

# CLIPPER

QUEEN CITY YACHT CLUB — JULY/AUGUST 1999

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## QCYC's singled handed racers shine

Fleet pounded by a major storm a few minutes from the finish

Queen City sailors did the club proud in the 25th Lake Ontario Singled Handed Association's 25th Anniversary two-race event on the August 1st long weekend. QCYC had no less than nine of the 20 boats scheduled to compete in the races, from PCYC to Youngstown on Saturday and back to PCYC on Monday. The QC fleet, assembled by Peter Ashby, was one of the biggest in recent years to enter a race not held at the club, including LORC events.

It was also one of the most successful. On Saturday, Peter Broecker on *Veloce* was second over the line and first on corrected time. Tony Araujo, sailing *Bretanha* in her first race, finished third over the line and second overall. Veteran single-hander and QC team captain Peter Ashby finished 6th on *Golden Eye*. The rest of the QC fleet DNFed.

The Saturday race began in threatening conditions and was started only because it appeared the fleet would be sailing away from them. QC's Diane Taylor, the only woman skipper and sailor of the Tanzer 22 *Spirit Warrior*, the smallest boat in the fleet, wisely elected at the last minute not to participate in the race. Diane's decision, proved prescient, when the storm wacked boats unlucky enough not to have made the finish in the mouth of the Niagara River.

From virtually nothing, the wind built to 40-knot force, pinning anyone who didn't get sails down in time. Peter Ashby reports waves on top of the four-footers that were rapidly bearing down on the fleet.

The strike caught Bill Eckersley in *Gone With the Wind*, at a particularly inopportune time, as he was about to finish after sailing a great race. Recognizing that he was on a lee shore, he started his engine to get to safety. However, a line caught his prop, stopped the engine and jammed the rudder. Although Bill, a veteran sailor, was concerned at his plight, remarkably he never hinted at anything more than his customary sang froid while requesting assistance, preventing *GWTW* from being beached.



JC displays his inimitable fordeck technique

No Queen City boats sustained any damage, but the rest of the fleet suffered blown out sails. One unfortunate PCYC competitor lost an entire Kevlar head-sail overboard.

Only seven of 16 boats that started, finished in the abysmal conditions. In fact, the committee boat was unable to re-main at the finish line east of the green buoy in the river entrance.

The return trip on Monday was sailed in much calmer conditions. However, QC sailors again proved their mettle. John Carroll won on *Meridian* and there were good finishes by *Veloce*, *Bretanha* and *Golden Eye*. *Veloce* and *Bretanha* ended the weekend one-two. Though unofficial, QCYC probably gained enough points to win the series challenge against the much more experienced PCYC single-handed fleet.

More to the point, most QC competitors became confirmed single-handers, despite the storm.

## *"I don't want to be hauling corpses out of the water"* — Rear commodore Graham Dougall

### **Racing is no excuse for ignoring fundamental safety rules**

*You could be disqualified for not giving assistance or not reporting a race withdrawal, Graham Dougall writes*

**A**n event occurred during the Wednesday, July 7th racing that should give us all pause. Although we can look back at the comedic aspects now, it could easily have had tragic results. During the race, *The Sting*, sailed by Jim Finch and Dave Craddock, broached and threw Dave into the water. As Dave wasn't wearing a PFD, it's fortunate he wasn't injured and the water was warm. He was able to tread water until we were able to pull him out of the water onto the Robbins. But as demonstrated during our 1998 Safety Day, getting people out of the water isn't easy. It took three of us on the Robbins to pull Dave to safety.

Several weeks after the incident, while visiting another yacht club, I witnessed ambulance and fire services removing an individual from a yacht after he had fallen from the boat and injured his back. Again, he was only brought onboard with difficulty. It took at least five minutes of preparation to transport the individual safely.

Then I learned that during the Women's Skippers' Race, Zully Neives was hit on the head and had to be transported ashore by the police. Fortunately, Zully is fine.

These incidents beg the question: *Are we ready for the life threatening events that occur in sailing?*

New small craft regulations mandate a boarding device if the freeboard is greater than 0.5 meters. Does every QCYC craft that needs to carry a boarding device have one? If members aren't sure, they should check their boats.

Other questions arise as well. Does more than one person on your crew know first aid and CPR? What happens when only one does and that's the person who is injured?

I realize that it isn't pleasant to think about such incidents. But it's even less pleasant to encounter problems through neglect. I strongly urge all members to plan how to handle such emergency situations. (See the Internet links at end)

Equipment is also important. We have members involved in the chandlery business who would be happy to discuss which PFD is appropriate for different circumstances. I encourage all racers to consider wearing PFDs especially since inflatable PFDs are available and now meet legal requirements. This applies to the race committee as well.

#### **No racing penalty for aiding a yacht in distress**

The first rule of yacht racing is safety. Rule 1.1 covers "Helping Those In Danger" and states that "a boat or competitor shall give all possible help to any person or vessel in danger."

The rules also cover the granting of redress under Rule 1.1 so that assisting boats will not be penalized: Rule 62.1 states: "A

request for redress shall be based on a claim that a boat's finishing place in a race or series has, through no fault of her own, been made significantly worse by giving help (except to herself or her crew) in compliance with rule 1.1."

This type of redress is readily granted. The Jury at CORK granted redress to eight dinghies in one day for coming to assistance when a line squall went through.

Note that not giving aid when required is not only unseamanlike, but grounds for being disqualified. In fact, CYA appeal decisions have upheld the disqualification of racing yachts for *failing* to give help. For information see CYA Appeals numbers 24, 34 and 39.

The point of all this is that people do get injured yacht racing. An average of one racer has been transported ashore because of serious injury during the LORC Open Regatta series. Given that record, it makes sense for all of us to pay more attention to safety on board, whether racing, cruising or day-sailing.

#### **Reporting withdrawal from a race is a safety issue**

The QCYC Sailing Instructions require yachts retiring from racing to report to the Race Committee. Too often, this rule is ignored. But be advised that failure to do so can lead to disqualification.

This isn't a scoring or courtesy issue, but one of safety. When a yacht fails to finish and isn't visible, the Race Committee has to decide whether to initiate the appropriate search and rescue measures. In many cases it isn't possible to report the retirement directly to Race Committee, but alternatives include leaving a note for us at the club house or having another yacht report.

Rest assured the Race Committee isn't interested in seeing yachts disqualified. But neither do we want unreported withdrawals causing confusion and possibly danger.

It would be cold comfort if your yacht sank and it took a while before realizing that you hadn't merely withdrawn without reporting.

You can bet I have a personal reason for hoping racers stick to the rule: I don't want to be hauling corpses out of the water.

#### **Safety Links**

This list isn't exhaustive, but it can be used as a starting point.

First Aid Courses

Canadian Red Cross

<http://www.stjohn-metro.org/>

Water Safety

Canadian Red Cross - Water Safety

Boating Safety

