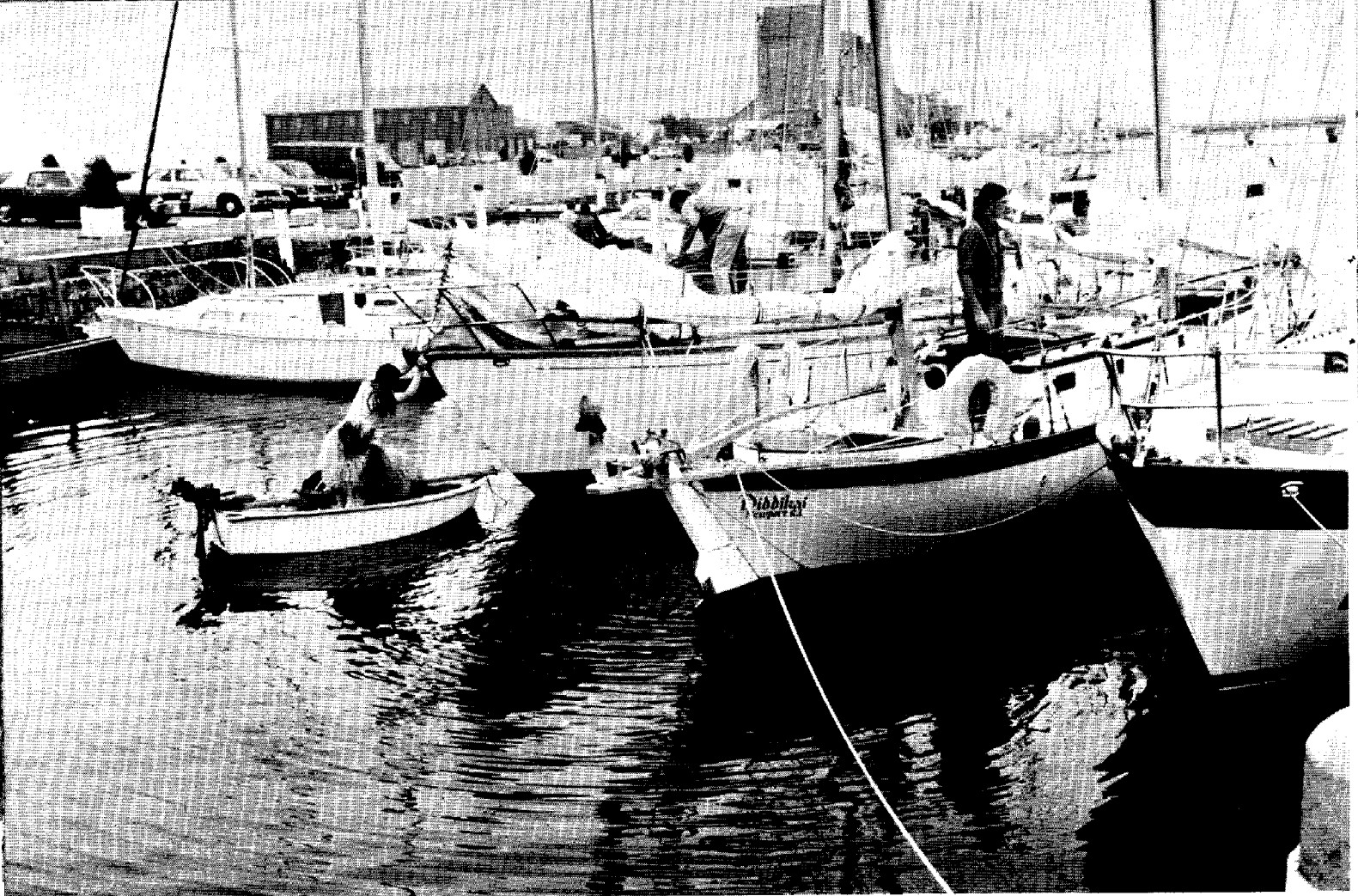
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Bill Maney, sailing the 36' DIDDIKAI, was the only "true singlehander" but was forced to retire to Newport, with gear failures, after 8 days. The Maney's live aboard with their huge sheepdog "Bilbo" seen here going ashore minutes before the start.

Chesapeake to continue the good work and after a guided tour of the ship I asked the first mate about the rumour. He said that had been their intention but they were afraid to take her into the ocean, even for 70 odd miles, as her bow tended to scoop up water. With tiny *Poco* rafted alongside it seemed preposterous that I intended to take her across 1300 miles of ocean, including a double crossing of the Gulf Stream, when this giant was hesitant to make a day trip in far calmer conditions.

After being flushed through the infamous Hell Gate on a five knot flood tide and stopping for two days in Cold Springs Harbour to repaint the bottom, we arrived in Newport with a week in hand before the start. Surely one of the most outstanding aspects of singlehanded racing is the comraderie between the participants and the incredible socializing that inevitably takes place and the Bermuda 1-2 Race was no exception. It was great to meet old friends from the OSTAR; Michael Richey, Bob Lengyl, Tony Lush (who now lives in Newport but was not in the race), Francis Stokes, Gerry Cartwright and also to meet many new ones.

Ian Radford who sailed *Jabulisiwe*, a C&C designed Trapper 400 in the OSTAR, was also an early arrival and we became friends while conspiring how best to freeload beer and meals around the waterfront. (Ian wrote two excellent articles on the B 1-2 which appeared in the September issue of *Cruising World*).

The mayor of Newport hosted a reception at which "Skippy" Lewis, the Commodore of the hosting St. Georges Sport and Dingy Club, wished us bon voyage and promised to stand us a beer when we arrived in Bermuda. There was also a lawn barbeque, a pizza-bust during a gale, as well as an incredible garden party at the Cartwrights. Possibly I have over-emphasized the party aspect of the race but during the week all the skippers worked hard preparing their boats and themselves for the difficulties ahead.

Conditions for both legs of the race were almost perfect Shark sailing weather. The winds for the start were about 20 knots with the occasional gust to about 35. After a short beat, to get clear of the harbour, it was a close reach on a course between 170 and 180 magnetic. I carried the working jib and alternated between a full and single reefed main. With the main halliard and reefing lines led back on the cabin top I can take in a reef in about 30 seconds and shake it out in about 10. Thankfully the wind was steady for the first 36 hours, as I was sick as a dog. Whether it was from overindulgence in Newport or the violent motion of the boat, I don't know, but I spent most of the time sleeping. I felt quite miserable and although I didn't throw up I only went on deck to adjust sails and the self steering.

By the log we did 125 miles in the first 24 hours but the wind eased and with a leftover slop we did about 10 miles less the second day. On the third day I was



Part of the singlehanded fleet. (l to r) CRYSTAL CATFISH, the largest entry was destined to break-up on Bermuda's coral reefs after the U.S. Navy moved a radio beacon, POCO, LITTLE DIPPER, and MARGARET D (DNF).

able to take sights for the first time but the motion was so violent that I didn't even bother to work them out as I was sure they were miles out. I was all bruised from being thrown about and wore my hockey helmet constantly, when below, even when sleeping. I gave up trying to keep dry, and as it was so warm, wore only a safety harness. Had the genoa up for several hours, on the third day, as the wind eased to about 15 but at 2200 hours it filled in again and for the next 24 hours it never dropped below 30 and the gusts were near 50. Under the storm jib and double reefed main we were driven slightly east of our course, as the wind was SSW, but we were averaging between 5 and 8 knots. By noon of the fourth day there was 507 miles on the log, we were just about on the rhumb line and the wind had eased to 15 and backed to the WNW allowing me to raise the genny again. I stayed up all that night playing with the poled out genny as one minute we'd have 5 knots of wind and the next 25 knots in rain squalls. The wind was shifty during the squalls and I gybed 4 or 5 times which was a real Chinese fire drill with poor visibility caused by the rain and spray. With the motion and water on the foredeck it was an unpleasant place to be and I was thankful for the lifelines which kept me from going over several times.

I had stayed up that night as we were so close to Bermuda, about 100 miles out and I hoped we would arrive in St. Georges sometime during the following day, but it was not to be. The wind died off to a

whisper and I catnapped in the cockpit while trying to keep her moving.

My tired old RDF set was giving me very strange signals so I just homed in on the AM stations in Hamilton. (The US Navy had moved their RDF beacon from Kindley AFB, at the NE end of the island, to the SW end, without issuing a notice to mariners, and ten boats in our fleet went into the coral reefs, with 6 hitting and one, *Crystal Catfish* the scratch boat - a 44 footer, ripping out her bottom on the North Rock and sinking - luckily John Hunt the skipper was picked up with only minor injuries). I picked up the loom of St. Georges after dark and with the aid of another rain squall closed rapidly until I was becalmed about 8 miles off at one in the morning. As we were dead in the water I caught two hours sleep but before dawn we were ghosting toward the island again.

The clockwise current around the island had set us somewhat to the south and it was 0650 before we crossed the finish line with help during the last hour from another rain squall. I had heard race reports on the Hamilton AM station and according to them about 8 boats had finished, when actually only 5 had, so as we were the smallest boat in the fleet of 25, to finish sixth was not too bad. The passage had taken 5 days, 18 hours and 50 minutes for a rhumb line distance of 640 miles and we actually logged 684 miles.



POCO rafted onto Pete Seeger's *CLEAR WATER* on the Hudson River. Her boom weighed more than *POCO*.

The winner, Francis Stokes, sailed a Valiant 40, averaged over 7 knots and barely missed breaking the full crewed *Finnisterre*'s record time for a 40 footer. Francis came 3rd in class in last summers OSTAR and was one of 8 skippers in this race who had OSTAR experience.

The boats ahead of us were: a Valiant 40, Tartan 30, Ranger 26, CS 27 and another Tartan 30. Boats finishing behind ranged from Gerry Cartwright in a 40 footer of his own design a Columbia 38', a pair of Southern Cross 31's, two folkboats (including the famous *Jester*), a C&C 28, and a smattering of stock boats down to an Aquarius 23. (Although the Aquarius was about a foot shorter than *Poco* she has a longer waterline and displaces 1000 lbs. more so whether I'm right or wrong I considered *Poco* to be the smallest entry in the race).

The hospitality shown us by the host St. Georges Sport & Dinghy Club was absolutely incredible. There were tours of the island and continual parties but I suppose the highlight was the presentation night when the Governor of the island, the Mayor of St. Georges and the Commodore made the presentations. I had come 6th overall but only 5th in division (there was no handicapping system) so I didn't even get a

handshake but I was introduced to the Governor.

My son Bob Jr., who was to crew back with me, flew in the next day, a week before the start of the second leg, and worked like a trojan on the boat most of the time. I was too exhausted, and having too much fun, to help him much although I did scrub the bottom the day before the start.

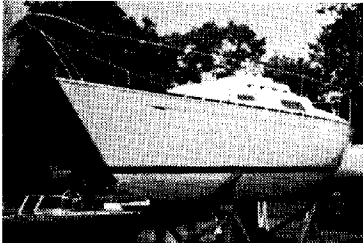
The start of the second leg was inside the harbour; and after a miserable start we were about 6th going through the cut. After raising the chute, for the first time ever, we were moving really well and at dusk were in second place, behind the Valiant. Before dusk everyone, except us and the Valiant, dropped their chutes and by midnight the masthead lights of the boats behind us had disappeared, but so had the Valiant's ahead. Although the wind was on the beam, and a little puffy, we carried the chute for 22 hours and although broaching often, managed 136 miles in the first 21 hours and our top hourly average was 7.5 knots. The log was underreading as it was frequently out of the water but from 1500 on the first day, by which time we were clear of the island, to 1500 on the second day we logged 155.3 miles for an average of almost 6.5 knots. The best day on the way down had been 139 miles noon to noon. We were becalmed for 8 hours and paddled for most of that time with the bunkboards making only 91 miles on the second day. As the wind filled in later in the afternoon, traffic got comparatively heavy with *Segatious*, the CS 27, sagging through our course, but not gaining much on us, and then we were buzzed by a Russian spy ship for a while.

We entered the Gulf Stream shortly after dark on Tuesday night and gradually reduced sail from the genoa, with a single reefed main, to the working jib with a triple reefed main. As the wind was slightly aft of the beam, the boat seemed to balance better with the jib up rather than the storm jib. It took 12 hours to cross the Stream and the wind was reasonably steady at between 30 and 40 knots. We were averaging between 5 and 7 and were flying off the tops of almost every wave. I've never been able to get used to the second or so of weightlessness (it seems like years) before the boat crashes into the trough and it still makes me feel quite queazy. I'm sure that the whole keel was out of the water during most of these lunges but having seen George Hinterhoeller build *Poco* I didn't worry about damaging her in the least. The adverse currents in the Stream cost us 30 miles but once clear of it the wind went to the East which allowed us to hoist the chute again. We kept it up almost continuously until the finish and we both pegged the speedo at 15 knots for brief periods, which is especially exciting at 3 in the morning when you're alone on deck. Once I actually sailed through the chute and it came back to wrap around the forestay and spreaders. I can't say that my life flashed before my eyes but it was close. We crossed the finish line at 1026 local time on Friday for a passage time of 5 days, 22 hours and 26 minutes - three and a half hours longer than the first leg. Considering that we had been becalmed for almost 20 hours and had logged a total of 745 miles it wasn't too bad.

The winner, once again Francis Stokes in the Valiant 40, crossed the line about 8 hours ahead of us



The author smiles nervously minutes before the start of the first, singlehanded, leg from Newport. Designer George Hinterhoeller referred to POCO as a submarine after the main hatch was installed. All three deck hatches were water-tight and steering was through the self steering gear.



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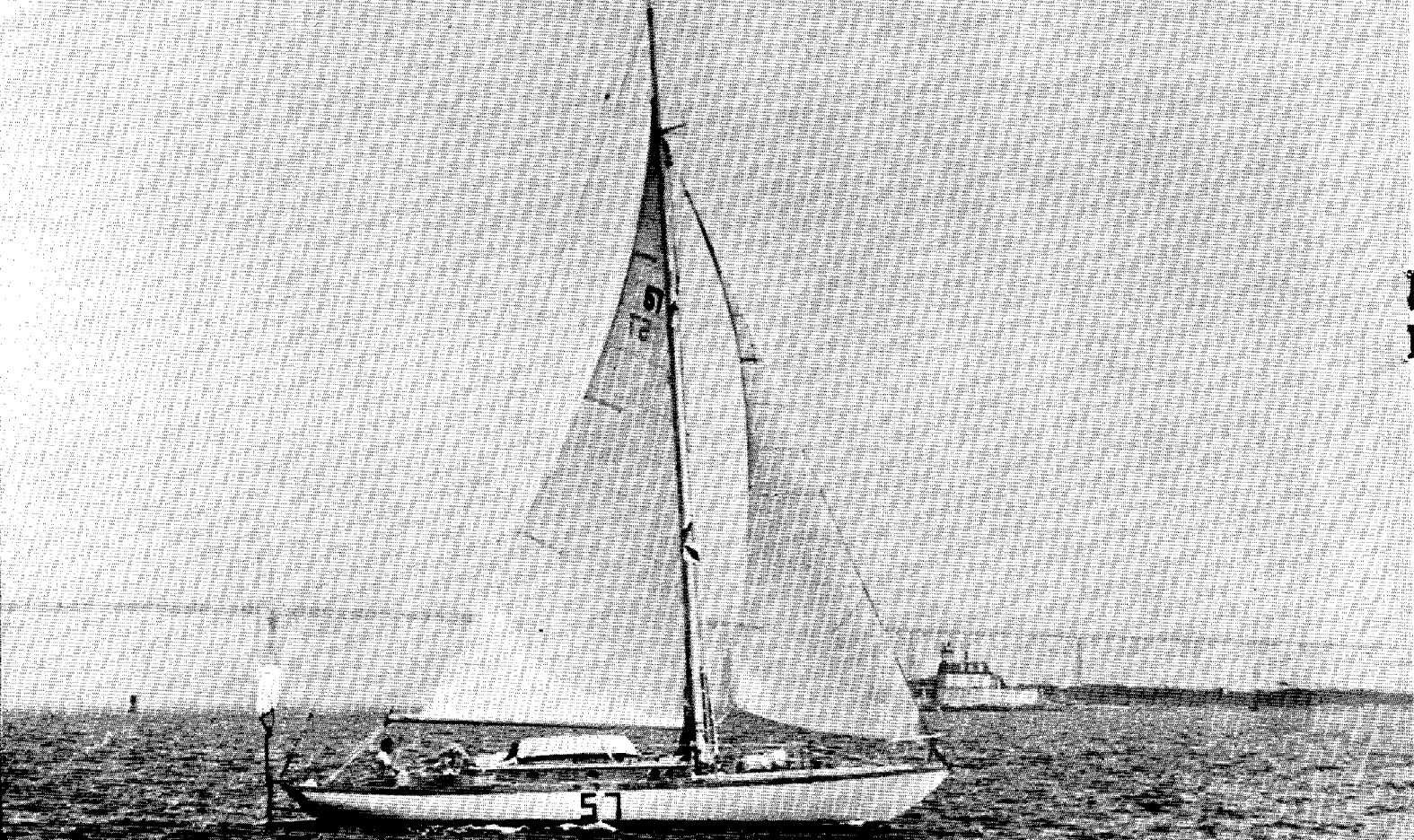
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Dr. John Hunt maneuvering CRYSTAL CATFISH moments before the start. Hunt ripped the mainsail shortly after the start and after repairs restarted at midnight.

When Blondie Hasler owned JESTER she was canary yellow. She is now dark green because Michael Richey "had some left over". The modified folkboat has made 9 Atlantic crossings – 8 of them singlehanded.

Dr. Ian Radford was one of eight OSTAR veterans to compete in the Bermuda 1-2. He has already entered JABULISIWE, a C&C designed 28, for the next trans-Atlantic singlehanded race.

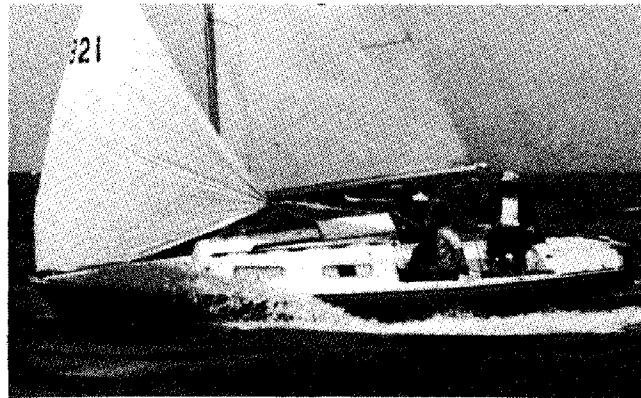


but so had a few others so we came 5th overall and 3rd in division. (Oh, for a handicapping system!)

Poco is without any doubt the finest boat that I've ever sailed. She handles beautifully, is incredibly fast, and strong as a brick house. We had no breakages, although a few arms and legs were suspect at the time, and all the equipment and sails worked beautifully.

Several Canadian sailors have spoken to me about entering the Bermuda 1-2 but as this first one was

organized so hastily there was no time for them to arrange holidays etc. The next one will be in 1979 and information can be obtained from Gerry Cartwright, 112 Spring St., Newport, R.I., U.S.A. 02840. I think it would be marvelous to have 3 or 4 Canadians enter so we could have our own fleet awards etc. I am also lobbying for Gerry to adopt some kind of handicap rule to give smaller boats a chance against the behemoths.



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