

Right, the 11-strong J/105 class charges across the start line with surprisingly no over-earlies and most surprisingly, no yelling. By week's end, however, the battle will undoubtedly be fought in gladiator—yet also Corinthian—style.

Below left and right, thanks to MYSAIL, the CSR Kids Camp boats this year are Hobies, new to some, yet will be old favorites to all once they're mastered by Saturday—and, as all Hobie sailors know, will be loved eternally.

Bottom left, a stately Jeanneau, Leucothea II opens the day's races as an entry in the hotly contested Cruising class, which includes race week veteran Teddy Bear, now equipped with three generations of sailors.

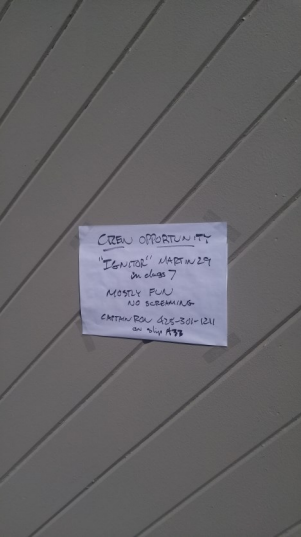
Bottom right, another familiar race week contestant, Ignitor, in Class 7, puts the word out. Barely out of the money on Wednesday, they're looking to secure a pickle dish or two.



Photo: Vicky MacFeidh



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Editorial/Publishing:
Vicky MacFeidh,
Liza Tewell
Press Crew: Dennis Caputo,
Dave Klein, Erik Scofield
Photography: Jan Anderson
www.janpix.smugmug.com

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The day before the day before the day before the last day of Whidbey Island Race Week dawned with broken clouds and broken hearts. But the sun that is setting on one of the most magnificent eras in modern sailboat racing is dawning on a new chapter. For 37 years Oak Harbor has hosted epic (and true) race weeks, with dramas played out in Penn Cove and, like Wednesday's racing, in Saratoga's fickle passage. Next year the stories will play out off the waters of Point Roberts. This week, however, the stage is still the aquatic geography off Whidbey Island's right coast.

After an opening evening of renewing cross-border friendships while dancing to live music on the lawn of the Oak Harbor Yacht Club, and a night of crispy winds and an unexpected rainfall, for the first day of WIRW 2019 Charley Rathkopf's committee led the fleet of 61 US and Canadian boats south into what most sailors were hoping was the last day of an unusually cool and cloudy July.

With several one-design classes which include fierce J/105 and J/80 contingents, plus a cruising class and PHRF handi-caps ranging in size from sprightly Moore 24s to majestic Hanse 455s, the day's courses tested the crews' fortitude and patience (no)thanks to dying breezes and a 10-foot tidal exchange. While Thursday may see more daring-do, Wednesday's uncertain waters and wind caused skippers to greet the week with conservative starts and no over-earlies. One notable exception was the Canadian-Farr 30, K.I.S.S., who port-tacked Class 1 under the tactical eye of WIRW stalwart Jeff Janders, though it was fellow South Sounder, John Hoag, whose crack crew got his 1D/35, Shrek, to the leeward mark first. Let the games begin!

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Above left, the J/105 Dulcinea, squeaks out a third-place spot in Monday's race.

Above right, fresh from a one-for-the-books Transpac crossing, Ullman Sail's Chuck Skewes presents Jennifer Hoag's Shrek youth team on Chinook their first of what will be many awards as they cement the beginning of their reign of terror.

Below left, the Aphrodite 101, Elixir placed fourth on Wednesday, hot on the heels of Chinook.

Below right, 2018 Whidbey Island Race Week overall winner Mad Dash do what they do best—win, and have fun.

