

Front Page Article from The Maui News, Wednesday, July 22, 1970
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Long Wait for 'Greybeard' Crew

It's one of those rare times when sailing instructions are far from favorable and there is strong speculation among the sea-faring fraternity gathering in West Maui about now about how much sooner the "Greybeard" would have arrived at her destination under "normal systems."

The 73-foot ketch, skippered by Lol Killam, who has sailed in all three Victoria-to-Maui races, chalked up an elapsed time of little over 15 days with her 12:45 p.m. arrival last Thursday.

At this writing, Tuesday morning, none of the ships in the fleet of 23 yachts were in sight although there were numerous reports that the "Satin Doll", for one, would be crossing the finish line at Black Rock before noon.

The "Porpoise III", Bill Killam's 1968 winner, radioed her estimated time of arrival as "sometime Wednesday" (today). Radioman Brian Lagdon, aboard the "Porpoise III", has been giving daily reports on the progress of the race. On the receiving end here is Larry Wong of the Maui Amateur Radio Corporation, whose messages have been helpful to Maui News – KMVI and officials of the Lahaina Yacht Club in plotting the fleet's course.

While no official tabulation has been completed, there is believed to be little hope than any of her rivals would be able to better the "Greybeard's" time for "corrected" honors in the handicap ratings.

Reportedly close behind the "Satin Doll", a 37-foot sloop skippered by T. Bush and out of the Corinthian Yacht Club, were the "Celeste", a 57-foot yawl; "Cubara", a 38-foot sloop; "Aukele", a 40-foot sloop; and "Hasty", a 45-foot sloop.

"Light wind continuing all over ... lengthy trip for all ... food and water okay" were the messages relayed by the "Porpoise III" on Monday afternoon.

Meanwhile, the crew of the "Greybeard" was enjoying a long, relaxing wait and also glad to see land again after the 2,300-mile journey were the Canadian Navy sailors aboard the escort vessel, "St. Anthony", which docked at Kahului Harbor last Saturday morning.

The 152-foot deep sea tug, commanded by Captain H. Hooper, headed out to sea again on Tuesday to maintain closer communication with the incoming fleet. On board was a non-crewman, Dr. Bob Widman, who was transferred from the "Satin Doll" early in the race when he became seriously ill. The Seattle dentist was in a semi-conscious state for 38 hours but is now in good health.

Three youngsters and their fathers are manning the "Whale's Tale", a Cal 30 and one of five Division III boats. Among them is 21-year-old Ann Black, a member of the U.S. ski team and rated one of the top 10 current skiers in the country. Her 16-year-old brother, Hunter, and March Doherty, also 16, are with her.

Lol Killam, who skippered the "Velaris" to a second place finish last year behind his brother, explained that the weather systems were not normal. "It's an unusual year but that's what makes it fun", he said.

The crews of many of the ships still at sea may not think so, however. Quite a few were still reported in the "Pacific High" area, a long distance away from catching the trade winds.

The "Greybeard" had her best runs the last two days, covering about 300 miles in the last 24 hours of her trip.