

PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate release:

For information, contact Nick Patch at nickp@lcmm.org, 475-2022; online www.lcmm.org .

Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's Challenge Race Spirited, Wavy, and Fun

Over 70 rowers and paddlers dug deep in the waters of Lake Champlain on Sunday in the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's 21st Annual Challenge Race. The race, an annual event for 21 years, has a distinctly communal spirit – with a delicious and bountiful potluck picnic afterwards – while also fueling participants' desire to fiercely compete.

“Everything was going for us today: we had a great turnout, superb weather, and spirited youth and adult competitors from the Champlain Valley as well as from Massachusetts. It takes a community to pull off such a successful event,” said Nick Patch, LCMM’s Director of Outdoor Education.

Many of the boats rowed by teams of 4 to 6 people are built here at the Maritime Museum by students from Addison County high schools. The youth boatbuilding program – Champlain Longboats – has constructed 21 wooden boats, many of which took part in Sunday’s race. A number of solo participants brought their unique versions of muscle-powered boats, from kayaks to surf-skis. Over 10-knot winds and 2-3-foot waves proved challenging for some of the slimmer, lighter craft, but the larger rowing vessels plowed ahead.

The weekend began on Saturday with the arrival of teams from Hull and Gloucester, MA. They were joined by rowing team members from Vergennes and members of LCMM’s Community Rowing Club and spent the day in light-hearted, informal cross-lake rowing, swimming and picnicking.

This warm and welcoming spirit extended throughout the weekend. “The teamwork of the entire rowing community was evident, especially in races where rowers from Vermont and Massachusetts were randomly mixed into new teams,” commented Community Rowing Club coordinator Lisa Percival. “After the racing was over, people lingered for lunch and a chance to continue visiting.” The LCMM connection has a new dimension this summer for the rowing team from Duxbury, MA. At the end of the racing weekend, they took home their newly purchased gig “Mad Martha,” which was completed and launched by LCMM’s Champlain Longboats program in May. “It can be hard to say goodbye to our newest boat,” Patch acknowledges, “but the sale of boats helps fund our youth education programs. All of the boats we have built are still actively being used, and it’s great to meet them again when we travel to races around the region.”

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Skiffs line up for the start of Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's 2017 Challenge Race. Photo credit: Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, Matt Witten.

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Rowing gigs navigate the turn around the marker buoy during Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's three mile Challenge Race. Photo credit: Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, Matt Witten.

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Jim Fredericks cruises to victory on his surf ski in Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's 2017 Challenge Race. Photo credit: Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, Matt Witten.

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After the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum Challenge Race, the rowing team from Duxbury took home their newly purchased pilot gig "Mad Martha," seen here being rowed by the Champlain Longboats crew that built her. Photo credit: Buzz Kuhns

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