

# 23rd Annual Cat Gathering

At Arey's Pond on Cape Cod

By Robin Davis

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Peter McClennen's Wianno Senior *Sea Lion* and *Brigadoon* getting down to it.



Richard Rodgers and friends in *Paws*.



Drew Staniar in *Pandora*.

Starting mark lineup.



The celebration of the annual 23rd Cat Gathering began on August 14, 2015, with a warm up race in which 28 catboats and two traditional boats, the Wianno Senior *Sea Lion*, and Robin Reese in her slick and salty *Baybird*, participated. In one hour and 20 minutes the finishers crossed the line, led by *Sea Lion*, Robin in her *Baybird* and the APBY 19' Caracal design, *An Cat Maher*. It was perfect Pleasant Bay weather, 80°, clear skies and southwest winds at 10 knots.

Cat Gathering participants were lucky enough to wake up to another perfect day on Saturday, August 15. By noon, just under two hours before the start sequence, 92 boats were registered and 87 of them were catboats. Prior to the beginning of the race Little Pleasant Bay was brimming with more than 80 boats dodging each other in 10 to 12 knots of southwest breeze. The larger boats, including Marshall 22s, Baybirds and other traditional rigs, were preparing for their 1:40pm start. By 2:10pm all sailors were underway.

For those watching the event it was a beautiful sight as gaff rigged cats tacked through the Narrows, a 300 yard wide channel bounded by Simpson Island that separates Little Pleasant Bay from Big Pleasant Bay. Several decided to avoid the Narrows, choosing instead to sail around the island which added another dynamic and spectacular view as catboats came into Big Pleasant Bay from all angles as they tacked their way to Mark A.

With ideal conditions we had record breaking finish times, led by *Pandora*, the Bernie Huddleston 20' catboat design, as overall top finisher in one hour and seven minutes. Joel Williams led the Catboat 14' and under class with the best time of one hour and 20 minutes in his Arey's Pond 14 *Scout*.

On the evening of the race participants gathered for the award ceremony. The Bert Jackson Quartet entertained all with a wonderful evening of jazz while various dishes were served to the salty sailors. Renowned Cape Cod artist Robert Cardinal captured the essence of the Cat Gathering in an oil on canvas painting which was featured on the awards.



Herb McClennen in *Lestrus*.



Phil Dickinson in *Elle*.



Scott Brown letting it all hang out in *An Cat Maher*, an APBY 19.



Carl Bechgaard in *Spinach*.