

My Friend Jack

By Dave Malusi



My friend Jack is a lot like you and me. He has had his challenges in life, his mountains to climb. (One of the “mountains” is Spina Bifida). What makes him a bit different from most of us is how he has skied down those mountains.... seated in a bi-ski! He has skied as long as I have known him. When not on the slopes, Jack gets around with a wheelchair but he hasn't let that slow him down or keep him from doing much of what he wants to do. Jack is also a sailor.

A few years ago, Jack was taken out on a “sailaround” on my boat through the newly formed watersports program at Challenge Mountain. “CM” is an adaptive ski area in Northern Michigan, near Boyne Falls. Jack's discovery of sailing has added a new element to his life; one that has grabbed him like it has grabbed most of us.

In 2003 CM should have rejected the donation of an old, beat-up Hunter 25. Our decision was nearly final to salvage what parts had value (not many) and dispose of the hull, when Jack and his dad asked if they could try to save the boat. I admit we shook our heads but thought, “why not?”

To our surprise the boat, now named “Waveslayer” entered our 2007 Mark Madness Regatta for Challenge Mountain. You can call it a 4 ktsb if you like, but it was Jack's 4 ktsb (okay, maybe 3 ktsb). To say the sails were a bit blown out would be like saying Hiroshima was a small explosion.....they were pretty bad and the boat sailed accordingly. That night at our Cajun Shrimp Boil (what good is a Regatta without a huge

party?), area sailors stepped up to the plate. On Sunday, “Waveslayer” had a different set of racing sails (some borrowed, some donated) and won the day. Jack won his first flag, in the Cruising Division, and he was hooked! He returned in 2008 and promises to make it an annual event.



I am Vice-Commodore of the Boyne City Yacht Club. We are one of those “paper” Clubs everyone picks on. I think most “Sailing Anarchists” would appreciate our \$30 per year, nearly 700 Member Club for what we do. In addition to active Racing and Social Programs, our Mark Madness Regatta (5th Annual this June 13th and 14th) has been all about helping people like my friend Jack get out on the water. Partially through those efforts a new adaptive boat is being built. Hull #1 of the CM20 class should be floating this summer. This boat, designed by Ken Workinger of Tiara Yachts and being built by the Great Lakes Boatbuilding School in Cedarville, MI, will be a “normal” 20-foot keelboat at first look with the capability of being adapted to individual needs. Two pedestal bucket seats with 5 point harnesses can be added to secure the sailors and provide needed stability. Hand controls will be available when needed and sip and puff capability is also planned for those sailors with extra-special needs.



All of these things cost a lot of money and we hope Mark Madness will continue to grow so we can provide more. Sailors can help in many ways. Equipment and cash will go far, even stuff we can't use on the CM20 can be sold in CM's re-sale store (and you get a tax deduction). Another way for Michigan sailors is to join us for the event. If you can't sail, our Cajun Shrimp Boil on Saturday night rocks!

Information about Mark Madness and the boat project can be found here:

<http://www.boynecityyachtclub.com/MarkMad1.html>

I'd like you to meet my friend Jack someday. He is truly a special sailor. He doesn't ask for much. Like you and me, he just wants to sail.....