

# REGATTA AL SOL XXVI

RHUMB-LINE RACE LEAVES COMPETITORS WITH PLENTY OF TIME TO ENJOY FESTIVITIES IN ISLA MUJERES By Stephen Murray, Jr



During the Regata al Sol's activities in Isla Mujeres the Lima Cup was presented to Enrique Lima by Commodore Dwight LeBlanc and Commodore Sam Foreman. Also taking part in the ceremony was the State Governor, Felix Gonzalez Canto. The Lima Cup trophy was created by the Southern Yacht Club of New Orleans and the Pensacola Yacht Club, co-sponsors of the Regata al Sol, to honor the memory and life achievements of Senor Jose de Jesus Lima. The Trophy is a tribute to the man who founded and promoted the race and awarded to a yachtsmen for Seamanship and Sportmanship during the race.

Even with the course lengthened by eleven miles to avoid the oil slick from the recent Deepwater Horizon disaster, this year's Regatta al Sol was the fastest on record. Strong southeast winds made for fast jib reaching conditions nearly all the way from Pensacola, Florida to Isla Mujeres, Mexico. Nearly all of the fleet finished by Sunday or Monday, leaving plenty of time to enjoy all that the tiny Caribbean island has to offer, from swinging (literally) at Buho's bar,

to sight-seeing, to diving, snorkeling and fishing on Isla Mujeres' reef, the second largest in the world, to participating in Mexico's only known all golf-cart Mardi Gras parade.

Setting the pace for the regatta was SYC's own *Decision* a Botin &

Carkeek designed TransPac 52 skippered by Stephen Murray, Jr., which finished at 10:21 p.m. Adjusted for the eleven miles added to the course, *Decision's* elapsed time beat the previous elapsed time record set by the Andrews 70 *Decision* in 2002 by 52 minutes. *Decision* also won the racing division on corrected time.



Stephen Murray Jr., center, accepted trophies for accomplishments in the Regata al Sol

ing division on corrected time. *Decision* swept the racing division awards, winning the Presidente de Mexico Trophy for best racing corrected time, the Trofeo Comodoro Adolfo Lopez Mateos for best elapsed time in

the racing division, the Aztec Warrior trophy for best corrected time of any SYC yacht, and the Madden Randle Memorial Trophy for best performance in the regatta. Additionally, *Decision's* tactician-navigator Johnny Lovell was awarded the Club de Yates de Isla Mujeres Trophy for the navigator of the racing division boat with the best corrected time. Commodore Dwight Leblanc also made the record-setting ride aboard *Decision*.



Commodores Dwight LeBlanc and Sam Foreman display the Senor Jose de Jesus Lima Cup Perpetual Trophy

In spite of her record-setting time, all was not smooth sailing for *Decision*. Less than eleven hours into the race, they lost all electrical power.

*Decision's* sophisticated instruments lay dormant while the crew navigated with the aid of Johnny Lovell's hand-held battery-operated GPS and paper charts. With no instruments, or even compass lights, the helmsmen steered by the stars and feel with occasional updates from whoever was holding the GPS. With no electrical power to run the bilge pumps on the very wet ride, the crew had to bail the bilge by hand every two hours. In addition, *Decision's* main was severely damaged while close-reaching in steady

twenty-five knots of breeze on the second night. Just after sunrise, the crew dropped the main and undertook emergency repairs headed up by delivery captain Gjis "Guinness" Gunemann. In less than thirty minutes, Guinness and his team had patched over twenty holes in the main, re-hoisted the sail and continued on their way to the record-setting finish. Fortunately, the repairs to the main held, and upon reaching the finish line, the race committee quickly got a fresh battery to *Decision*, providing her with power and navigation equipment to find her way over the reef and into Isla Mujeres' harbor. Coming in second in the racing division was Pat Eudy's GP42 *Big Booty*, which traveled all the way from Charleston, South Carolina to make the race. SYC members Marcus Eagan and Guy Brierre joined the *Big Booty* crew. *Big Booty's* delivery captain, Dan Valoppi was awarded the newly endowed Jose de Jesus Lima Trophy for sportsmanship and seamanship. When the race committee was unable to hail a cruising boat that still had not finished as of late Tuesday, Dan volunteered to sail to the boat's last known position to render assistance, even though it meant deviating significantly from his delivery course back to South Carolina. Fortunately, the missing boat arrived safely in Isla Mujeres on Wednesday. Finishing a close third in the racing division was Mark Palermo's Beneteau 40.7, *Sapphire Lunami*, owned by SYC's Celeste Roman and skippered by Devon Sweeney was fourth.

The Cruising Division was dominated by Jim Oyler's Beneteau 49 *Parlay* from Pensacola. *Parlay* took both corrected time and elapsed time honors in Non-Spinnaker and Cruising overall. Additionally, *Parlay* achieved the significant

accomplishment of arriving in Isla Mujeres before any of the racing boats, the first time in memory that a cruising boat had done so. Although cruising boats start twenty-four hours ahead of the racers, they are usually passed by the racing boats before the finish.

Repeating as Cruising Spinnaker winner was PCYC's Steven Montagnet's Beneteau 45, *Fidelis II* took both elapsed time and corrected time honors. In Second was SYC's own Vic Oliver aboard his Beneteau 36.7 *Patriot*. Third place went to Paul & Rachel Gillette's *Atlantic Union* from Pensacola.

As always, the race committee did a yeoman's job of pulling together a first rate event. Regatta Co-Chairmen Guy Brierre from SYC and John Matthews of PYC worked for the better part of a year to ensure that all went smoothly before, during and after the race. Island accommodations were coordinated by Dr. Ed Boos, Communications officer Bill Parson worked around the clock monitoring the boats as they finished, assisted by race committee emeritus members Dick Kammer, Hjalmar Breit and Robin Moyer. Wallace Paletou acted as scoring officer.



Wallace Paletou, left and Commodore Dwight LeBlanc, center, received Distinguished Guest Awards from City of Isla Mujeres