

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LIGHTNING CLASS RIDES HIS _____ DOWN THE GRAND CANYON ON A MULE NAMED SUG

by Donald Delorme

Each year when we take a major trip we try to get in some sightseeing. When I first started sailing and traveling, we were usually so rushed that after the Regattas we got in the car and shot back as fast as we could. Recently we have been trying to see more and more of the country, as we travel about it, and have been doing better and better. This year Wanda outdid herself. She decided that the best thing to see on the way back from California was the Grand Canyon. Very early in the game she wrote and got reservations for the mule ride down, staying overnight and the mule ride back out in the morning. Would I go? Sure, what the heck. If they will drive the bus to California, I will go down the mule ride.

I did not know what a mule was. I thought a mule was a burro, a little tiny thing I sat on and would drag my feet on the ground. Also, I had no idea how sensational the Grand Canyon is, but more later.

After we finished with the trophy presentation and shook hands with all our good friends in California, we drove almost out of state that night. The next morning we got up and drove through the low lands of Arizona to the Grand Canyon where we met Wanda's sister, who had flown out for the sole purpose of doing this. I was obviously overwhelmed with the size of this Grand Canyon not realizing it was over 200 miles long and up to 20 miles wide at its widest place, plus a mile and a half deep in most areas with the Colorado River rolling through it.

The area has been developed superbly with great care being taken not to be over developed. We had a very nice dinner at one of the two or three hotels there and got to bed early for our ride down the Grand Canyon.

After jogging in the morning, we arrived at the mule staging area with all our proper gear. One just does not arrive with improper gear; one must have a hat, certain type, must stay on head; personal belongings in a small plastic bag; and a little money. I almost fell over when I saw the size of these animals. They were bigger than a horse and did not look as bright as a basset hound. They had a lot of trouble convincing several of them they should let someone get on their back. As we waited, terrified, for our turn, one articulate lady was starting down with a previous group. They get you all on the mules and then they just start right over the edge of a cliff on a sort-of-a-path which is the way the thing goes. As she went over the edge she broke up the world by screaming "Holy----" and then another word which loosely translates to poop. We watched them descend down the Grand Canyon as our eyes bulged bigger and our hearts thumped harder and faster. They finally took our group in, we were the last, and they assigned us our mules. They asked everybody how much they weighed, why I don't know, because they gave the biggest one to 135 lb. me. In any event, they said, "You take that big black one over there." I heard the mule-tenders talking amongst themselves and they said,

"That sure is a big mule, Old Sug," and one said, "Yep, it's at least 30 hands high," at least I think that's what I heard him say. By now, you know I do not know much about mules. I am now one longways up in the sky. They got everybody else loaded on these mules and our mules start off down the Grand Canyon which is just about as mountain as anything you'd want to see.

My mule, who not only is the biggest, is also the stupidest. It does not seem to care about the beautiful sights of the Grand Canyon. It does not care about staying in line behind the other mules. All it wants to do is eat little shrubs, bushes and trees. I spend most of my time on the way down and on the way up trying to keep his head following the back end of the mule in front.

The ride down is absolutely spectacular. About 90% of the time you are riding on clear, open paths and 10% of the time you are hanging off cliffs with sheer drops of 1,000 or 10,000 feet, they seem, below. They keep telling us how surefooted these mules are. If mine is so surefooted, why does it keep stumbling all the time? I keep looking for the carcasses of the people that have fallen off the cliff and the mules also. Fortunately, for me, I don't see any. The view of the rocks and down the canyon is absolutely spectacular and also the view of the rim which is rapidly disappearing is similarly spectacular with the beautiful sky and sun. Our leader is a native named Bill. He said we could call him anything but a rangler and then he wouldn't tell me why. We stop about half way down and had lunch. I kiss the ground. It is getting quite warm now as you get down into the canyon. He explains to us that there will be several places on the way where it may get very hot. One they call the furnace. He doesn't have to tell me when we get there. We ride down along the Colorado River which is just beautiful and I feel happy and relieved that we're there. Then they take us right back up, about half way up over the worst bunch of cliffs I ever saw, and then down through a tunnel. Unfortunately my mule is 30 hands high and the tunnel is only 28. I have to kiss the mule's neck all the way through the dingbat tunnel scraping my butt on the tunnel roof which is just plain rock. We go across a bridge, which mules do not like, which is not good. If you are riding on a mule that is not happy, it does not take long to know you are unhappy also. We survive that and we get down to the base camp where we are going to stay for the night.

It's unbelievable, like going back 100 years in time. We have these little cabins that have been there since the turn of the century and a hunting lodge where Theodore Roosevelt stayed. They have all these pictures and books that these old folks signed. We had a super dinner and had a few minutes of comradarie with the people that rode down all feeling we have accomplished something great like flying over the

ocean ourselves, even though we just hung on to the back of a mule. We even met a member of the House of Parliament from London. The Honorable Kenneth Warren and his family with whom we enjoyed a glass of wine in the evening.

I slept very well that night between sleeping and praying that we get up there safely the next morning. In the morning, I jogged around in the bottom of the canyon in just an unbelievably beautiful atmosphere. We left very early in the morning to get the mules out before it got hot and the way out is almost straight up. It was something like 9½ miles the way we came down and 6½ miles the way we went up.

The mules, sensing that the thing would be over, were quite anxious to climb back out, and they do this very easily. The way back out had a couple of turns around cliffs that even scared them. We were back up to the top by 11 o'clock and we spent the day walking along the rim enjoying the view of the canyon. We saw some other Lightnings in the parking lot and realized that the Buckles and the Curries must be enjoying the canyon somewhere. The next morning I flew back to Washington and Wanda and Don took off with the bus.

I can hardly wait for the next long trip to see what is in store for us in the way of sightseeing. I am not much for recommending tour sights since I know nothing about being a tourist, but I'll guarantee you if you ever get a chance to see the Grand Canyon either ride down it on a mule or plan to hike down it. It will be one of the most spectacular things you have ever done.



THE "PSYC" OF SAILBOAT RACING

by Jay Lutz

When I was asked if I would write an article on this topic, I thought to myself, "What do I know about the "psyc" of sailboat racing?" All I do is hop into a boat, trim the sails, and go!" Then I started to think about it. Why are the same people winning regatta after regatta? Is it because of their preparation? Their crew work? Is it their boat? Is it their sails? Are they just better sailors? Why is it, no matter what type of wind you have in a regatta, the same sailors are always up at the top?

I'm sure all these things help a person win, but not one factor helps you win as much as what's in your head. There are probably ten boats in every North American competition that have good enough preparation and sailing abilities to win the championship, but only one person can win and that's the person who is psychologically ready.

Different types of people need different types of "psyching themselves up". Some need to be bold and brash, wanting people around to be awed by their undaunted fear. This not

only "psychs" the opponents out, but also builds an inner confidence in the skipper himself that puts him above the rest.

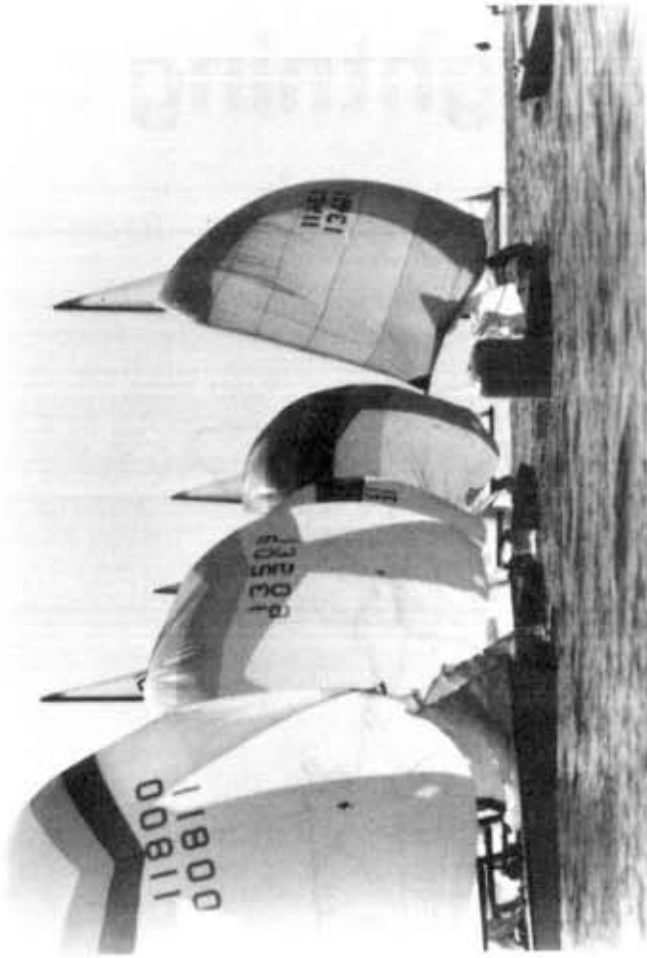
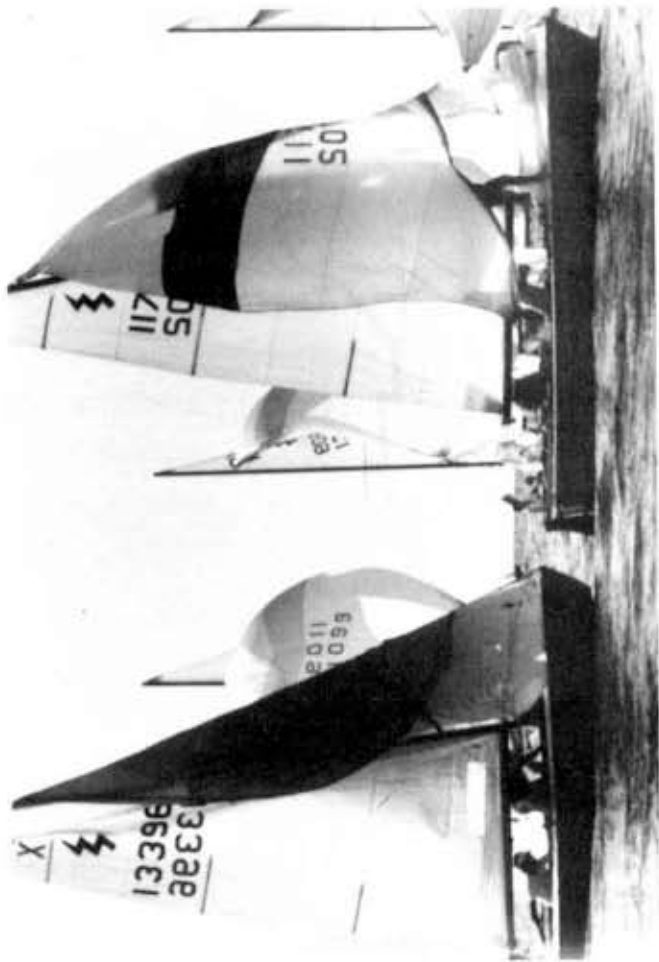
Other skippers degrade themselves, stating that preparation was nil and that they anticipate they will not be a threat in the regatta. That's when they lull the competition into not regarding them as a threat and — WAM — they go and have 3 bullets to win the series.

Crew "psych" is another important ingredient for a winning boat. The crew should always add input to the skipper's ears, whether he listens or not is another story, but at least he knows the crew is there to sail.

Having good preparation in boat and crew is one of the best "psych jobs" for the skipper there is in racing. When his worries are only getting good starts, concentrating on sailing a good race and winning, it gives him the advantage of psychologically attacking his opponents and the inevitable winning of the war on the race course.



Photo Credit Hank Fastenau (San Diego)



Spinnakers at the N.A.'s

Photos by Hank Fastenau

