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From left, Brian Nickel, Metro's John Drayton, Greg Eggstaff and "Hubie" Laugham wave as they come into the dock at Oahu following their 2,250 mile journey from Los Angeles to Hawaii. "Ragtime" finished 4th of 8 in its division in the Transpacific Yacht Race.



Photos: www.transpacificyc.org

Metro's John Drayton Completes Transpacific Yacht Race; 'Ragtime' Finishes 4th

By JIMMY STROUP

(Aug. 17, 2007) Metro's John Drayton, who competed in the Transpacific Yacht Race from Los Angeles to Oahu, is back in one piece. He compared the "nerve-wracking" but exhilarating experience to the isolation and intense concentration required to climb a mountain.

"Ragtime," the sloop Drayton navigated for the race, finished 4th out of 8 in the group that left the same day, and 33rd out of the more than 70 yachts that competed in the staggered-start month-long event. The race started for Drayton on July 15 and ended at 5:30 a.m. in Oahu on July 27.



Ragtime, center, foreground, set sail July 15 from Point Fermin. The 44th Transpacific Yacht Race to Hawaii had 73 starters. Photo by Martin Hochman.

"There was no wind," said Drayton, Metro vehicle acquisition manager. "Everyone who started with us struggled."

"Ragtime" spent the first two days laboring to get out of the local area. Wind speeds were around 3 knots, or 4 mph, for the beginning of the race, so Drayton and crew were forced to wait it out and hope for better winds in the latter parts of the race.



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Not enough room

"Most of the time we were going about 8 knots, which wasn't bad, but we wanted to be going 12," he said. "At the end, we didn't have enough room to catch up to the boats ahead of us, even though the last three days we really were moving good."

The crew's finish – a day or two later than expected – was nonetheless heralded with cheers from the 100 or so friends and family who had gathered at 5:30 a.m. for "Ragtime's" arrival, complete with Mai Tai's and the spirit of celebration.

"It's a very well-known boat," Drayton said. "It was neat to see all the people who came out to celebrate with 'Ragtime.' "

Drayton's future sailing plans include rejoining the "Ragtime" crew for an entry into the "Big Boat" series regatta out of San

Francisco in September, though he won't need to miss work for that one.

And as for next year, Drayton hasn't decided if he'll compete in the Transpac again. For now, he'll be happy to take a vacation around Christmas that doesn't involve 11 days of constant work with no showers and dried food.

