

Psyché's Song strong in seventh

By SEAN LEWIS

NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENT

Ask Wann and Judy Rawles, and they might tell you that Hemingway got it wrong, so did Herman Melville. Sailing is not a quest for a great white whale, nor is it a solitary man's struggle. To the proud owners of Psyché's Song and partners of 42 years understand that sailing is an opportunity to spend a few hours on the sea where nothing matters but jibing, tacking and hoisting the spinnaker.

With Wann at the helm, the Rawles and the crew of Psyché's Song made the best out of the sunny weather and moderate wind for a strong outing in a "fun race" as part of the Santa Barbara Yacht Club's Wet Wednesday races.

"This year I have turned out to be a really mellow guy," said Wann, who has skippered the boat since he and his wife bought it in December of 1990. "Last year it was a zero-sum game, this year I have just sort of taken a lot of pictures and enjoyed the sights. It's just good to be out on the water. That's what the racing does in the middle of the week is it gives us an excuse to go out on the water — otherwise we'd just be home watching a

Dodger game or something."

Psyché's Song finished in seventh place, just nine seconds behind the sixth-place finisher Liberty, but dropped to ninth in the final standings due to the fact that the H Fleet in which it sails is a handicap fleet that adds time to some of the faster boats (such as Tranquility, the race's winner that took first even with its considerable handicap). After a slow start near the back of the pack, Psyché's Song was able to overtake several other crews when it raised its turquoise spinnaker above the bow.

"We had a pretty good crew today... this is good wind for us," Wann said. "If it had been between 15 and 20 it would have been really competitive and we would have done really well. I can't blame the weather, I just blame the start. That was skipper error."

Mark Viney was the man in charge of keeping the spinnaker in the wind, and he did a marvelous job of it. But it was Pat Mullen whom Judy and Wann dubbed the MVP of the boat. The Rawles' longtime sailing partner made the tactical decisions on the boat, and helped newcomers Cher Macho and Max Wiedmann, as well as a clumsy journalist and photographer, understand their roles on the water and

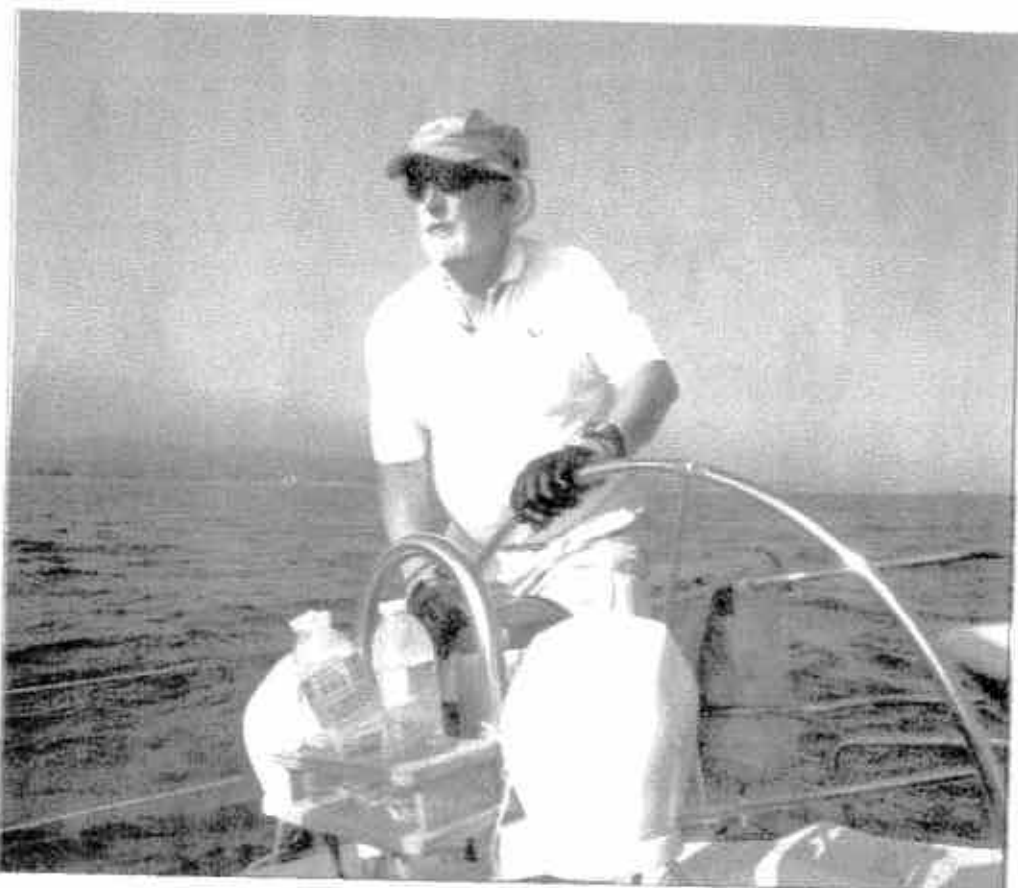
which ropes to pull.

"We have the best crew," Judy said. "We have wonderful people with whom we sail. Pat has sailed with us from almost the beginning out here, and he sailed with us when it was just the three of us. Wann and I used to sail the boat with just the two of us believe it or not, but now we're a bit older and a tad slower."

The race was undoubtedly important. Catching some of the faster boats was essentially impossible, but Wann and the crew worked hard in an effort to beat Liberty. Wann's competitive nature couldn't be completely suppressed by a season of smooth sailing, but when Psyché's Song was safely docketed it was over 40 years of sailing with his wife that got the old skipper's emotions stirring.

"It just makes me sniff a little bit, because we think about what it would be like if we didn't have a boat," Wann said, his emotions starting to get the best of him. "The two of us have always had a boat. I don't want to think about how many linear feet of fiberglass we've owned in 42 years. It's been fun, and it is still a lot of fun."

email: sports@newspress.com



MATT WIER / NEWS-PRESS

Wann Rawles mans the helm of Psyché's Song during Wednesday's race.