

# **The History of Sail Boat Racing at Joe's Pond**

Compiled by Susan Bouchard

The history of Sunfish Sailboat Races on Joe's Pond all began in the late 1960s. In 1970, the Caledonian-Record newspaper sponsored a sailing competition to be held at Joe's Pond and the winners were presented a trophy christened, "The Caledonian Cup" at the end of the racing season. The presentation festivities were hosted by Gordon and Barbara Smith, then the owners of the Caledonian-Record Publishing.

The Sunfish Sailboat Races were the brainchild of the late Dr. Marvin Sheffield and were supported by the late Dr. Fred Silloway and Ned Hamilton. Ned recalls the three of them racing around the islands and shortly thereafter, others joined in. At that time the Sunfish sailboats were selling for \$599 at Ned's sporting goods store, Peter Glenn Ski & Sports and he couldn't keep the boats in stock. Ned was nominated as the first Commodore with the competitions starting as doubles only. In 1976, it was expanded to include singles as well as doubles, now under the direction of its second Commodore, Donald Walker.

Don Walker spoke of how much he loved his time as the Commodore and the fun he had every Sunday with his assistants, Eileen Morrison and Ellie Bertrand. He took his position very seriously, not hesitating to penalize a sailor who violated the regulations but was well liked and respected by all the competitors. He recalls that most races were attended by 20 to 30 boats and on one Labor Day weekend there were over 30 sailboats competing. Every summer, Don and his wife Audrey would host a pancake breakfast at their camp. When Don became the Commodore, he began inviting sailors and their families, which grew the amount of guests to over 100 people. It was a wonderful way to strengthen and encourage a sports community focused on the ideals of a friendly competition.

Prior to having a home on Joe's Pond, Fred Bertrand recalls trailering his Sunfish to the races. No matter how busy his schedule was, it was very important for him to be at the lake on Sundays so he could race. Fred remembers one of the sailors had a medical event and his wife, Ellie, who was one of the scorekeepers on the Commodore boat, jumped in to help the sailor. The next day in the newspaper it was reported that Fred

Bertrand saved the sailor. One Labor Day weekend, the organizers decided to hold the event in the second pond where the wind was very tricky, not to mention maneuvering through the narrows just to get there was a challenge.

Jamie Stewart tells the story of how his father (Bob Stewart) and Gordon Smith would race together in the early days. Jamie said "This involved two guys who were more into the social scene than being competitors. The only race they won was one with such terrific wind they had the most weight in a boat to keep it upright. Another feature on race day were the chase boats. My job was to follow (staying out of the way) but to supply dry cigarettes and cold beer during the race. It became an art form to toss beers to a racing Sunfish without knocking the sailors overboard or worse. It did not take long for the Commodore to ban chase boats. Gordon and Bob had a great time racing but totally enjoyed the end of the Season party more."

Diane and Don Sherwood shared the following story. One rainy night when Bob Lockwood was the Commodore of the JPA Sunfish Races, we had a party at his camp on the big island. Of course, we all had to arrive by boat, and visibility was limited. As we neared the island our boat hit something that caused the motor to stop. We realized we had cut a line from a buoy in place for the next day's race, so located the buoy and brought it to the party. Bob said not to worry, that he would find the line the next morning and take care of it. No more thought was given until later in the summer at the "Caledonian Cup" party at the Smith camp over Labor Day weekend. The usual awards were presented and then Commodore Lockwood made a "special presentation" to non-sailor, Don Sherwood. It turned out to be a tightly twisted and knotted mass of rope that Bob had wound around his propeller the morning that he went out to locate the severed line! To this day, it remains mounted and shellacked on a wood plaque as Don's non-sailing award, placed alongside Diane and their son David's sailing awards!

Ray Rouleau remembers wanting to participate in the sailboat races when watching all the colorful sails racing around the lake every Sunday. He recalls being nervous initially since it was a new sport, new boat and he had no idea of the rules. Ray describes a memory that he calls "A BAD WINDY DAY". We started with a strong wind and I decided to cleat in and lean over

the edge of the boat and hang on for dear life. A gust of wind caught my sail and the boat capsized. My wedding ring caught on the boat rivet and nearly took off my finger. I quickly got on the rudder to upright the sail forgetting that it was cleated. Now the sail was all over me (you never upright the sail when it is cleated). I didn't forget that my finger was badly damaged as I fought my way for air. I uncleated and up-righted the boat just as the safety boat pulled up. The Commodore realized it was a "bad wind day" and cancelled the race. I went to the hospital, the ring was cut off and several stitches were needed! I still have a scar to remind me.

Lee Erdman said that Joe's Pond and sailing for the Caledonian Cup are two joys in life. He learned to sail on Long Island Sound and jumped at the chance to sail for the Caledonian Cup in the 1970's. He has sailed both singles and doubles with different family members including his three daughters, Heather, Heidi and Tricia and his nephew, Matt Nichols. He enjoys teaching his grandchildren how to sail and some of the lessons he is passing on to them are to follow the leaders of the Single Division to get a good start and not getting too close to the edge of the pond where the winds are funky and sometimes nonexistent. Another important lesson for sailing doubles is shifting the weight in the Sunfish in order to sail flat and maximize speed. He plans to sail for the Caledonian Cup for many years to come.

Susan Bouchard remembers sailing with her brother, Jay Chatot, in the early days when all sailors had to race double. She was always the Captain's mate; she never soloed in any race except once, when her father made her race in the Powder Puff. Susan was reluctant to race but to keep her father happy she did... At the starting line, Susan was struggling to manage the boat and hit the potential winner's boat. This female sailor yelled "360" which frustrated Susan as she really had no idea what she was doing. Susan always enjoyed being on the lake watching the races; but had no interest in competing. However when she was dating her husband, Butch, and he came to Joe's Pond the first time, she thought she could show him that she was a sailor! It didn't take long before Butch realized the depth of her sailing abilities and happily took over commandeering the boat. In the mid 1980's, Bob Lockwood became the Commodore followed by Tom Dente. A drop off in participation of the races began in 1994 with the last season of racing in 1998.

Susan Bouchard and Tom Dente resurrected the Sunfish Sailboat races in 2016 with 17 boats participating and there was excitement to continue the races. Since 2017, the Caledonian Cup races are held three times during the summer with the final race at the end of August. Tom Dente served as Commodore until 2018 when Joe Hebert then assumed the role. Mark and Rosie Smith continue the tradition hosting the post-race celebration and presentation of awards. Each winner of the Single and Double Division receives a trophy along with their names being engraved on the Caledonian Cup. The Caledonian Cup will be celebrating its 50th year in 2020.

The following table shows the yearly winners:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Name</b>
1970	Burt Morrison & Peter Hamilton
1971	John Ritchie & Jamie/Chip Milne
1972	Marvin Sheffield & Jane Harrell
1973	Marvin & Carolyn Sheffield
1974	Burt & Patricia Morrison
1975	Marvin & Carolyn Sheffield
1976	Fred & Kim Silloway
1976	Marvin Sheffield
1977	Joe, Matt, Tony Calcagni
1977	Burt Morrison
1978	Jamie Milne & Andrea Calcagni
1978	Burt Morrison
1979	Burt Morrison
1979	Marge Jacobs
1980	Fred & Mike Bertrand
1980	Burt Morrison
1981	Bill Hamilton & Jim Craig
1981	Burt Morrison
1982	Pam & Torrey Lamere
1982	Jack LaGue

1983	Gina, Karen, Jimmy Kurrle
1983	Burt Morrison
1984	Carmen & George Irving
1984	Burt Morrison
1985	Lee & Heidi Erdmann
1985	Burt Morrison
1986	Lee & Heidi Erdmann
1986	Burt Morrison
1987	Gina & Karen Kurrle
1987	Lee & Heidi Erdmann
1987	Burt Morrison
1988	Gina & Karen Kurrle
1988	Burt Morrison
1989	Lee & Tricia Erdmann
1989	Burt Morrison
1990	Gina & Karen Kurrle
1990	Burt Morrison
1991	Pam & Scott Palmer
1991	Bob Colombo
1992	Ray Rouleau & Emily Cassani
1992	Bill Hamilton
1993	Lee Erdmann & Matt Nichols
1993	Bill Hamilton
1994	Bob Kimball & Sandee Conn
1994	Gene Long
1995	Jack & Jennifer LaGue
1995	Gene Long
1996	Bob Colombo

1997	Bob Colombo
1998	Matt & Cindy Nichols
1998	Bob Colombo
2016	Jamie Milne & Pam Hamilton
2016	Bill Hamilton
2017	Lee Erdmann & Charlie Roberts
2017	Bill Hamilton
2018	Joe & Susie Cassani
2018	Jack LaGue
2019	Lee Erdmann & Charlie Roberts
2019	Jack LaGue
2020	Lee Erdman & Ava McCann or Matt Nichols
2020	Jack LaGue