



I'm profoundly honoured to receive your most prestigious *BARTON CUP*. Please accept my apologies for not being able to join your festive Annual Dinner.

Solo sailing has always been part of my life. In my desire for salt water I sailed first down the river *DONAU*, then around the world twice. Until recently I thought the biggest challenge was my single-handed boat building which from a bare aluminium hull to the seaworthy home kept me quiet for three years.

I named her *NEHAJ*, that translates to: 'Feel safe here, Do not be afraid'. She has proved to be a seaworthy and strong boat. The maiden voyage was over the top of *Iceland* in 2015, then to *New Zealand* via the *Southern Ocean* on a 133-day passage.

My husband and I have a unique marriage. We left *Tasmania* at the same time, but we chose very different routes towards the *Atlantic*: He headed for *Cape Horn* to leave the *Americas* to the Left, while I had an attempt of the *Northwest Passage* in my mind - to leave the *Americas* to the Right.

As is my nature I kept quiet about it. Being 'A First' was not my intention. I was well aware that single-handing the *Northwest Passage* is asking for trouble and I give the high latitudes my full respect, however, my sailing experience of 200.000 miles and *Nehaj's* solid construction encouraged me.

After 10.000 miles across the *Pacific Ocean*, the real adventure began in Alaska. It was an easy start in the ice-free *Bering Sea* in 24 hours of daylight and settled weather. Gradually conditions tightened as the short northern summer proceeded. *Victor Wejer* was supporting me with weather and ice information and pulled several magic tricks out of his experienced Arctic hat.

In *Franklin Strait* the ice unexpectedly blocked the way ahead and behind, we were stuck for nearly two weeks. Wintering in the wilderness off the *Boothia Peninsula* was looming, but in a brief opening I reached *Bellot Strait*. By September the short Arctic summer was finished and new snow lay down to the sea. *Lancaster Sound* brought freezing spray and the first severe autumn gale made me search for shelter 60 mile up a fjord at the village of *Arctic Bay*.

On the 17th of September we crossed the Arctic Circle again after 3.683 miles. Due to changeable weather and fewer calms than average we managed to be under sail 75% of the Northwest Passage. In my opinion we were often too close to land and in too shallow water, but both was dwarfed by the danger of sea ice and Atlantic ice bergs. My sense of 'good seamanship' was often crying out loud in protest.

Sailing down *Baffin Bay* and *Davis Strait* brought gales and dark nights in ice berg waters. Due to rough seas radar was of no help. At night I hove too and I was scared, but the Northern Lights were spectacular. It was a race to *Nova Scotia* and I counted every single one of the 30 degrees in Latitude. On the last day of October I reached *Lunenburg* and decided on wintering in this lovely little town.

I had abused *Nehaj* badly, but she showed not a scratch. In one severe ice-collision she didn't spring a leak or loose her rigging. In fact there was no working list at all. Time for me to reflect on our journey over the top of the world.

While this passage provided *Nehaj* and me with incredible challenges it has also rewarded us with an unparalleled sense of accomplishment and appreciation of the boundless adventures the seas have to offer.

From *Tasmania* to *Nova Scotia* in 9 months we clocked 16.240 miles and 115 days at sea.

My future sailing plans? Sorry, but again, as is my nature, I prefer to be quiet about it. Thank-you for sharing my story.