

## THE MOSSEL RACE



The start of the race.

### STEERING THE BIGLIFT WOMEN - by Erik Fleumer

The Mossel (Mussel) race is part of a yearly event in the third weekend of July organized by the fishing village of Bruinisse. This three day event marks the start of the Mussel season. You may call the Mussel race a Muscle race as well, because the rowing teams don't shoot over the water in needle-shaped skiffs like you see in the Olympics, but participate in a national competition for "die-hard's" rowing a sloop.

The BigLift club "Masrova" rows a former rescue boat from the weather observation vessel "Cumulus".

There are two teams, a men's team and a women's team. The sloop is painted in BigLift colours and during the winter season BigLift/Splithoff provides shelter at the Amsterdam office so we can carry out the necessary maintenance.



Just after the start.

Last May, I was invited to join the team as a supporter on the safety boat that followed the sloop while rowing the 30+ km so-called HT-race. The HT-race from Harlingen to Terschelling across the Waddenzee is organized yearly during the holidays around Ascension Day. The last time I rowed the H-T race myself was some 25 years ago when I was attending the maritime college in Amsterdam.

On Terschelling the BigLift team also participated in the "Bungee" race. The sloop is tied to a bungee cord and the team that stretches the cord the most is the winner. For this short race I was asked to join the men's team since they were one short. We didn't win, but the whole race-weekend made me enthusiastic... again. At the end of that weekend I became an aspirant club member. A week later during my first training through the 'grachten' of Amsterdam I learned that rowing is not that good for people with damaged backs, so I started paddling my canoe around the polder near my house, to train my back and prepare for rowing in the sloop. In July, I was asked to help out again, not to row the sloop, but to join as a helmsman for the women's team at the