

## **Tovells Dominate 2016 Midwesterns** by Allen Chauvenet

Craig and Cindy Tovell (C-Monkeys; 4200) dominated the 2016 Midwesterns with an impressive string of first place finishes. A broken outhaul at the start of the first Sunday race meant that they had to count their 2nd in the final race along with 8 wins to emerge 22 points ahead of the runner up team (and former Midwestern Champs) Lon Ethington and Meg Gimmi (5070) of St. Pete, Florida in Prize Pig. While Craig Tovell has won this event many times (including last year with his wife Cindy), seldom has he put up such an amazing set of finishes as this year. We were pleased to have 15 boats racing with 8 out of town boats joining 7 Hoover Sailing Club (HSC) Fleet #60 sailors.

The RC, headed by PRO (505 & Windmill sailor) Graham Alexander did an excellent job in dealing with shifting and challenging conditions. Two races were run Saturday morning in light (5-7) airs and in both the Tovells not only had excellent speed, they found all the key shifts. Both races were run over a Triangle WLW course.

In the first race, long-time local sailors Mike & Dixie Michelson (4804) picked out the shifts very well and pushed the Tovells around the triangle. National & 2016 Midwinter runners-up Chris & Nancy Demler (5705) had "Speed Bump" moving well and eventually got by the Mickelsons to claim the runner up spot. Allen Chauvenet of Washington D.C. and Sarah Steward (5586, Beauty & The Beast) won a tight battle for "best of the rest" while Lon & Meg rounded out the top 5.

The second race again found the Tovells off to an early lead which they simply widened throughout the race. Nate & Tim Bachman (4689) in "Blue Muse" took the runner up spot ahead of Pat & Janet Huntley from JY15 NAs Champ of Erie, Pennsylvania (5703) in "Grafitti" represented the the new Erie PA fleet. The Demlers recorded another excellent race for 4th position while Meg & Lon were again 5th.

The lunch break gave all a chance to re-organize their efforts! Everyone enjoyed the always outstanding Hoover lunch spread before heading out for afternoon racing.

Winds were just a bit stronger and steadier (still quite shifty) after lunch as the committee again set a Triangle WLW course. Lon & Meg came out and sailed with great skill and determination to turn the weather mark first and retain the lead at the jibe mark. The Tovells got by on the run to the leeward mark and were able to protect and slightly extend their lead throughout the rest of the race. Lon & Meg held 2nd followed by the Bachmans, Huntleys and B&B in 5th. The Demlers slipped to 7th when Nancy exacerbated a shoulder injury, leading them to sail in and miss the remaining races.

The 4th race saw a similar course, but with starboard roundings. Carroll Sparwasser of Rock Hall, Maryland and local Hallie Bourne (3800; Apollo's Chariot) found boat speed and the left side of the course to be first around the weather mark followed closely by Allen & Sarah who used the same strategy. The Tovells came over to the left in time to round 3rd. There were no

place changes on the reach but on the run except the Tovells were able to take the lead followed around by B&B with Carroll & Hallie now 3rd. The Tovells slowly extended their lead but B&B stayed close enough to make them pay attention! In a tight battle for 3rd, Lon & Meg edged the Huntley team while the Bachmans came from behind to take 5th from Carroll & Hallie. Unfortunately, Tim was hit by a rapidly retracting whisker pole; while ultimately not a serious injury, the Bachmans missed the next two races and had to count a DNS. The Crotty (Mike & Matt) brothers from the Erie fleet (having driven all night after putting together their "new" Windmill) made it out to start their first Windmill race, finishing just behind the Mickelsons.

The fifth race repeated the same course, again with starboard roundings. The Tovells battled with Allen & Sarah around the triangle with much of the fleet close behind. On the long beat the defending 2015 NA Champs, Ralph and Matthew Sponar of Rock Hall, Maryland found all the shifts and made great gains to turn the weather mark just behind the Tovells. The run and final beat saw the Tovells hold the lead with the Sponars followed by Allen & Sarah who held off Graffiti and Pig Headed.

The sixth and final race on Saturday reverted to port roundings but was shortened to WLW. Many boats were very closely bunched approaching the leeward mark but the Tovells alertly jibed to port and passed behind B&B to get the critical inside overlap. The final beat was very tense as the Tovells came from the left and tacked to place a perfect cover on the Sponars and B&B. The scramble had Tovells, Sponars, Lon & Meg, Huntleys and B&B finishing in that order within seconds--by hull color in the absence of time for numbers!

Saturday evening and night found everyone enjoying the always spectacular Hoover food, drink and hospitality events in preparation for Sunday races. Kudos to all the Fleet #60 and HSC members who pull this off every year!

Sunday saw similar conditions and courses. The race committee held 3 Triangle WLW races followed by a final shorter WLW as on Saturday. Just after the first start, the Tovells had an outhaul failure leading to DNF. The Bachmans sailed an outstanding race to win with the Sponars taking 2nd again followed by Carroll/Hallie, Allen/Sarah & the Huntleys.

The Tovells won the next two races with the Bachmans and Lon/Meg showing great results behind them. This left Lon/Meg in command for the runner-up spot and the Bachmans with an outside shot at 3rd even counting their DNS. However, although the Bachmans won the final race, becoming the only team to beat the Tovells in any race, this was not quite enough; they did pass Sarah/Allen (who hit the weather mark with their boom) by a point but were still two points behind the Sponars & Huntleys. Their string of 2nd place finishes gave the current National champions the 3rd place regatta finish.

It was another outstanding event at the longest running Windmill regatta sponsored by the same club/fleet. As always, everyone owes a debt to those who made it possible and looks forward to having even more boats sailing next year.