

# Past Traditions



Reproduction of water color painting of Optimist Dinghy fleet presented by RYC Women's Association in loving memory of Erica Schwenk (President, 1976), Mitzi and Kurt.

# New Directions

1978 - 2000

Painting donated to Women's  
Association by Franz Schwenk, artist,  
yachtsman, and member since 1967.



Photo by Stan Wright

## RYC CHANGES TO MEET CHANGING TIMES

Our recent clubhouse renovation and decking are symbolic of the directional changes RYC has made during the past quarter century in order to stay contemporary.

Other initiatives and events that have brought positive growth to RYC include:

- managing the Club's financial affairs more like, but not entirely like, a business,
- encouraging and recognizing the growth of women's sailing,
- seeing our sailors compete in the Olympics and other national and world championships,
- continuing to grow our reputation as a world-class regatta center,
- helping to organize and operate a regatta to raise funds for a charity once a year or so,
- the purchase and subsequent development of the Yacht Center facility as a Junior Yacht Club/regatta center,
- encouraging cruising enjoyment, both power and sail, of our members on and beyond Lake Ontario,
- seeing our sailors cruise seemingly to all points of the globe,
- making our clubhouse even more kid friendly,
- introducing the Optimist dinghy program to teach children to sail from age six to 15,

- introducing a small keel boat club racing program,
- a greater emphasis on sail training for adults.

This chapter will describe these developments and other activities, while also honoring our past traditions.

During the late 1970s and 1980s, the Club experienced normal growth and development. Thanks to the efforts of conscientious and dedicated long-range planning committees, the needs of RYC were continually reviewed. Through 1979, the Club was concerned about sheet piling and construction in the west basin, a heating plant and air conditioning for the clubhouse, lighting for the tennis courts, and the growing size of the membership. In December of that year a house on Parkview Terrace was purchased giving great potential for Club expansion.

A major addition to RYC property was the purchase of the Yacht Center in January, 1981. This greatly solidified the boundaries, and allowed for significant improvement in our operations. As has been noted elsewhere, the east basin heads remained a problem. In 1986, this resulted in the formation of the rebirth committee. The full name of this group was RYC East Basin Inc. to Rebuild the Heads. History does not tell us when this organization disbanded, if it ever has.

In September 1987, the LRPC made a recommendation for a significant addition to and renovation of the clubhouse and the rest of the Club's property. This committee's work set the stage for future developments of the Club's facilities, recommending an

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indoor snack bar, new and expanded showers and heads adjacent to the pool, better access for the handicapped, and an expanded kitchen. The clubhouse was painted and new carpeting for downstairs was selected. The north lawn was rebuilt.

Converting the Club to a cashless bar was a topic for serious discussion in April 1988. At the same time the Friday Night Fish Fry Fleet was implemented. This Genoa Only group was to have four races, with three proposed divisions, over a 38-mile course. It seems appropriate at this time to mention that in November 1988, a report was given that the East Basin Heads project was 80 percent complete. Perhaps a conclusion is in sight?

Starting in early 1989, plans were made to improve the main entrance to Club property. A new guardhouse was built, which included a "back flow valve" protecting our surrounding neighbors from any RYC inadvertent outflow. The main roadway was widened and straightened, and consideration was given to implementing a single entrance to Club property, which after evaluation, was rejected. Also, a decision was reached to purchase a Luhrs Alura 30 powerboat to add to the Race Committee fleet. The boat was named George Culp in memory of our 1908 Commodore. Two houses owned by the club on Parkview Terrace were demolished and the RYC office was moved to the remaining house there. At the same time the House Committee was taking bids for equipment to air-condition the kitchen.

Here we go again — in May of 1992 there were active discussions regarding the east basin heads. Things were apparently so bad that an additional \$7,000 expenditure was approved so that immediate corrective measures could be taken. On a more pleasant note, the Club in October of that year gave the International 14 the status of fleet in development.

Normal Club functions continued through 1994. Necessary maintenance items were taken care of. However, the most important activity was the continuous and intense sessions of the long-range planning committee. Finalization of the program to be submitted to the Club membership was of utmost priority. In January, 1995, a new implementation committee was appointed. Its primary function was to hire an interior space-planning consultant. The object was to have a thorough review of the clubhouse and surrounding area so that a plan for phased growth could be developed. At the February board meeting, an initial plan for this renovation was presented. It was exciting to see the results of the input of a variety of committees and individual members. Drawings of the proposal were displayed and were shown in the clubhouse soliciting members' comments. After the plan was refined, the construction costs were determined and a financing plan established.

In June of that year a part of RYC history returned. The Club purchased the International 110 Class Sloop that was formerly owned by Past Commodore and RYC Poet Laureate George Culp. The boat was put in a shed for refinishing and

#### Picture this...

"When F. Ritter Shumway was Commodore, he knew my boss at Kodak who was also an RYC member. I was an assistant to the director of sales training so I was trained in photography and worked on travel logs; my main job was marketing photography. Commodore Shumway asked me to take a movie of the first Rochester Race in 1952. I also was offered a membership," said **Walter Chapelle**.

Walter liked to take pictures of boats but only from small powerboats. He developed a certain way of operating. "Sailors would have clobbered me if the wake from my boat spoiled their sailing; also, I never wanted to be in the way of their wind."

After showing his movie to other clubs like Chicago and Buffalo, he was asked to make one of the Newport to Bermuda Race. Since the U.S. Naval Academy was participating, Walter was aboard a destroyer to do his photography. A sailboat was almost run down. When Walter asked why no sailor complained about the wake of a destroyer, the response was, "Because the boat had a five inch gun on the foredeck!"

In 1958, Walter bought the 19-foot hull for his powerboat, *Hi-Lite*. In his garage, he finished the deck and interior in seven months by visiting Maine boat yards and taking pictures while on summer vacation.

Walt Chapelle (member since 1952)

refitting by members to be available for the next sailing season.

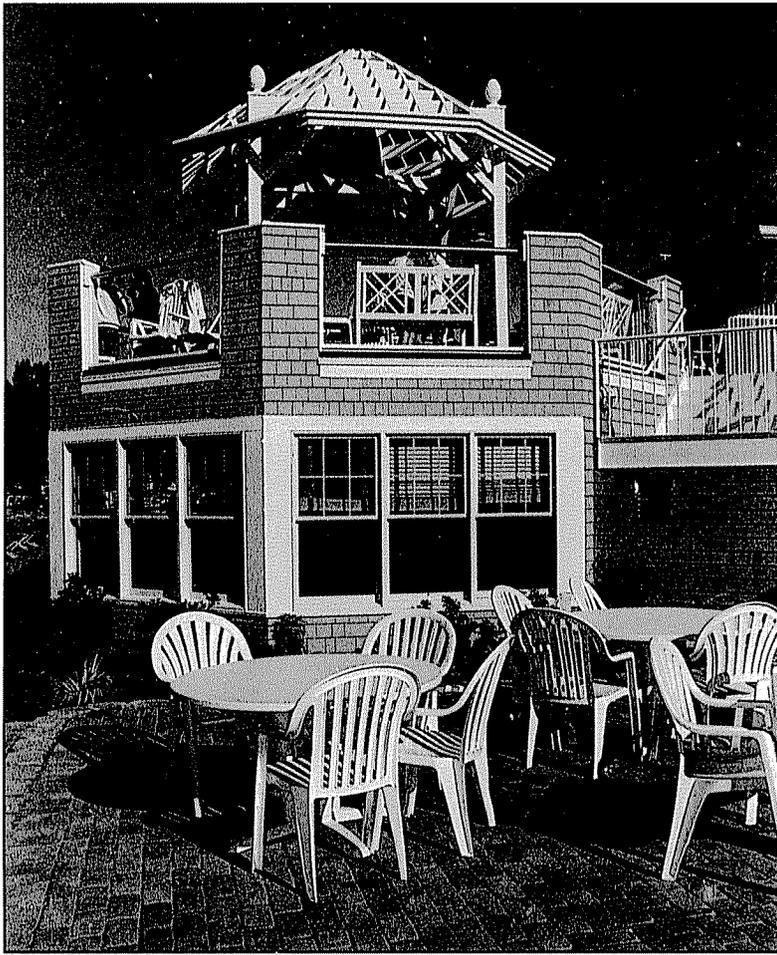
The long-range plan was put out for bids and a successful bidder selected. It was hoped this phase would start in September and be completed by late February, 1996. The work went fairly close to schedule.

At the same time it was announced that the Army Corps of Engineers had devised a plan to help the reduction of the surge in the river. This would involve lining some inside sections of the piers with rocks to reduce wave action. If successful this would be a great improvement to the Club and, more specifically, the yacht basin.

The year 1996 started auspiciously for RYC. Our Cory Sertl was named 1995 Rolex Yachtswoman of the Year. The announcement was made February 9 at the New York Yacht Club in New York City and was based upon Cory's superlative racing record. There is hardly a higher recognition for women racing skippers in the United States!

In the March *Log*, the Commodore reported on the progress of our reconstruction. The Club opened the first of February as promised. Everything was not quite shipshape, but members could get back to enjoying themselves in their favorite "hangout." Work continued at a hectic pace, but everything seemed pointed to a grand opening party on April 20, which by all reports proved to be a spectacular event. The octagonal dining room was named "The 8-Meter Room."

The new gazebo.



The Club owed a huge debt of gratitude to Tom Roth, Commodore, 1995, 1996. He served as project manager for this major reconstruction, and performed this task with distinction. Without Tom's vision, dedication, commitment and skill in managing the project, we would not have the quality facility we have today.

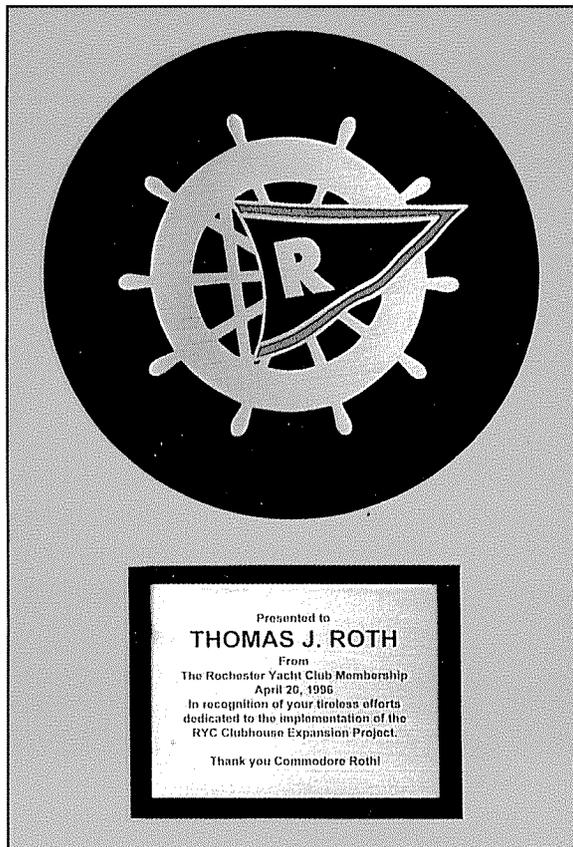
By the end of June, phase I of the long-range plan was essentially complete to most everyone's delight. Another notable RYC accomplishment was the naming of Louise Van Voorhis to the 1996 US Olympic Yachting Team.

In August of that year the Corps of Engineers' surge protection project on the Genesee River was started. The Club Board of Directors was to review the design proposal for a deck to go over the rocks in front of the clubhouse. This had to be done sooner than planned from a Club budget viewpoint, but the window of opportunity provided by the Corps Of Engineers was too good to pass up. This "good fortune" enabled the Club to add a significant piece of property in a very strategic location - immediately adjacent to the clubhouse.

While attending a traditionally elaborate New Years Day reception, January 1, 1997, members were treated to an exceptional view. The Luedtke Engineering people were driving nine steel columns in front of the clubhouse. These were to support a 20 by 60-foot deck over the stone surge barrier protecting our north seawall.

Corps of Engineers inspectors would not approve the original installation of stone for the wave barrier north of the clubhouse. Additional stone had to be placed, raising the stone to a new height, necessitating redesign of the deck covering. This resulted in rescheduling the job as a winter 1997-98 project.

1998 started with a bang! RYC was selected to host LYRA in the year 2001. Robb Holt was re-elected President of LYRA and Sam Morse Vice President. Construction for the north deck was underway and appeared to be on schedule and within budget. RYC announced it had established a website on the Internet. Thanks to Peter Davidson and his staff [www.rochesteryc.com](http://www.rochesteryc.com) was introduced and earned a distinguished award in that field.



Also of interest was the notice that the Club was selected to host the 1999 8-Meter World Championship Regatta once again recognizing the ability of RYC to attract world-class sailing championships.

A very interesting, informative and well-attended presentation was made at the RYC clubhouse in September, 1998. Under the auspices of the Rochester Power Squadron, topics covered included redevelopment of the Port of Rochester as well as the communities of Charlotte and Summerville. The improvement of the south shore of Lake Ontario as a waterfront recreation area and tourist destination was also given much attention. The possibility of establishing ferry service between Rochester and Toronto would have tremendous impact on the entire project. As this book heads for production, this eventuality appears to have a high potential.

## REGATTAS

The class of regattas it can attract measures a true test of the involvement a Yacht Club has in sailing. These great meetings of local and international sailors are organized along the lines of one-design fleets or regional organizations. The Soling, Dragon, J 24, Ideal 18, Laser, and Optimist regattas at RYC have been numerous over the last quarter century, since we have had active fleets in each regatta. The Central New York region one-design regattas are frequently hosted by RYC.

### Some World, National and Regional Regattas hosted by RYC since 1976

Soling:	North Americans	1975, 1983, 1993, and 1998
	Great Lakes	1997
	US Championships	1997
Dragons:	World Championship	1991
	Great Lakes Championship	1980
Lightning	North Americans	1981
	North Americans	1990
Thistles	Great Lakes District Championship	1980
8-Meter	World Championships	1985, 1990, 1999
J 24	North Americans	1981, 1989
	Great Lakes Championship	1983
	World Championships	1995
Offshore	LYRA	1985, 1989, 1993
Optimist	National Youth Regatta	
Laser	Women's Worlds Single &	
	Double Handed championships	1979
Sonar	Adams Cup	1996
	Richardson Cup	1990, 2000

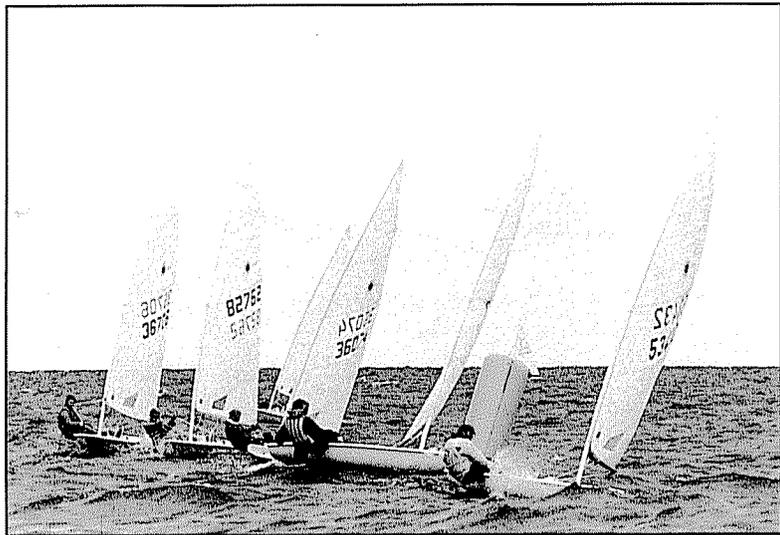
## WOMEN'S WORLDS

These events take a tremendous effort on the part of our Club's volunteer resources and infrastructure. RYC has been able to rise to the occasion to conduct these major regattas and a pile of minor ones with confidence. The Regatta Chairmen head the effort, running the schedule up to several years in advance, selling RYC capabilities to national organizations, coaching the individual regatta organizers, and accounting for the finances after the fact.



The Women's World single and double-handed championships held late in the 1979 sailing season were one of the most memorable international events at RYC. Close to 100 women competed, representing countries from all the continents except Antarctica. Their 420s, Lasers, and tons of gear came in containers that littered the drysail area. They came early to practice up to a week before the week-long event. Club members opened their homes to all of the competitors and their coaches.

Lasers approaching the mark in Women's Worlds.



Lake Ontario dealt up its usual flat calms to roaring south westerlies. Injuries were minor, but gear breakage was significant. Big celebrations hosted by the Shumway's and Stoltz's at their homes were spirited to say the least with many an RYC bachelor on the prowl. Gail Nealon still corresponds with and visits the members of the UK team she hosted 20 years ago. Many of the boats and much of the gear was sold to empty the containers that the women proceeded to fill with Levis and other US goodies purchased in Rochester at "bargain" prices.

## 8-METER WORLD CUP REGATTAS

A start of a World Regatta at RYC.

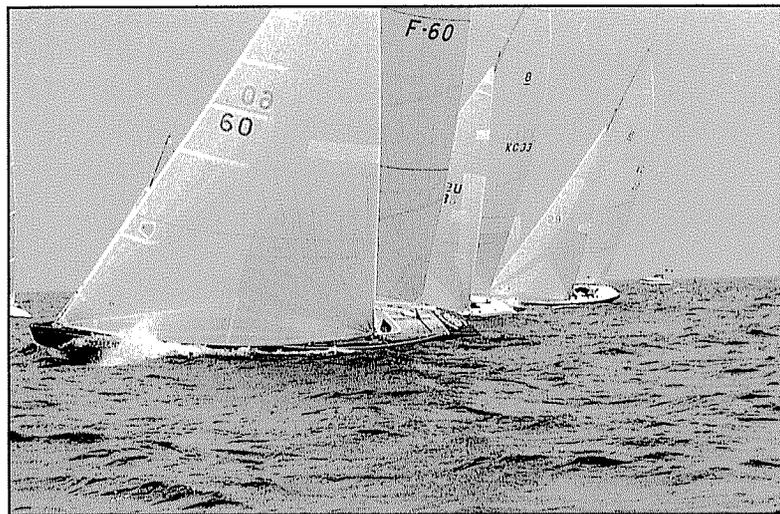


Photo by Fran Cruikshank

In 1982 the World Cup was held in Visby on the Island of Gotland, Sweden. Eugene VanVoorhis entered *Iroquois*, a new design 8-Meter, as the sole US entry. Robin Clarke from RYC entered *Vision* as the other participant from this hemisphere. During the second race in very heavy wind after rounding the weather mark, *Iroquois*' spinnaker topping line fouled the upper spreader and ripped it from the mast causing the spinnaker to drop out. It wasn't until the last race that *Iroquois* regained first place winning the regatta composed of 16 yachts.

As in most events, the transport of the crew and boat are notable experiences. Again in Eugene's own words:

*The trip going to and from the race site was equally exciting. We took the boats down through the Erie Canal and Hudson to Port Elizabeth, loaded onto a freighter and retrieved them in Goteborg from where we had to sail about 500 nautical miles around Sweden to get to Gotland in the Baltic Sea, two gales and one night of being becalmed later. It was like going to Toronto from Rochester every day for five days. My teenage sons were so tired when Heide picked us up at Visby they merely yawned when we went by the traditional clothes-optional Swedish beach.*

*Iroquois* in Visby, Sweden 1982. Eugene VanVoorhis and sons John, Norman, and Charles and C.W. Rorabach. *Iroquois* finished first.

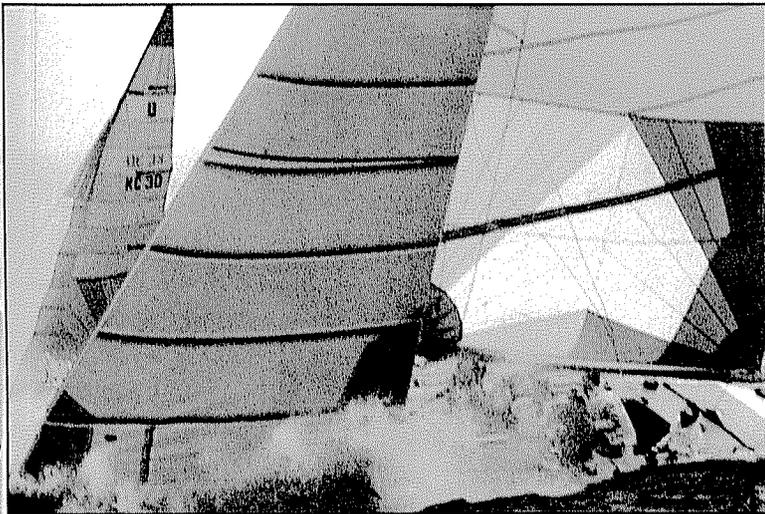


In 1983, *Iroquois* traveled to Norway, going through the Trans-Sweden canal system including the Gotha and Troihatten canals and then sailing up the west coast of Sweden into the Oslo fjord to the island of Hanko, Norway. Fifteen 8-Meters competed in this World Cup including *Vision*, which was sailed by Glenn Foster of the Seawanka-Corinthian Yacht Club, and the *Cirra*, sailed by His Majesty, King Olav V of Norway. *Iroquois* won the regatta which was very festive and included being entertained on the King's motor yacht. The crew on

*Iroquois* included Frank Shumway, Charles Van Voorhis, Lee Van Gemert and Ohne Vanderval. The weather was moderate until the last day, when after tacking upwind against 16-foot waves, *Iroquois* lost her steering ability, and had to limp in under her trim tab.

In 1984, the 8-Meter World Cup was held in Toronto with three brand new 8-Meters competing. About 16 yachts in all competed and *Iroquois* came in third. Its owner left behind one of the new foreign 8-Meters, *Golden Feather*. Eugene took advantage of being caretaker of the boat to lull Harry Voss into the romance of 8-Meter competition. The rest is history. In 1985 the Rochester Yacht Club hosted the World Cup and *Golden Feather*, with Harry Voss at the helm, won the regatta, which had attracted entries from Switzerland, France and Sweden, with four yachts in all from across the Atlantic competing in Rochester. This included the Baron de Rothchild's team and lavish tender.

*Iroquois* & *Octavia*, 8-Meter World Cup, 1985, Rochester.



Rochester Yacht Club won the 8-Meter Worlds in Medemblik, Holland, in 1995. Hank Stuart chartered *Natural*, designed by Ed Du Bois and built by Walter Green in 1990. The winning team included Tom Ruffin and Tim Donovan of RYC. Also included were Hank Willard, Jerry Dodge, Eric Will and Ed St. George of Sodus Bay Yacht Club.

The team traveled to Amsterdam to prepare the boat for the week-long event. After a few days of race preparations, the team sailed the boat 80 miles up the Markemeer and the IJjeetmeer to Medemblik.

1995 8-Meter World Champions: Hank Stuart, skipper, Eric Will, Tim Donovan, Tom Ruffin, Jerry Dodge and Henry Willard.



"After Sunday, we knew anything could happen," bow man Chuck Bauerschmidt said, referring to the first race, in which *Golden Feather* went from first to fifth after finding a hole in the wind. A repeat of that mishap would have been disastrous. But on the last leg of the last race, *Golden Feather* doubled its lead. *Feather* finished first for the third time in four races to capture the 1999 world championship going away.

Before the World Cup series began, skipper Eric Voss pulled *Feather* out of the water and all six crewmen went to work on the boat's bottom. "We sanded it, filled a lot of holes and put some go-fast juice on the bottom and that really helped out," Voss said. Then almost daily during Cup week, they went swimming to wash down the boat.

*Feather* was able to beat five-time world champion *Gefjon* of Switzerland and two-time titlist *Sarissa*, which won the first two races of that year's series.

In the end, Harry Voss hugged his son and said, "You did it." Like father, like son.



Ron Palm's 8-Meter with the late Mark Cook as crew.

1999 World Champion *Golden Feather* crew, left to right:  
Chuck Bauerschmidt, Kurt Barnes, Joel Roemer, Bob Bryant,  
Marc Fischer and Eric Voss, skipper.



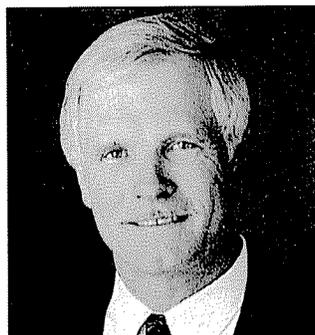
## THE “GREAT 8s” MATCH RACING SERIES

In 1998, RYC hosted an 8-Meter celebrity event that was the brainchild of Joel Roemer, long time 8-Meter crew. Joel invited media magnate and renowned sailor Ted Turner to join in a match race series as a charity fund-raiser. Ted found the idea appealing and brought along his son Teddy (a sailor of some renown as well) and wife Jane Fonda who has not been known to sail. Seven 8-Meters participated. Both classic and modern

classes were represented. Joel worked out a clever way of scoring a Phantom Turner boat so that all of the teams raced against one time 12-Meter America’s Cup winner Ted Turner as well as each other. Eric Voss and his crew on *Golden Feather* won the event. The Turners turned in a second place due to a slow spinnaker dousing on one race.

TIME WARNER

**R.E. Turner**  
Vice Chairman



January 26, 1999

Mr. Stanley C. Wright  
Past Commodore  
Rochester Yacht Club  
5555 St. Paul Boulevard  
Rochester, New York 14617

Dear Mr. Wright:

Congratulations on the Rochester Yacht Club's book commemorating the new millennium and the club's 123 years of excellence. It was a pleasure participating in the 1998 Eight Meter Match Race Series sponsored by the Rochester Yacht Club last summer. My son, Teddy, who was part of my crew, and I had a memorable experience, as it was my first eight meter competition. My wife, Jane Fonda, also enjoyed visiting your community. All of the people involved in this event were kind and enthusiastic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. E. Turner". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

R. E. Turner

The event did a great deal for local sailing in the local media and all of the members who got to rub elbows with the stars at Voss' big event.



Ted Turner and son Teddy help bring *Golden Feather* back to its dock.

## J 24S BECOME RYC'S LARGEST ONE-DESIGN FLEET

1978 saw the formation of the REEK J 24 fleet. What has turned out to be one of the most popular keelboat designs ever, won the hearts of a fun-loving and competitive group of Rochester sailors.

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J 24s in action.



Photo by Walt Chappelle

The organizational skills of the fleet grew to a level that enabled hosting the 1981 North American's, still one of the largest on record. Bob Castle recalled that 55 to 60 boats were expected for the regatta. The boats continued to arrive until every available parking space at the club was filled with trailers and a total of 99 boats were in the basin. The club manager, in near panic, ran around to all the local supermarkets to grab enough food for the dinners. The committee took it all in stride and the participants never realized the scramble that had taken place. That regatta helped establish RYC's reputation as one of the best regatta centers in the country.

Through the decade of the 80s planning became a forte of the fleet. With the addition of Larry Gaenzel and Kay Rote, Mark and Cory Sertl, the Faust family, Bob Laser and

Gene VanVoorhis and family, the fleet took on the 1989 North American's, which again ran like clockwork.

By the mid 90s the fleet organizational strength grew to the point of attaining international fame when they hosted the class 1995 World Championships. The committee, headed by Reid Stava, approached the organizing process by placing themselves in the position of the foreign visitors and ascertaining what their needs and concerns might be. For housing, a primary concern, they used the tried and true method of using the Women's Association to find enough "berths" among the RYC members. As it turned out, all of the "housing hosts" had kind remarks for their guests. (Imagine being able to pick the brain of your own 'pro for a week'!) It is an idea that may not be feasible at many World Championship Regatta sites.



Photo by Jay Tovey

Boat measurement ranks high as a concern for J 24 events. There just seems to be much more variation in the construction of these boats or the competitors are always pushing the limit. The committee built waist-high sail-measuring tables and scaffolds to enhance the complex measuring process by reducing measurers' fatigue and focusing on logistics. They lined up all the United States J Association measurers they could find locally. Fortunately, the International J Association Technical Chairman was on hand to deal with the expected "innovations" that showed up.

The next element of concern was race management. General recalls seem to be a way of life in J 24 fleets and the Worlds were no exception, usually 5 to 8 each race! One Olympic course was used and the rest were windward leewards with a gate. Without doubt the gate tamed the downwind mark rounding and is strongly recommended for large fleet races. Race management elected to have a single starting line rather than using a mid-line boat. You cannot imagine how long the line was with 73 boats (the pin end boat, an inflatable, needed its flag to be seen as the hull was lost in the seas).

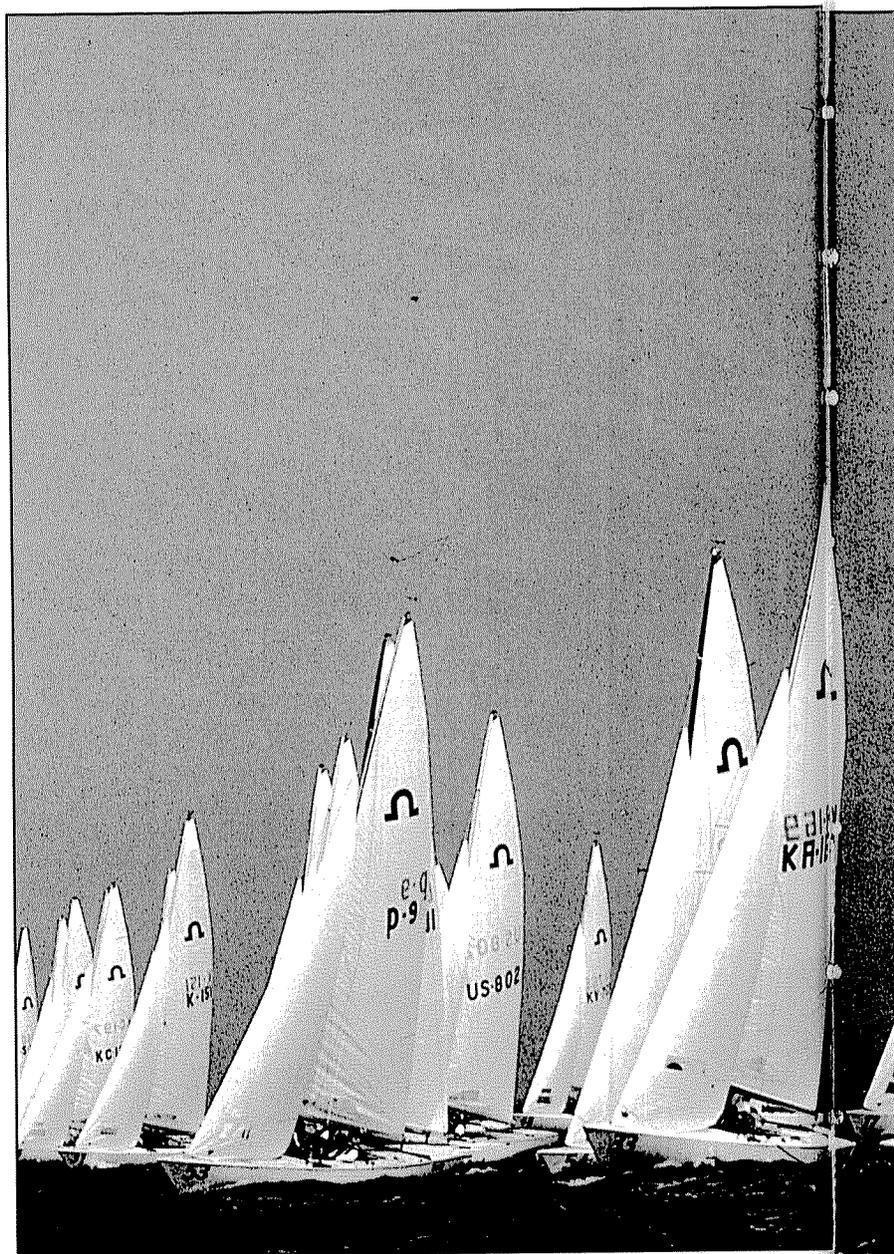
Fleet sailors have also been active in national and

international class regattas. Gunther Buerman sailed in several Worlds' championships (J 24 sailors have to qualify to sail in these), with one of the more noteworthy being one held in Sweden. Gunther made it a point to bring home something of value from his regattas, and this time far exceeded his best previous record when he brought home his new wife, Maggie. What a find!

In the 90s the fleet picked up Greg Eiffert and crew who followed Gunther's tradition, winning almost every regatta trophy on Lake Ontario. As a headliner, they placed third out of 95 boats at the 1998 North Americans, beating numerous professionally crewed boats.

## THE OLYMPIC SOLING ACTIVITY

Solings at the starting line.



1979-80  
William J.  
Stolze,  
Commodore



1981-82  
Peter M.  
Woodams,  
Commodore



1983-84  
Gordon R.  
Britton,  
Commodore



John Odenbach Jr. at helm of *Hangover* with crew Keith Burhans & Steve Labuzetta



## FIRECRACKER REGATTA

Since the inception of the Soling class, the Rochester Yacht Club has played a major part in the development of the association. The fleet started in 1969 with boats owned by Jerry Castle and Reg Britton. The Firecracker, first held in 1970, is the oldest regional Soling regatta and is hosted yearly by RYC on July 4th weekend. An Odenbach (John with three wins and Fritz with one) has driven the only Rochester boats that have won this regatta. In order to increase participation this regatta has been used this as a feeder for North American and World Championships. World-renowned sailors, Buddy Melges, Kevin Mahaney, Hans Fogh and Stuart Walker, to name a few, have competed in this event. This regatta, which once boasted of 25 to 30 boats participating, has now dwindled to a fleet of 10 to 15 boats. This has given local sailors a chance to sail against some of the toughest competition in the world without having to leave their home port for the past 29 years. No matter where you go on the Soling circuit world-wide, the sailors all rave about those regattas hosted in Rochester.

## SOLING WORLDS

In 1991, RYC hosted the World championships and provided housing for more than 65 competitors, a feat that not many, if any, other club can claim. In addition to the World Championships, RYC has been host to four North American Championships ('75, '83, '93, and '98), Great Lakes Championships and a US Championship in 1997. At each and every one of these events the crew ability to handle these high-tech boats is tested in wind conditions from 0 to 40 knots. The Soling, being such a versatile boat, is able to handle these conditions by powering up and down with a combination of adjustable shrouds, forestay, backstay and traveler. Anyone who has been on board in 25-plus knots remembers well the acceleration after the big chute is launched at the windward mark, and soon forgets what happens when it gets out of control (everyone) or the mast comes down (Fischer, Tenny).

Rochester is only one of several places where these boats are raced. Major regattas are rotated and for those in the mood for a "road trip" can easily trail this boat to Willamette, Milwaukee, Chicago, Marblehead, Annapolis, St. Petersburg, and Miami. Our own Helen Ingerson in Punta Gorda, Florida, hosts one of the more popular southern regattas. Helen is usually the host to 20 to 35 boats and crews for what have been the US Championships. This 25-hour drive gets us out of Rochester in April with some fine sailing on Charlotte Harbor on Florida's west coast.



1985-86  
Paul B.  
Schumacher,  
Commodore



1987-88  
John W.  
Newell,  
Commodore



1989-90  
Stanley C.  
Wright,  
Commodore



## True friends...

Every yacht club has its racing aces, the ones everyone emulates. And we at RYC have those. But, we have much more than that – a real hero and a role model we suspect not duplicated in any other club.

For as long as he has been a member of RYC, **Keith Burhans** has given his friends a lot of grief on the race course. He won more often than not in his Soling *Stash*. But, more than skippering his own boat, he was crew on others', a top-notch tactician, known throughout the racing circuit at RYC and beyond as the best.

As Stu Sills, former owner of Sills Marina and longtime racer, said, "If Keith Burhans is navigating, it doesn't matter who the skipper is, the boat will win."

And then the accident in which he lost both his legs just below the knee. He, his family and his friends were devastated. How could this happen to such a great guy?

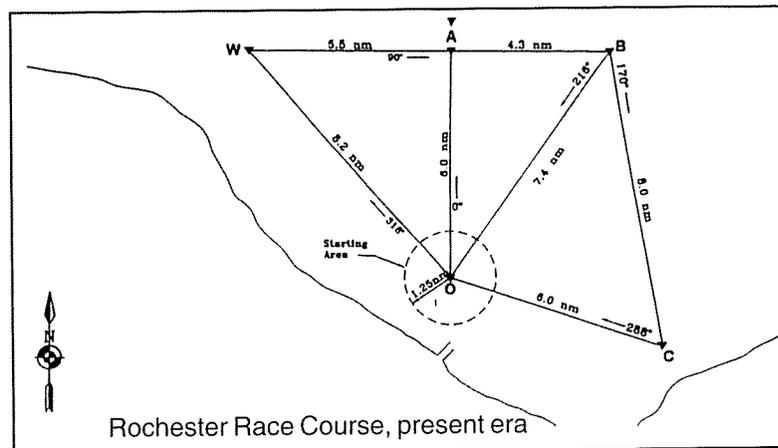
But it did happen and how he met and conquered his grief is how he will always be remembered. He didn't give up; he just changed directions and has never looked back. He is still sailing and now teaches the disabled how to sail. He is on the board at the Rochester Rehabilitation Center and introduces wheelchair athletes to sailing in a specially equipped Martin 16. And, with two other disabled sailors, has achieved championship status in the Disabled World Championships.

His friends support him in this effort, just as they always have, as they remember vividly the first Friday night after he had been fitted with his new legs that afternoon. He, his wife and two daughters, walked into RYC for the Friday night fishfry. There was absolute silence; drinks stopped in mid-air and everyone gasped. Then there was a little clap that grew into a thunderous applause; tears flowed and no one will ever forget it.

RYC sailors also remember when right after he came out of the hospital before being fitted for his prostheses, he was sitting on a barstool when the Wednesday night racers came off the course. They were stunned as Keith looked at them with only two thirds of his legs and said, "Hi guys, how goes it?"

Keith declines the hero status thrust upon him, but that is just what he is to all at RYC. He says it is a two-way deal, "I relied on you guys to help me through this; you certainly did. Thanks."

Keith Burhans (member since 1973)



## THE ROCHESTER RACE – A REVIVAL

One fall Sunday afternoon after a RYC fall series offshore fleet race Cliff Sertl, Bob McCaulay and a few others sat at the bar with Offshore Fleet Captain Jim Nealon and decided that RYC, as one of the most active fleets on Lake Ontario, had been negligent by not sponsoring an annual regatta for the Offshore boats. They believed it was time for RYC to step up like many of the smaller yacht clubs and put another race on the calendar.

The challenge was to schedule an event in an open time in the season and make it a unique event. This was accomplished by some active and creative committee work over the next year.

The unique race course has been tuned up by the RYC race committee including the Watoma Shoal fixed buoy and a gate in the long leg to the magical deep-water mark that has never drifted. In 1990, the committee added a second day of course racing on Sunday, which has enlarged the event significantly. The Rochester Race was canceled only twice; lack of wind in 1986 and in 1995 a leftover hurricane provided the assembled starting fleet with the largest rolling waves most had ever seen on Lake Ontario. The committee boat couldn't hold an anchor and the committee and many of the racing crew were suffering "mal de mer" at starting time. No one balked at the cancellation and Vince Lobe cleverly recycled the trophies for the next year. Therefore, the previous long-distance Rochester Race, last sailed in 1965, became a 30-mile around-the-buoy race for the foreseeable future.

## LEVEL FEVER

What a concept! Race boat-for-boat. To hell with handicaps! This has been Don Finkel's concept of how to keep a regatta simple. The Youngstown Level Regatta was conceived in the early 70s over many Youngstown bar discussions. The first event was held in 1974 for fewer than 20, 20 to 30-foot 1/4 and 1/2 ton rated boats. By 1977, Don opened the regatta up to several of the stock cruising and one-design boats represented around Lake Ontario like the Redwing 30s, Viking 33s, C&C 30s, and J 24s. Basically, if you've got more than five boats, you've got a start. In subsequent years bands and beer

Keith (left) helps his skipper, Paul Callahan, get ready.

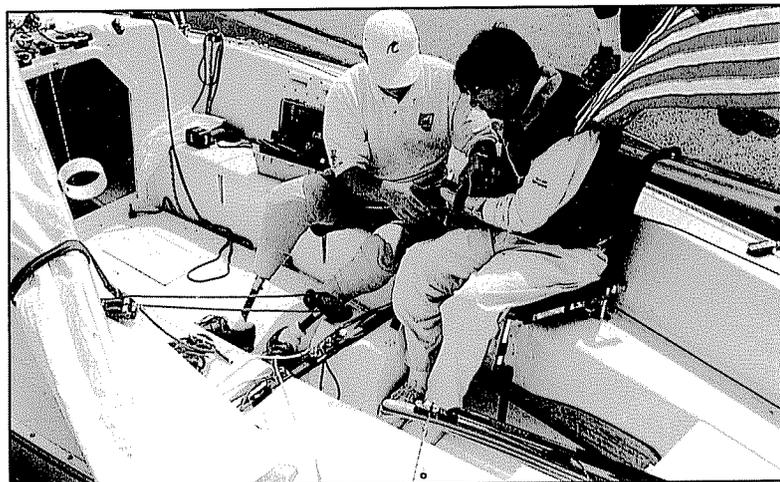


Photo by Fran Cruikshank

augmented the two-day racing format and fine hospitality of YYC. It grew so much in popularity that many stock racer-cruiser yacht owners and those with one-off designs demanded to participate. Don accommodated them by dividing the whole entry field into divisions with yachts of similar speed potential. He attempted to separate the heavy displacement masthead rigs from the newer light displacement fractional rigs since they perform differently in various winds and sea conditions. Don and his advisory committee have maintained a wonderful feel for this leveling technique resulting in great competition. The result was NO HANDICAPS. Don's able committee with a polite version of "like it or watch from a spectator boat" handles the occasional complaint about division placement.

When most other regattas have dwindled or died altogether, this event has continued to grow like the 90s stock market. The formula seems to work; nearly out of control "social" rafting + competitive sailing + creative awards + great entertainment + tolerant town = 400 plus competing yachts. Don claims the whole thing is easy with the help of Kevin Doyle's complete computer program. We know better!

The Youngstown Yacht Club has no slips to offer the competitors, so the sea wall in front of the club serves as the anchor for the fleet. A complex technique, called rafting, is used to moor all 400 or so yachts. The boats are stacked next to one another, gunwale to gunwale a dozen or more deep, all levered off the unfortunate boat tied to the wall. All this is accomplished in the Niagara River that frequently sports a four-knot current. Occasionally a strong westerly wind or an unscheduled squall in the middle of the night makes for fire drills beyond description. An example of a trying night was in 1999 when a thunderstorm came through. Several bent pulpits resulted and a few injuries occurred from sailors trying their best to fend off boats in the lengthy rafts.

Sunday mornings always come too early at Levels. Granny (perennial public address queen) starts at about 0630 hours with "good morning, Viet Nam!" Scrubbing the deck, finding one's belongings, telling last night's stories, and waiting for a shower are the prime pastimes until Granny's "hurry, hurry, the rafts are breaking up" routine. Before you know it hundreds, of boats with thousands of eager competitors are galloping down current to one of the four race courses located around the plume of the Niagara River.

RYC skippers and crews have been an integral part of the Levels since its inception. Usually RYC has the largest participation of any yacht club and RYC skippers usually haul away most of the coveted awards as well.

## SCOTCH BONNET FEVER

Our river neighbors to the south, the Genesee Yacht Club, have provided a classic racing event since 1973.

The race is always scheduled for the longest daylight Friday of the year to aid in the eyeball navigation on the Canadian shore. Before the Loran C day's navigation was the real secret of winning.

Knowing that the Trenton (Canada) Air Force Base Radio Beacon was 206 MHz and was in a direct line with the old Braddock Point mark and the Scotch Bonnet Island was priceless. It was also helpful to know that Scotch Bonnet Shoal was also in line and the navigator could watch the soundings rise to 25 feet and then drop off again a few miles south of the turn. In the fog the best close-in navigation tool proved to be nasal acuity - the gull deposits in the rocky little island are distinct.

### From ragamuffin to sailor...

The Tierney home was in the 10<sup>th</sup> ward in the city. However, during the summer the family lived in White City at their cottage. Pete and his friends would head over to RYC to see if anyone needed crew.

"All we ragamuffins would stand on the finger pier, hoping to hear, 'Hey, you in the red shirt, grab that port stern line.' And if you were good, you'd be asked back the next week," **Pete Tierney** says.

"Every Saturday, the VanVoorhis brothers would take out *Iroquois*, a gaf-rigged P boat, which was over 50 feet long. The lines were kept on posts and the skipper would give directions to about eight of us boys to push the boat backwards, turn it 180 degrees, pull it back into the slip, and then shove it into the basin. Sure learned about boat handling, especially bringing it back in - knowing when to drop the sails, enter the basin, and then enter the slip."

After Pete watched the Star Boats' 1936 World Championship on Lake Ontario, his dad gave him the plans for building his own. The initial construction took place inside their cottage with only one obstruction, Pete's mother. The solution was to suggest that she go to visit her sister in Florida. "When she returned it took all summer to clean out the saw dust and we had to finish it elsewhere. Finally launched her in 1940."

Pete Tierney (member since 1938)

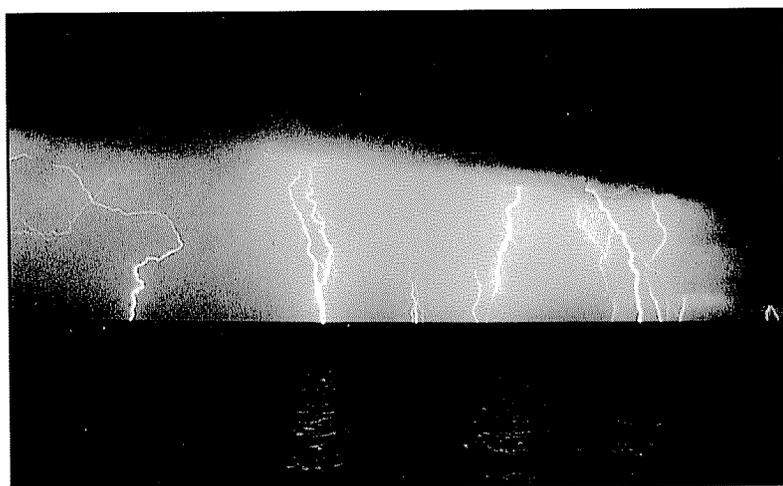
Scotch Bonnet Island with light, photo courtesy of Lillian Roemer.



With Loran and GPS the navigator's place in the crew hierarchy fell considerably. The races are now won at night. The crews that can stay alert and trim efficiently hour after boring hour will have the best shot. But, like all distance races, if you get too far in a corner there's a good chance you will have squandered the best of sail trim.

The lake hadn't had much of a chance to warm up by June so memories of cold wet crossings are frozen in sailors' minds. The same conditions give rise to morning fog, which makes crossing the shipping lanes twice very exciting. Stories abound of the crew hearing the "churning-chugging" of a lake freighter and the gentle rise and fall crossing its wake and never laying eyes on the giant. Another cold-water phenomenon seldom experienced elsewhere is the nighttime breeze that never disturbs the heavy cold stagnant air at the water surface. As a result the competing yachts can be spinnaker reaching along in the middle of the night at six or seven knots and the crew can look over the side and see their undisturbed moon lit reflections in the water.

In 1987, one of the larger Scotch Bonnet fleets (85 or so yachts) met with the most extravagant electrical storms nature ever worked up for Lake Ontario. Hours of brilliant cloud to water strikes destroyed night vision and VHF radios. Most every crew came home with tales of St. Elmo's fire, hot shrouds, or some other extraordinary event. But all boats returned safely with no serious hull or rigging damage.



The SBLR skippers' meeting is always charged with excitement waiting to see which ill-informed competitor will ask "is the light on?" It is safe to say that the Scotch Bonnet Light Race is the single largest generator of sailing "bar tales" on the south shore of Lake Ontario.

## LAKE YACHT RACING ASSOCIATION (LYRA) AT RYC

RYC negotiated hosting LYRA in 1977, the Club's Centennial Year. Bob Rae was the Commodore, and there were a lot of new, "hot" boats in the basin. This was the hey-day of the I.O.R. rule, and one of the hottest was Henry William's Peterson Two-Tonner *Susan B. Anthony*. There were others too - Bill Stolze had a new Swan 44, *Sideband*, and Marge and Jim Robfogel's *Heritage 37* Ping was only a year old. From Sodus Bay came a beautiful Swan 41, *Scotch Bonnet*, which was owned by Bill Stuart, and there was a new C&C boat, the 38, from Niagara called *Sunshine*, which won the Freeman Cup that

year. The most radical boat in the basin that August was Steve Haarstick's *Daedelus* from Ithaca. Steve was a young, iconoclastic sailmaker in those days and his boat reflected its owner - 29 feet, cold-molded mahogany, tippy as hell with the mast section and keel of a star boat, a huge main and tiny genoa. She was the most unlikely cruiser/racer ever seen.

In those days, LYRA was a big affair, with a lot of "gold platers" from Toronto, Hamilton and all over. Bernie Herman's *Bonaventure* was a C&C 61 who routinely took line honors in the long distance races. Another of the big boys was Gerhard Moog's *Dynamo*. These boats were tough competitors who often lined up "pros" like Jay Gross and Hans Fogh to steer for them.

The first running of the Centennial Race, in 1977, honored RYC's 100th anniversary. Bud Bamann presented a lovely trophy, and the course was set from Rochester to Niagara and then to Toronto, where most of the fleet would then start the Lake Ontario International race one week later. The Centennial started in the afternoon, and there was almost no wind. By the time the larger boats started, some breeze filled in from the west, and everyone sailed close-hauled on port tack along the shoreline into the setting sun. *Susan B.* was really trucking and quickly passed almost everyone. Later that night a nasty turn of weather upset most of the fleet, especially those who had opted to sail low of the rhumb line between R2 and the Eastern Gap. The first view of Toronto from any of the boats was nothing but the top half of the CN tower above the fog and clouds.

RYC didn't host LYRA again until 1985. By that time a lot had changed. For one thing, the Youngstown Levels regatta had become a fixture the weekend before LYRA, so the entire schedule of LYRA was geared feeding boats from the Levels. The Centennial Race started at Youngstown and finished at Sodus, a convenient course but one that lacked the challenge of the original dogleg run in 1977. The Freeman race started at Sodus Bay, and finished at Rochester. The race was reduced to around 120 miles, with the course to Oswego, around Stony Island, and then back to Rochester. This was a classic Freeman, with the start in the afternoon breeze, followed by the evening "parking lot" off Oswego.

The Course Racing in 1985 was a different story. By now RYC had adopted inflatable marks set by the day for course races. There were two separate race courses, one for large boats, and one for smaller boats. Competition on these short, closed courses was tight, and there was plenty of sun and wind all week, making for one of the best regattas. Also special were the on-shore activities, run by an army of RYC volunteers, which were coordinated by the team of Joe and Toni McGrain. That LYRA set an all-time high for participation among racers, volunteers, and was one of the first big regattas RYC ever hosted that made money.

RYC hosted LYRA again in 1989, this time under the chairmanship of Tom Roth. The event was big, with the best turnout in several years. Scores of members took two to three

Downward reaching at LYRA.



hour turns grilling hot dogs, serving beer, selling T-shirts and cleaning up. It was a lot of fun, since whatever your job, you only had to do it for two hours.

By 1995, LYRA had experienced a half dozen years of shrinking participation. Rochester was asked, and we said "yes." Commodore Doug Burkhardt drafted Tim Sladden to chair the event for 1995.

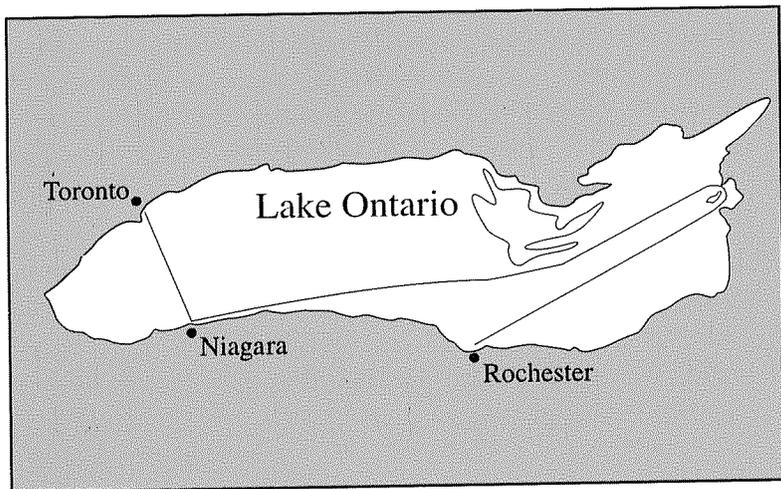
The 1995 LYRA hosted a charitable benefit in conjunction with a major regatta. That year a bareboat charter in the Virgin Islands was raffled to benefit Sunset House, a local hospice founded and operated by Gail and Jim Nealon. Freedom Yachts (ex Lake Ontario sailor, Paul Petronello) and the Goodwin Charitable Trust donated the prizes, and the ticket proceeds were donated to Sunset House; win-win for everyone. As luck would have it, the overall winner of the PHRF fleet, Rick Lohr of Youngstown Yacht Club, also won the raffle! He was the second

largest purchaser of tickets. The largest, Skip Shumway, held no grudge.

LYRA history has a way of repeating itself. The boats change, but the people remain much the same. *Bonaventure* is long gone, but her old crew is still around. In 1995, none other than *Red Jacket*, a 1969 C&C design, won Freeman Cup. The skipper was Brian Gooderham, who had spent years as the professional on *Bonaventure*.

Every year it gets harder to attract a good field. The host club markets the event, calls old friends and searches for sponsors. The fleet is split between IMS, PHRF and one-design classes, so there are more divisions but fewer boats in each class. The Freeman race is a little shorter. But the course racing is the main event - two races per day, minimum - short course with lots of mark roundings. (To win at LYRA still means something, and RYC entries are very consistent.) In 1997, RYC boats won nine of 15 divisions.

# LAKE ONTARIO INTERNATIONAL



In its hey-day, the LOI was a classic course, starting off Toronto, to R2 at Niagara, around Stony Island to starboard, and finishing at Rochester. The LOI was brought to life as a replacement of the original port-to-port Rochester race, and nurtured ever year by Frank Shumway (see Rochester Race, Chapter III), and later by Franz Schwenk. It was billed for a while as the longest fresh water race in the world. Fresh, consistent winds prevailed in 1977, and a course record was set that year by *Bonaventure*, with *Dynamo* also breaking the previous record. Rudy Kohler's *Impetus*, also of RCYC, won the race on corrected time. Sadly, only one year later, the 1978 LOI marked a turning point. Fleet size was starting to decline, as fewer and fewer sailors wanted to commit to the time off and expense of the event. The boats were starting to become more "stripped out" and uncomfortable to sail for two nights running. In 1978, there was a bad line squall, which tore through the course on Saturday night while the fleet was on the spinnaker leg from Niagara to Stony. A crewman was pulled overboard from the Viking 33 *Mary Poppins* while struggling to douse the spinnaker. Despite a search by many boats, he could not be found. That LOI was won going away by Chuck Bentley's *Magistri* of RCYC, who in the same season had won the Freeman Cup and the Trans-Superior race.

## THE RICHARDSON CUP

John Odenbach, Jr. in 1978 won the Cup in Sarnia with the help from brothers Gardy and Fritz, along with Rick Eberhardt, Woody Hawks, Tim Nally and Erik Schwenk. That team in 1979 also traveled to Long Beach, Ca. for the Congressional Cup, and finishing nine of 10 in a very competitive fleet.

The Richardson did not return back to RYC until 1989, where, as pictured on page 111, skipper Marc Fischer, with crew Bob Fischer, Chuck Bauerschmidt, Keith Burhans, Joey Tomaselli, and mascot Kathy E. Biggins traveled to windy Edgewater YC in Cleveland, beating out current Tartan 10 NA champ, Rick Strickly of Chicago, in the final race. In the previous

### A word about scoring...

This regatta-racing thing is all quite simple as long as the race committee has all of the complicated stuff well in hand. But let's not forget the unfortunate scorer. Especially in handicap racing, the scorer is indispensable. When the finish gun has fired, the highest PHRF boat has finished and the committee boat is all tied up the party begins – except for the lonely scorer who hunkers back to his quiet cell where no one can interrupt his train of thought. He makes the day when he arrives with the telltale sheets; once posted the beer stoked arguments can begin.

Before the advent of pocket calculators the handicap-scoring task was one of huge magnitude. Results were held up for hours sometimes days. **Dan Hollands** got involved in scoring. RYC took the big step into the 80s and purchased a computer for the office that Dan made dance. Dan built user-friendly software that he commercialized in 1987 under the name QUICK SCORE. The last decade has seen one improved version after another and Dan's scoring expertise crunching the numbers all over Lake Ontario and at regattas far and wide. Today the laptop computer lives on the committee boat, sail numbers are entered and the computer clock rules the finish time. A simple execute command scores and sorts.

Guess we don't need a scorer any more.

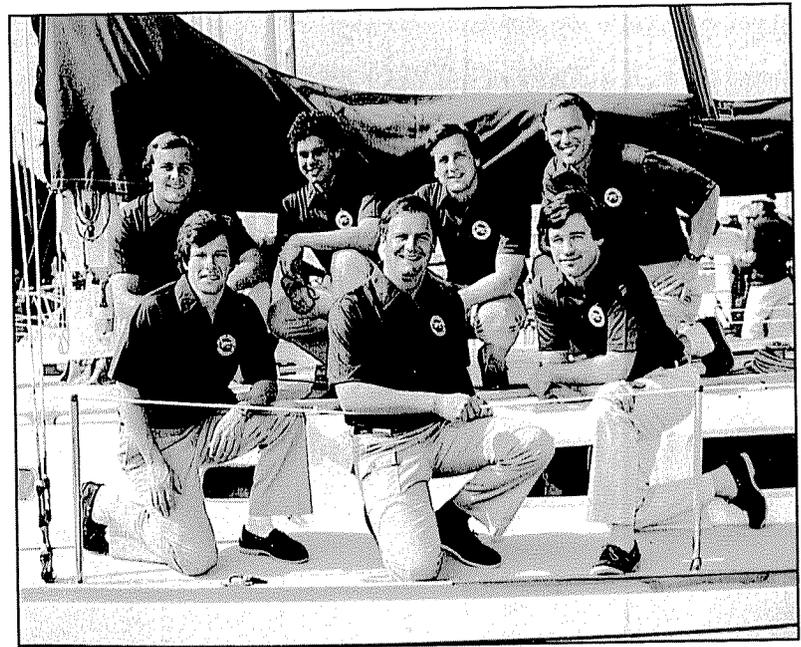
Dan Hollands (member since 1978)

year, Fischer and crew sailed to a second place in Detroit. A tough defeat, but a good lesson for the two years that followed.

In 1990, Fischer and crew again captured the Cup. This time in C&C 35 Mark III's at their home RYC, sailing undefeated against four Great Lakes teams. Windy conditions again making the fine crew work a necessity for ultimate victory.

Since 1990, RYC has not represented LYRA for the Richardson Cup although gets the opportunity to win back the "Millennium" Richardson Cup here in Rochester in September of 2000. Those who have competed for the Richardson Cup throughout the century have much to be thankful for, given the

John Odenbach, Jr. and crew at 1979 Congressional Cup



support they've received from RYC and its membership in helping them to ably represent the fine RYC tradition.

A special debt of gratitude is owed to RYC's Helen Ingerson, whose tireless efforts in the organizing, executing and officiating for this prestigious event have added much to the success of the Richardson Cup whether it be on behalf of RYC, LYRA, or the Yacht Racing Union of the Great Lakes.



From left: Joey Tomaselli, Keith Burhans, Mark Fischer, Chuck Bauerschmidt and Bob Fischer

## ADAMS CUP

The Mrs. Charles Francis Adams Trophy is a perpetual challenge trophy for the purpose "of promoting the sport of yachting by encouraging proficiency in seamanship and sportsmanlike conduct in sail yacht racing on the part of yachswomen."

Women from RYC have continued since our centennial year in 1977 to be interested and supportive of the Adams Cup and have competed at the local, LYRA, Area E and national levels. Frank Shumway and Helen Ingerson have judged at several local and national Adams trophy events.

Our Club hosted this competition in 1996. Shumway Marine loaned 10 sonars. Helen Ingerson was the principal race officer and worked with an all-volunteer race committee. Club members housed all 10 crews. Two crews from RYC competed in the Area E trials for these finals. RYC hosted the Adams finals in 1976 in Solings.

Cory Sertl won the Adams Cup in 1985 prior to her RYC affiliation.

In 1993, Helen Ingerson, with Deborah Koop, Jill Fornalik, and Christine Schwenker as crew competed in the finals hosted by Eastern YC, and raced out of Marblehead in the Atlantic after winning Area E, eliminating the crews from Sodus Bay YC and Bayview YC from Detroit. Helen has been one of the trustees of the cup for over 25 years.

In 1999, Debbie Koop plus crew in Lightnings won the Area E elimination and represented RYC in Milwaukee.

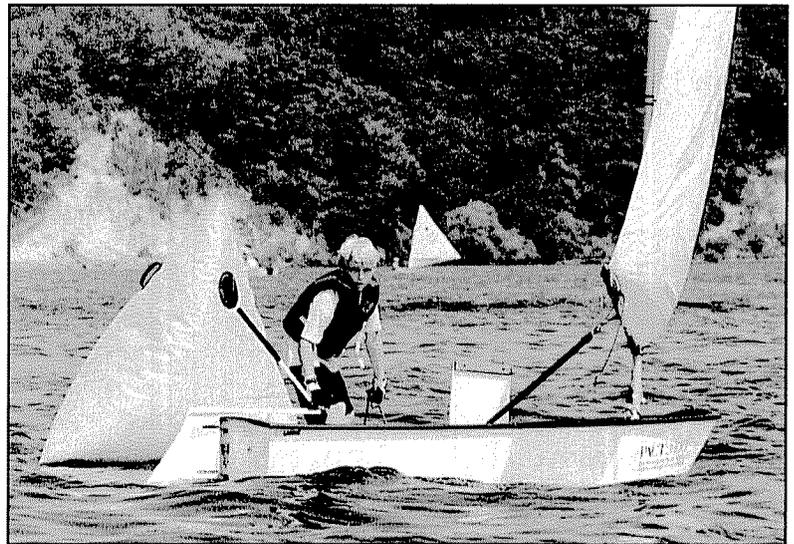
## OPTI'S RULE

In early August 1996, RYC hosted the United States Optimist Dinghy Association (USODA) National Championship Regatta. There were 257 competitors from 10 states and six countries who raced in four fleets: Red, Blue, White and Green. At the time, it was the largest one-design regatta of any kind ever held in the USA.

The Rochester Canoe Club and the Newport Yacht Club assisted RYC with this large event by running the Green Fleet (beginners) racing on Irondequoit Bay. There were 22 competitors who enjoyed great racing on the calmer waters of the bay.

The Red, Blue and White fleets raced in light to medium air on Lake Ontario. The 235-boat fleet was split four ways, with each group racing each of the other groups. There were several general recalls, most likely caused by more than a hundred boats on the starting line. After two days of racing, the plan was to establish Gold and Silver Divisions, and run more races for the championship. A major glitch in the scoring system delayed the proper split into these divisions, causing the last scheduled day of racing to be canceled. Final regatta results were based on the first five races held.

The challenges for this regatta committee were similar to others; fund raising, housing, awards, registration, boat storage/launching/hauling. However, this regatta had the additional challenges of extensive on-the-water safety, entertainment and feeding of 257 young competitors, and dealing with several hundred sailing equivalents to "soccer moms and dads."



The sight of 235 Optimist Dinghies sailing back and forth to the race course on the Genesee River was a delight to behold.

The Optimist is an excellent starting boat for young sailors, ages six to 15. Originally designed to be built from a single 4X8 piece of marine plywood, Optis are raced worldwide, with more than 300,000 boats registered in more than 100 countries. As with many clubs, RYC uses the Optimist for its junior sail program. Several members also own this hot little box racer.



at RYC where *Eclipse* came in first. The area around the race served back for *Card* a visitor's victory settled.

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## THE TON THING

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Back when the International Offshore Rule (IOR) was the rule of choice there were certain increments of the complex formula that resulted in a sort of level rating scheme so boats of the same calculated speed could race together with no time owed. Quarter-half-three quarter-1 and 2-ton classes were all represented by active racing offshore boats. From Frank Connard's San Juan 24 quarter-tonner (to which he refused to add any auxiliary power), and Steve Haarstick's *Daedalus*, to Henry Williams' aluminum two-tonner *Susan B. Anthony*, RYC supported her share.

Most probably, Henry Williams has raced more miles than any other skipper has in RYC history, from several Mackinac and Lake Erie races to the Newport to Bermuda races. Most of his racing was done in "tonners," *Susan B. Anthony*, *Dorothy Gale*, and *Audrey Two*. Gunther Buerman with his *Eclipse* in the half-ton class was successful racing on the East Coast during the 70s and 80s.

None of the tonners were more successful than Tarry Polidor's Kirby designed 30-foot overall *Wild Card*. A West System wooden beauty crafted by Stu Sill was light enough that without its keel two people could heft the hull. Tarry eliminated all bad dreams about through-hull fittings by designing a hollow support strut for the propeller shaft that served as the seawater inlet for cooling the engine. With proper ballast *Wild Card* measured in at 21.7 IOR or half-ton.

The North American Half-Ton Championships were held



Photo by Fran Cruikshank

Up or down?

at RYC in 1979, the week after the Youngstown Level Regatta where Tarry Polidor's *Wild Card* and Gunther Buerman's *Eclipse* trounced all of the Lake Ontario and eastern Lake Erie competition. Boats attended this regatta at RYC from the Detroit area and from Grosse Pointe YC in particular. The LOI that year served as the long-distance component of the regatta. The race back from Stony Island saw a gunwale duke-out between *Wild Card* and the Thompson Brothers' boat from GPYC. The visitors squeaked out a few boat length leads to cross the finish in victory for the distance race and ultimately the regatta. *Wild Card* settled for a second and *Eclipse* was third for RYC.

A couple of years later at the Grand Traverse Bay Yacht Club the next Half-Ton National Championships were held and RYC took revenge. The same basic format consisted of course racing and medium and long-distance races. More than a dozen hot boats competed. *Wild Card* won three of the course races and the long-distance race to win the title. *Wild Card* remains the only RYC yacht ever to win a US championship.

Jim and Marge Robfogel outfitted a Charley Morgan designed Heritage One Tonner in 1975. Its inaugural racing was done in one-ton classes in Annapolis. Hot-shot sail makers and riggers had a ball outfitting this *Ping* for a few months before it was shipped to Rochester for more safe and caring racing. *Ping* was particularly renowned for her two-person tiller necessary for control on reaches and runs.

Like the rest of the IOR rule designed boats, eventually these ton boats got more and more extreme and the costs continued to climb out of range of those the rule was initially intended to "protect." Now these rockets race in the PHRF fleets at RYC and around the country giving crews down wind thrills in every big blow.

## REGATTAS OFF LAKE ONTARIO

After our handicap racers have competed in 10 or so Freeman Cup races or 10 or 15 Youngstown Level Weeks and LYRA regattas, a significant number leave Lake Ontario to try their luck elsewhere. Lake Ontario is a central location for access to well-known racing venues away from this last (and greatest) of the Great Lakes. Turn left out of the Genesee River piers and with the help of the Welland Canal to reach lakes Erie, Huron, Michigan and Superior. To the right and down the Oswego Canal to the Hudson are the waters of Long Island Sound, Newport and Annapolis, not to mention Key West. And to the right and straight ahead down the St. Lawrence are the mighty waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Canadian Maritimes.

Lake Ontario is a small lake and breeds a disproportionate number of hot handicap racers. They generally do well in other venues and, some, very, very well. Tim Kinsella, John Odenbach, Jon Heinrich, Jim Robfogel and Frank Shumway, to mention a few Rochesterians. And there are many more from popular

## PAST TRADITIONS/NEW DIRECTIONS: 1978-2000

Toronto across the Lake. One might compare the Lake Ontario sailors to the Portuguese in the voyages of exploration. There are not too many of them, but they are most always there first.

In *Margaret, Susan B. Anthony, Dorothy Gale* and *Audrey Two*, Henry Williams and many Rochester crew members went out to the end of the pier and turned left or right to participate in the following off-lake races:

- the Newport to Bermuda Race,
- the New York Yacht Club Summer Cruise,
- the Onion Patch Series,
- the Long Island Fall Series,
- the Annapolis Fall Series,
- the Columbus Cup,
- the Port Huron to Mackinac Race,
- the Chicago to Mackinac Race,
- Lake Erie Race,
- the Cross Cup (inter-lake races with one or more teams from each of the Great Lakes),
- the J 44 North Americans,
- the Little Traverse Bay Series (Lake Michigan),
- the Buzzard's Bay Spring Racing Series,
- the Super Mackinac Race (Port Huron around the Cove Island buoy through the straits from Mackinac to Chicago: the longest fresh water race ever),
- the Chicago to Port Huron Race,
- and the Cabot 500 Series (a six race distance race series celebrating the 500th Anniversary of Newfoundland).

In seven Newport to Bermuda races, 21 Port Huron Races and 13 Chicago races, it is difficult to sort out which race was which, but some episodes are indelible.

## ON THE FRESH

From 1976 to 1980, Jim and Margy Robfogel raced their Heritage One-Ton 37 in Lakes Erie, Huron and Michigan. Their first outing off Lake Ontario was a near disaster. To get to the start of the Lake Erie race in Buffalo, they spent the bicentennial July Fourth transiting the Welland Canal, watching the Tall Ships parade in New York Harbor on portable television. Not yet understanding that Lake Erie was shallow unlike Lake Ontario, they promptly hit a rock upon exiting the canal, the worst grounding they have ever had to this day. Lesson learned- look for those little dots on the chart. But the race was worse. Lake Erie put up her fiercest storms for two days to batter the fleet with squalls clocked at 80 knots by the Coast Guard. By the finish off Toledo Beach, Ohio, they were beating into 40 knots with only a storm jib and triple-reefed main. All hands, nine RYC members, were on the rail as no one could bear to go below and Gunther Buerman was at the helm. Suddenly, out from

underneath the main, appeared the huge bow of a lake freighter they had crossed without seeing it. All on board were sufficiently terrified to learn another critical lesson—always keep a watch no matter how tired and cold you are. But the two boats behind, that they were racing to the finish, were impressed!

Lake Erie never treated *Ping* very well over the years but in 1979 she had a great Mackinac Race, placing third overall and third in class. It was more *Ping*'s weather, a light air beat, and the leg from Cove Island to Mackinac was just her stuff. All night long the crew played the shifts and picked off boats on every tack. They arrived at the island so early that they had an inside slip in the harbor with the big guys. The main street of Mackinac, all bars and fudge shops, must be one of the best places to party after a good race in the world. And party they did. As everyone who races knows, it is partly the challenge to oneself that is the reward, partly the friendships forged among the crew who live and work so closely together, and also partly the new friends from other clubs that one meets and meets again another year that makes yacht racing such an addictive sport.

## ON THE BRINE

Howie Reekers and Henry Williams cut their teeth on their first Bermuda Race aboard Arthur Hughes' *Lady Linden* (Arthur Hughes achieved one of his life-long goals: to win his division). The celebration that followed was even more formidable than the race and included drinking stingers out of the Lipton Cup donated by the tea baron. Leaving the place of revelry with sea legs still in control, Arthur tripped and dropped this enormous silver trophy down the steps to the lawn. Clang, clang, clang, clang went the trophy. The entire crew rushed down to see it.

Severe damage had been done, but Arthur sauntered over, picked the trophy up, dusted it off and, grabbing it by one of the handles, went off to bed.

In another salt-water event, Henry sailed with the New York Yacht Club Summer Cruise (the gentlemanly term for "race"); the event was held in some of the most beautiful waters in Maine from Mount Desert Island north (east). There was one problem. The event was in July, and July in Maine means fog. The New York Yacht Club does not cancel races, so racing in the fog was the name of the game. They quickly became hero navigators by finding a boat with radar and sticking to it like glue. With full time people on the depth sounder and the Loran (no GPS then) the Rochester contingent did very well considering they had no idea how or where they went or at what point the races finished.

Jim and Marge Robfogel first bought their Freedom 44 to cruise, but the itch to race occasionally took over. Partly for fun, but partly as an exercise to ready the boat for an Atlantic crossing, they entered the Marion-Bermuda Race in 1983. Paul Petronello and Tarry Polidor completed the crew in the short-handed class. The first leg, a light air beat in foul current out of Buzzards Bay was not good for a heavy cat ketch loaded with gear and spares for extended cruising. But the wind-Gods smiled and miraculously sent a front with northwesterly winds for the rest of the race and they jibed downwind all the way to Bermuda finishing second elapsed, second in class corrected and second in the short-handed division. Against a fleet of 165 boats including Swan 65's and custom racers, *Ping* again got a prime mooring spot on the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club wharf and proudly flew the RYC burgee. Jack and Cynde Hay soon joined them in *Newsboy*. The Hays were also trying out their ocean sailing techniques by racing to Bermuda that year.



Hank Stuart and crew in the Caribbean

## CARIBBEAN CAN DO — 1995 ANTIGUA RACE WEEK

Led by Peter Pape and Hank Stuart, a group from The Rochester Yacht Club chartered a boat to race in the 1995 Antigua Race week. A crew of 10 able-body seamen was assembled and crew training commenced immediately. Training sessions were held during the fall and winter at a large conference room, where tactics, local events and even sail handling techniques were discussed and simulated. A mock deck was arranged and pails used as winches. Cliff Sertl spoke to the group about his previous experience at Antigua Race Week.

As luck would have it, a brand new Swan 53 was substituted for the original 46 that had been sold from under the group. So, five more bodies were added to the team and dry land, dead of winter practice sessions continued. The team consisted of RYC members:

Peter Pape    Hank Stuart    John Murfin    Rob Carson  
Paul Chechak    Joel Roemer    George Lusink

The crispy new yacht was delivered to St. Martin and the crew was required to sail it to Antigua. The sail to Antigua was beautiful. What a night under the stars it was with salt air in your hair. Flying fish would unexpectedly board the boat during the night. By daybreak Antigua was in sight. Motoring into harbor was made especially difficult by a fuel valve in the off position that took an entire day to find.

Official photographers were very busy with still and video images of the racing and the lay day party at Antigua Yacht Club. Paul Chechak rigged a video camera on the aft rail, which caught all of the fine crew work, laughter and cries for more grinders. The entire crew would suddenly notice the yacht *High Tide* as she sailed into sight. Her all female crew was a delight to see at a major event such as this. The fact that they all enjoyed sailing without shirts made their presence particularly distracting, of course!

Somewhere the results of this regatta were posted, but the actual performance of this crew on the race course was questionable and not of public record. They were successful in proving that a Caribbean adventure can provide a wonderful lasting memory of great friendships, great sailing and plenty of laughter.

## OTHER ONE-DESIGN FLEETS

### FROSTBITING

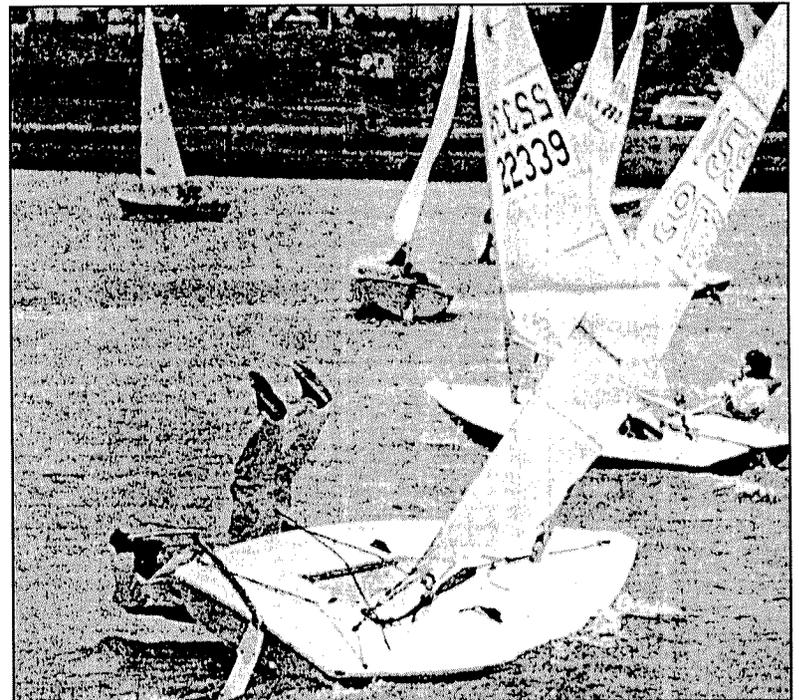
Starting in the middle of October, a bunch of ragged-looking sailors in overalls and bulging life jackets converge on the ramp each Sunday for an afternoon of dinghy racing in the turning basin. They are the "frostbiters" and on closer inspection, as first

reported in Chapter III, they rank among the best sailors in town.

During warmer weather these sailors race in one-design fleets as far as Oswego and Buffalo, returning each autumn to RYC to sail dinghies on short courses. Ten to 15 races per day are typical, as are several protests and even more 720s, as aggressive skippers negotiate a short starting line, strong current and gusty winds blowing between the warehouses on the Charlotte side.

As also first described in Chapter III, since the late 1950s the boat of choice has been the Interclub, an 11-foot, soft-chinned dinghy with mains alone. When Lasers first became popular in the 70s, the Frostbite Fleet experimented using them as their boat, but returned to the Interclub, mainly because it was a dryer boat for winter sailing.

Hiking too far---not recommended on a cold day.



To sail an Interclub at all requires a fair amount of skill and even greater courage, as the boats are tippy by nature, round and slippery inside, and tricky off the wind. In New England they race Interclubs with a crew of two, but here they sail them single-handedly.

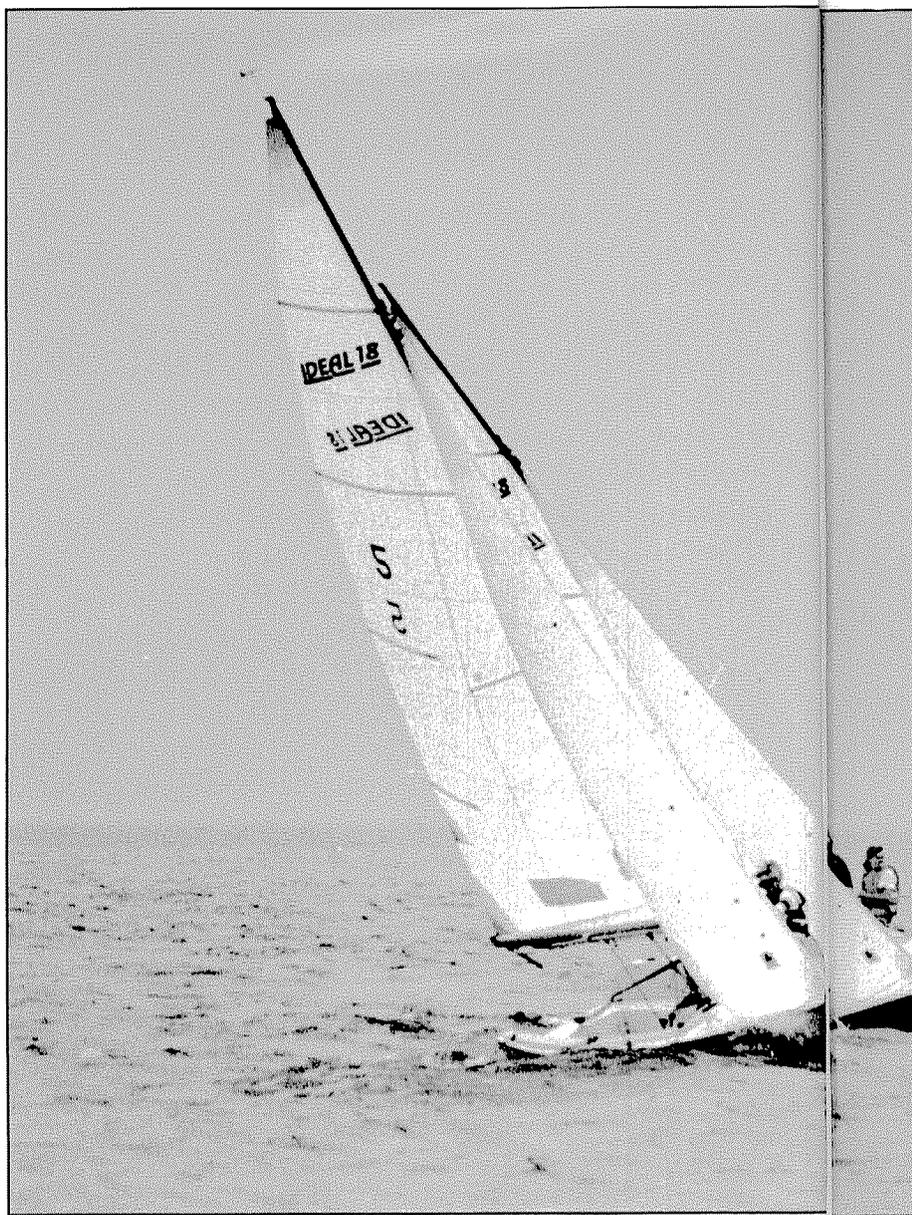
Novices receive two bits of advice on their first day: "keep the centerboard down" and "when in doubt, tack - don't jibe."

Today it's a new cast - The Sertls, (Mark, Cory and Kurt) Tom Kingston, Joe Tomaselli, Marc Fischer, Greg Eiffert, Bob Bryant, Chad Atkins. There are more Madge Cup winners in the Frostbite fleet than any other.

Racing in the confines of the river gives play to racing rules which most of us find little use for- searoom, for instance, and tacking-too-close. Reflex lends more assistance than the rulebook when the choice is to tack away or ram the seawall.

The sum of which is what makes these guys (and girls) the best sailors in town - they handle their boats like rodeo cowboys, know their rules inside and out, and sail more than 100 starts a season. It happens every winter Sunday.

Winter-time frostbite sailing with Interclub dinghies.



## IDEAL 18s

In the front of designer Bruce Kirby's design notebook is a scrap of yellow, lined paper, a piece of a legal pad. The date at the top is May 5, 1989, and the notes on the paper are from a conversation he had with Frank Shumway, an old friend from International 14 days and many winters racing in the SORC.

Frank had recognized that Club-racing participation nationwide was on the decline and he had called Kirby to talk about producing a small, modern keelboat to be used as a day-racer. The boat he envisioned would be quite a bit smaller than Kirby's 23-foot Sonar and a lot drier than his 18-foot Fox, both of which Frank had sailed. So it was to have generous freeboard, a self-tacking jib, and must be suitable for single-handing or a crew of two. It was to be a good light air boat - lots of sail - but at the same time stable enough that human weight was not a major factor in its performance.

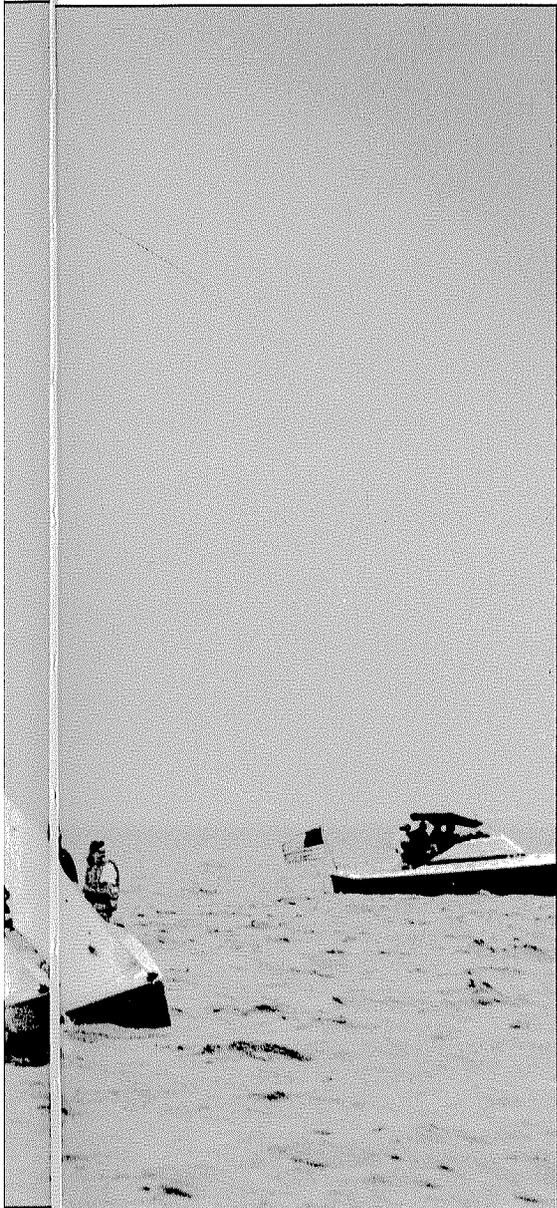
The prospect of designing such a boat was very exciting for Kirby. Here was a knowledgeable sailor who really knew what he wanted. That would save a lot of time. There's a tiny sketch on the scrap of yellow paper, drawn freehand, but looking

remarkably like the Ideal 18 of today.

As Frank and Bruce talked about a boat with an overall length of 17-to-18-feet, Bruce gave it enough overhang to be pleasing to the eye, indicating a waterline length of somewhere between 14 and 14.5 feet. In the end, he chose 14' 4". Other calculations resulted in a target displacement in the neighborhood of 1,200 pounds. They wanted the boat to have a high ballast ratio - something above 50 per cent - which meant the keel would be in excess of 600 pounds, and all other parts of the boat combined would be below 600 pounds.

Kirby did a study of several boats of that general type and size, comparing the displacement to length ratio, sail area to displacement ratio, percentage of crew weight and some other numbers that would help him zero in on the best boat for the job. The result was a lively boat in all airs, with plenty of keel and also plenty of rudder, enabling the boat to be steered easily in heavy air.

The Ideal 18 is innovative in more ways than just its design and construction; its racing format and marketing approach are also unique. Ideals race on short courses (weather legs of one-quarter to one-half mile), and they sail a lot of races (approximately



group of rag-tag sailors typically leaves Rochester in February with boats in tow. They traverse the hills of Pennsylvania and Virginia, fighting snows and ice all the way, and arrive at the Ocean Key House 24-hours later, none the worse for wear. They immediately set up camp, launch the boats and begin to check out the sights and sounds of one of the most intriguing spots in the Florida Keys. In 1995, the racing was held at the Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo.

With 12 plus fleets established, the Ideal 18 has proved to be a winner. Individuals, who may not wish to make a large investment, purchase these boats and lease them back to the Club for program use. These RYC boats are available to all interested members on a full or part-time basis.

### C&C 35 MK III

Wow, what a finish!

All nine C&C 35s on this particular Wednesday night race have finished within 54 seconds of one another. Bragging rights at the bar that night went to the crew of *Windrush*, skippered by Ralph Priesch. Bob Stolze and his crew aboard *Sideband* grab a close second and hold onto their overall lead in the series. The rest of the C&C 35 skippers and crew banter good-naturedly with tonight's winners knowing that next Wednesday night has a chance of being a different story. All skippers and crew in this fleet are capable of winning any race in any given series or regatta.

And so it goes - great one-design offshore races at RYC, aboard 35 foot C&C 35 Mk III's. Formed as a separate division in 1988, as many as 13 boats actively raced during the late 80s and early 90s. Whereas, the hulls, keels and rudders are identical, spars vary but only slightly. These boats race without handicap and, therefore, most mark roundings and finishes are highly contested with all boats within close proximity of each other.

This division has an association of its own, meeting periodically to modify their racing requirements and standards, as well as organizing several social events. Rare is the club which races large boats (35-ft. or greater) in a one-design type fleet without handicap ratings.

Several notable yachting achievements have come from those who sail in this fleet:

- Madge Cup winners --- Bill Stolze and Harry Voss.
- World Champion in 8-Meters --- Harry Voss.
- Winner of Chicago-Mackinac Race --- Tim Kinsella (in his Olson 40.)
- Winner of Performance Trophy (best record for Freeman, Scotch Bonnet, Rochester Race) --- Bob Macaulay (in his C&C 35.)
- Four RYC Commodores --- Stolze, Wright, Roth and Haas.

90 races are scheduled at RYC each season.) Saturday races are scheduled from 1,000 hours to 1,400 hours, and no race can be started after 1300 hours. If a race is in progress at 1330 hours nears, the course is shortened and the race finished so everyone can get in to either socialize or go on to his or her next task. Five races a day are typical. RYC's Fleet Number 1 has also begun to experiment with team and match racing. Sailing on a closed course near the clubhouse encourages spectating by non-sailing members and families. It is the goal of Fleet Number 1 at RYC to involve as many people as possible in a fun, social setting. The Fools Regatta (held around April 1) and the Old Farts Regatta are favorites for getting more people involved.

RYC's fleet grew quickly and has continued to grow to its current 14-boat size. It is not surprising that the fleet includes a number of "second generation" RYC sailors, like Mark and Dan Lawless, Skip Shumway, Kiki Voss and Dave Murphy, as well as some "first generation" names like Gene Faust, Howie and Lynn Low, Mort Polsky, Shane Olney, Sam Morse, Jeff Riesenberger, Sue McCabe, Dawn Shumway and Jack Gilbert.

One of our fleet's claims to fame is its hosting of the best midwinters on record. Held for three years in Key West, RYC's

Over the past 12 years since this fleet began, a wonderful camaraderie has developed among its skippers and crew. In the early years of this fleet, Dave Fingar, owner/skipper of *Kemah* (our first C&C 35 MK III fleet captain) was instrumental in promoting outstanding "Esprit D'Corps" for this fleet. Off the race course, the C&C 35 MK III has proven to be a popular family cruiser. As a result of this dual racer/family cruiser functionality, great competition and camaraderie, the fleet has grown quickly and remained active.

Bottom line, this fleet has fun with family and friends doing what they enjoy most -sailing!

The original owner/skippers are shown in the adjacent picture just coming off the race course.

## RACE MANAGEMENT

As the race management chairperson in 1978, Tarry Polidor's improvements included revamping the sailing instructions into the detailed book format that we still use today.

For many years, the olympic circle marks were set by anchor. Quite often the marks would drift far from the original location or would be missing altogether. To make the marks more permanent, Tarry's idea of filling a tire with concrete and the end of a cable line and securing the other end of the cable to the mark worked well. In fact, it was the way the olympic circle marks were made from that point on.

Tarry ran many of the races, and also had several assistants to help. Once his year was up, luckily, John Hayford, a Star sailor, decided to accept the race management chairperson position in 1979. John was compensated with a free club membership and four dollars for each race. John had learned how to manage races by working with Dick Kemp, reading from the race management handbook and other articles, and understanding the needs of the sailors being an experienced racer himself.

One of the areas John excelled in was creating a team climate by bringing on kids from the Club and the local high school. Chip Evaul who was hired to help out during a large J 24 event in 1979 dubbed this team the "All Kid Crew." John enjoyed this young group and gave them many responsibilities from fixing and cleaning boats to running their own courses and using firearms.

It wasn't all play though. After working about a year in the old RYC Race Committee Boat, the Club purchased a newly renovated, seaworthy lobster boat, eventually named the "*George Newell*." It was a welcome addition to the race committee. John recalls that the boat even came with radar. However, it was used only once because it had such a draw on the battery that they were afraid they wouldn't be able to start the boat and get back into shore.



In John's first year, RYC hosted the Women's Nationals and the Women's World Championship. For these events, a USYRU professional race management team was brought in to manage the regattas. John and his crew watched and learned how this professional team worked. What the USYRU team did was truly innovative at the time. Every course was set and plotted on chart paper, each member had a specific role, and everything was crisp and sharp.

This professional race management team had such a profound effect on John and the "All Kid Crew" that it set the stage for change in race management at RYC. Many different ideas were discussed, but eliminating the olympic circle and setting all courses seemed to be the most prominent one.

To give RYC sailors a taste of the "new" race committee, on Sundays, courses were set using buoys. Because it was an experiment, the sailing instructions didn't include this type of racing format. So, the race officer would describe what course they were setting over the VHF radio before each race. Many sailors appeared to like this new change. However, because of some opposition, it would be another 10 years before RYC would completely eliminate the olympic circle.

Because of the changing atmosphere and the increased intensity of racing, two distinct positions began to evolve and are still around today. The first is the race management chairperson, which changed into a volunteer position. This person has many different tasks such as preparing budgets,