

# Man versus nature



KIRA HORVATH/Staff phot

Hamilton resident Joe Harris is planning to set sail on his 50-foot boat, The Gryphon Solo, for a solo around-the-world race. When not at sea Harris docks his boat on Rowes Wharf in Boston.

## FLYING SOLO Man prepares for eight-month sailing race around the world

BY BEN CASSELMAN  
STAFF WRITER

Docked at Rowes Wharf in Boston, Joe Harris' boat seems small.

The MBTA ferry dwarfs the 50-foot boat. So does nearly every yacht docked nearby, almost none of which has traveled more than a few miles out to sea.

Harris' single-masted sailboat, the Gryphon Solo, seems even smaller in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, as he can attest. A month ago, the Hamilton resident was aboard the boat, alone, with no land in

sight.

"Fifteen hundred miles from help, it's a little intimidating," Harris said. "Whatever comes up, you've got to deal with it."

Harris, 44, sailed from Plymouth, England to Boston Harbor as part of the "Transat" — a transatlantic race that is among the toughest solo races in the world. Harris finished second out of the four boats in his class.

Difficult as it was, it was just a warm-up for Harris' real goal: the 5 Oceans Race, an around-the-world-alone race that kicks off in 2006 and could take eight months to complete. The Transat took Harris 16 days; each

leg of the 5 Oceans Race will take twice that.

Racing around the world alone has been a dream of Harris' for 20 years. A real estate executive when on land, Harris has sailed 25,000 miles in the past 15 years.

"I just enjoy the challenge of it, the fact that you have to be able to do everything," Harris said. "I've always had this need to be hands-on, to be self-reliant, and to really kind of test myself. It makes me feel like I'm alive."

Harris said his wife, who enjoys sailing a

Please see **SOLO**, Page 5