

## SAILING

## Sailors with disabilities gather in Vancouver to compete in Mobility Cup

BY DENISE RYAN  
VANCOUVER SUN

Sailors from around the globe will be in Vancouver this week to participate in the 20th annual Mobility Cup, an international regatta for disabled sailors.

The event was founded in Vancouver by Sam Sullivan after the Man in Motion World Tour's Rick Hansen gave him an adaptive sailboat. Hansen had received the boat from then-British prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

Sullivan, a former Vancouver mayor who uses a wheelchair, used the boat to launch the Disabled Sailing Club of British Columbia in 1989.

Among this week's competitors is Terry LeBlanc, 57, who became quadriplegic after a diving accident at the age of 25.

LeBlanc has been involved with the club since 1994, when he first moved to Vancouver from Nova Scotia.

Initially he struggled with the restrictions imposed by the wheelchair, and accessibility issues.

"Sailing means freedom to me. You leave the wheelchair behind."

Sailors use a "sip n puff" interface, a chest-mounted control through which they sip air to bring sails in, and puff to let them out.

LeBlanc says it's easier to sail the Martin 16 outfitted with the sip n puff controls than it is to work a

wheelchair.

"With one straw I sip to starboard and turn the rudder. With the other straw I control the sails. It's very intuitive."

LeBlanc's first Mobility Cup was in 1995 in Victoria.

Being able to sail and compete was a revelation to him.

"At that time in Nova Scotia, I couldn't even get on a boat as a passenger," he said.

The Mobility Cup has been held in Vancouver four times, as well as in Victoria, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

LeBlanc travelled to Halifax to compete there in 2007.

To return as a sailor to the community where once he couldn't even get a

ride as a passenger on a boat was a joyful experience for him.

LeBlanc said many communities across Canada still lack basic accessibility in transportation and livability for the disabled.

"What this does for the disabled community is it enables people to come here from smaller communities to see how wonderful it is to have accessible transit and all the other wonderful services we have in Vancouver," said LeBlanc.

This year's event takes place at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, Jericho station, and runs from today through Friday.

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Terry LeBlanc says sailing freedom to him. He is in take part in this week's M

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you actually understand.

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## IN BRIEF

## Gummi bears LSD lo

The discovery of LSD in a bag of gummi bears has prompted Cranbrook police to warn parents in the Kootenai region. Police found the bag in a car in October, months ago, but recently got results back from the lab.

"LSD is a psychedelic drug that affects the brain, often causing psychological problems that alter the thought process," Cpl. Chris Faulkner said in a release. "While it is not necessarily dangerous, a person who is under the influence of LSD may become irrationally aggressive. If a young child were to consume a gummi bear, the effects could be dangerous."

Kim Bolan, Vancouver Sun