

# SHACKLES & CRINGLES



SPRING  
2023



# The Commodore

Hello sailors!

I trust everyone has been spending hours on the hiking bench in the off-season. I only get credit for having the occasional thought to do it – a reoccurring thought I've had over the last few decades. Maybe next year. Soon the legs will be complaining about that lack of attention. But bring it on!

The 2023 season started with boats from the Great White planning to go to the **mid-winters in Florida in March**. Sadly, the regatta was shut down by the Red Tide. But with 12 boats already in Sarasota (including two Canadian boats), the gang decided to run their own regatta. We are grateful to Chris M. who was our reporter on the ground, sending daily updates and photos of the reorganized sailing races. Find out more from **Michael Heinsdorf's post-regatta report** on the fun that was had. Thank you, Michael, for the story, and thank you Ralph Glass for sending it our way.

As I bragged in the last Shackles, your CAA executive is hard at work. Master Maslowski is organizing a **rules session on April 14 at St James Town Sailing Club**, hosted by Olympic sailing coach and international juror Pat Healy. Chris is also organizing two race training sessions: one for advanced racers in June and one for intermediate races in the summer. Again, stay tuned for details.



*Mr. Mas has been busy organizing CAA clinics. Thanks Mas!*

You likely also know that the CAA has partnered with Rondar Race Boats UK to design, develop and manufacture a class-legal Albacore. The goal is to have the first produced hull on the starting line of the Internationals this summer, sailed by Mr. Busy Maslowski. This project has led me to have conversations with various class members on both sides of the big pond, but a conversation that was special was with our very own David Weaver, a long-time Canadian racer and multi-decade chairman of the Albacore International Rules Committee.

Our new CAA executive member Leslie Boctor (Communications) did an interview with David to capture his experience in the class dating back to the sixties. Look for it on the CAA website. David's reflections got us thinking about the love for this boat that stretches across the country. How could we capture it and better connect with one another? In a stroke of perfect timing, albacore owner Tom Saunders reached out to CAA a few days later, asking to join the fleet.

He's been spreading albacore passion in Manitoba, and as club Commodore, is growing the fleet at West Hawk Lake Yacht Club. Tom has a lifelong connection to the boat. In this issue, he's shared stories about the history of albacore racing in Manitoba, the local boat makers, and his drive out to Manitoba to get reacquainted with his Dad's Fairey Marine. We're delighted to have his slice of albacore history from the Prairies. The cover photo of this issue is from Tom's collection. Looks like a happy day on West Hawk Lake in the sixties.

Look out for a survey coming to your inbox soon. We would like your input! Tell us what you want to see from your executive and the CAA. Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts. Finally, we encourage submissions to Shackles – articles, pictures, updates, regatta write-ups – anything! Look forward to seeing you all soon.

Cheers,  
Raines  
7919





# 2023 RACE SCHEDULE

## MAY 2023

Friday Night Outer Harbour series begins **May 5** every week

Harbourmasters Outer Harbour series begins **May 14** every second Sunday (except Aug 7)

## JUNE 2023

US Nationals **June 17-18** Miles River Yacht Club, St Michaels, MD

Toronto Island Sailing Club Regatta **June 17** Toronto, ON

## JULY 2023

Hampton Annual One Design Regatta **July 8-9** Hampton Yacht Club, Hampton, VA

Ontario Championships **July 15-16** Hamilton Bay Sailing Club, Hamilton

Westwood Sailing Club Regatta **July 24** Toronto, ON

Albacore International Championships **July 29-August 5** Abersoch, UK

84th Annual One Design Regatta **July 22-23** Fishing Bay Yacht Club, Deltaville, VA

## AUGUST 2023

Governor's Cup **August 5-6** Ware River Yacht Club, Gloucester, VA

Mooredale Sailing Club Regatta **August 12** Toronto, ON

St. James Town Sailing Club Regatta **August 26**. Toronto, ON

## SEPTEMBER 2023

Long Distance Race **September 1** West River Sailing Club, Galesville, MD

Bill Heinz Memorial Regatta **Sept 2-3** West River Sailing Club, Galesville, MD

Canadian Championships **Sept 15-17** Thornbury YC, Thornbury ON

President's Cup **Sept 25-26** Potomac River Sailing Association, Alexandria, VA

## OCTOBER 2023

North American Championships **October 7-9** Miles River Yacht Club, St Michaels, MD

Corsica Annual One Design Regatta **October 14-15** Corsica River Yacht Club, Centerville, MD

# RACING RULES CLINIC



**Friday April 14 6:30-9:00 pm**

**Presented by Patrick Healy, former Canadian Olympic Sailing Coach**

Understanding racing rules is essential to enhance safety on the race course, fairness in the sport, and a key element of tactical sailing. Pat is the former Canadian Olympic Team coach for the Los Angeles, Seoul, and Barcelona Games, in which Canada won five medals. He is also a World Sailing International Judge serving on the Sydney and Beijing Olympic juries and most recently the chief judge at CORK. Pat will review some of the patterns and rules that get sailors into trouble at marks and the starting lines. The second half of the clinic will cover questions submitted by participants. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from an international judge and sailor with a wealth of experience

**Location:** St. Jamestown Sailing Club, 10 Regatta Road

**Cost** \$15 - Pizza is provided

**Please contact Chris Maslowski** to secure a spot: [maslowc78@gmail.com](mailto:maslowc78@gmail.com)

“ If you think that the Racing Rules of Sailing are easy, then these courses are real eye-openers. A simple basic rules seminar is something that everyone should attend. I am so convinced of this that I think it should be mandatory for anyone who decides they want to be a community club skipper, boat captain, or casual racer.

Henry Pedro, Shelbourne, NS



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# SAVE THE DATE

## CAA Race Training Sessions

Hosted by top Albacore class racers, these clinics will include on-the-water training and classroom sessions.

**Location:** Toronto Outer Harbour sailing club to be confirmed.

**Time:** 9 AM -5 PM

**Saturday June 8:** This advanced session is geared for racers who finish consistently in the top quarter of the fleet. **Ten boat maximum.** Applicants will be accepted on a first-come basis and subject skill level is required.

**Saturday July 8:** This intermediate session is geared toward the intermediate-level racer. Ten boat maximum. Applicants will be accepted on a first-come basis.

Interested participants contact **Chris Maslowski** [maslowc78@gmail.com](mailto:maslowc78@gmail.com).





## **SPARE PARTS NEEDED!**

**The Polonie Boy Scouts tribe** is looking for parts to fix up a fleet of old donated Albacore hulls. If you have any spare boat parts, sails, spars, or foils, please contact Adam Kubik at 289.600.3581 or [ahkubik@yahoo.ca](mailto:ahkubik@yahoo.ca) or [polanie@karpaty.zhpkanada.org](mailto:polanie@karpaty.zhpkanada.org).

Tribe Polonie has been restoring old Albacores to teach sailing to scout groups at their Barry's Bay location. The Scouts have since benefitted from the generosity of CAA members and the community clubs who have donated parts and sails. The CAA is grateful for the work Adam is doing to keep these Albacores on the water, and for teaching a new generation of kids to appreciate the boats. Keep us posted, Adam!

## 2023 Albacore Midwinters

by Michael Heinsdorf

USA 8125

The spelling error in the email's subject line from the Sarasota Sailing Squadron said it all: "Canceled 2023 One Design Midwinters".

A week prior to the regatta, the Squadron had fired a shot across the proverbial bow with an email stating that they were "...not optimistic about, the effect of the Red Tide Algae Bloom on the Sarasota Bay."

Red Tide, or as science calls it, "harmful algae bloom" is pretty common in Florida, but it doesn't make its way inland that often. As the name suggests, it's an algae that produces a toxin that kills fish, makes shellfish dangerous to eat, and potentially sucks all of the oxygen out of water, turning it red. Remember that last point as it's pretty critical to our story. Red tide is also made slightly worse by global warming, as warm water temperatures encourage it to grow. It is something that you don't want to swim in, or in some cases, breathe in. According to maps by the US Geological Survey, there were reports of Red Tide within Sarasota Bay. Online, it looked legit.

However, as we later found out, there wasn't any visible Red Tide in Sarasota Bay or the Gulf. This was a bit puzzling, as all the Squadron would have had to do to confirm the existence of said masses of seaweed or red-tinted water was go for a short motorboat ride into any of the racing areas. Once the Albacore fleet made our way out on the water, we did not see any evidence of Red Tide (seaweed salad, dead and rotting fish, whale carcasses, etc.). To add a dab of manatee dung icing onto this rotting cake of seaweed, the Squadron held other scheduled events while we were there, such as their Luffing Lassies Thursday sail, Opti Training on Saturday, and an E-Scow series.

However, I'm getting ahead of events. Once the aforementioned email came out, the US Albacore class leadership made the decision to NOT cancel Midwinters and seek out alternative venues, with less than a week's notice given by Sarasota. After many calls by Eva Hogan and Tyler Phillips, no alternative venue was found.

In the immortal, unprintable words of Barney Harris, (of which I'm sure you can get the gist), we just did it. We rolled our own regatta in Sarasota. And a dozen boats, all of them loaded up, either en route, or already at the Squadron (not to mention the car reservations that were non or limited-refundable) showed up at Sarasota Sailing Squadron for a clinic and a couple days of racing.



Since this was not a regatta, I took this opportunity to try out my unauthorized modifications to the HAPCO adjustable shroud system. Surprisingly, Barney did not even come over to look at these modifications, likely because he was busy unloading or keeping track of the two Albacores that he had brought. I'm happy to say that my modifications worked much better than the original setup, which, if it hadn't been for some quick moves by Farley Will in the 2017 Internationals, almost cost USA 8125 a mast as a control line started slipping. To keep things fair, I didn't use them while we were racing on Friday or Saturday.

Back to Sarasota. Most of us showed up on Wednesday and rigged boats. Thursday, Barney and Lars, myself and Lizzie, and Dave and Chris (from here on known as "The Bruces"), went for a leisurely sail around Lido Key. While it was somewhat breezy, it was overall quite pleasant, with consistent breeze in the low teens, plenty of sun, and marginal wave action. We rounded the north end of Lido Key, headed down south along the shore close hauled, and then hit the south channel back in. Chris Maslowski was staying in a boat anchored at one of the marinas, which was crewed by an owner who was more than happy to deplete his beer stash by tossing us some cold ones. As this was happening, we suddenly lost sight of Barney, which is odd when beer is involved. Apparently, he got incredibly distracted and excited by what he thought was a Hylas 47. Once Barney got his excitement under control, we headed back to the Squadron via a pleasant reach.

### **Friday**

The weather forecast was a bit more challenging on Friday. Mid to high teens and consistent breeze. Cloudy. The water was no longer flat. Waves were about one to two feet in height, just enough to be something you had to worry about unless the crew didn't mind getting a wave to face every thirty seconds. Puffs were forecast to be in the 20s, some even hitting the 30s.

The decision was made to do an around-the-island race. Since the breeze was out of the south, the fleet would head out to the channel, hit Mark 12, round it to starboard, and head south, upwind, to Mark 8 (more on this later), also round that mark to starboard and head parallel to the Lido Key shore on a screaming reach, then head back into the Sarasota Bay via New Pass, likely getting stalled under the bridge, then round back up to Mark 12 and back to the beach.

The start was also going to be a bit different than our usual timed start. Instead of a traditional start, we'd be doing a Le Mans start. For those who don't know what this is, it comes from the French LeMans 24 Hours Automobile Race, one of the oldest car races in the world. The Le Mans start involves the driver running to the car, jumping in,

starting the car and racing. As a side note, it's also a start technique no longer used, because it's a bit dangerous. And we did have a bit of carnage - Eva Hogan tipped over her boat on the start line and Tyler Phillips' boom tried to take out my crew.

The Albacore Le Mans start had one rule: one crew member must be out of the boat with their feet on the bottom of the Sarasota Bay. Realizing that The Bruces, who were tall, and some others who fit that vein, may have an advantage in getting out the deeper water with clearer air and a bit of a head start, my crew extraordinaire, Lizzie Ellis, and I planned on positioning ourselves as far out as possible, with as much separation as possible. This put us in the deepest part of the southern side of the starting area that I, as the tallest of the two of us, could get into. Once the start happened, I would pull what Lizzie called a "reverse ninja" (the "ninja" is my sneaky way of getting out of the boat as we come in, as generally Lizzie doesn't know I'm out of the boat until I'm in the water), jump into the boat, and start trimming and steering as soon as possible.

As Lee Mullins started a countdown, Lizzie got the boat ready for a reach (pulling in slack in sheets, pre-trimming the vang, setting the centerboard, and making sure she was ready to go out on max hike immediately). This was highly prescient, as once I saw Lee make what looked like a "go" sign, and I angled the boat off the breeze, we shot out like a bullet on a reach. While my legs were still outside of the boat, we were making massive separation from the fleet, with The Bruces and Tyler rounding Mark 12 in 2nd and 3rd respectively. There was a good 8-9 boat lengths separating us from The Bruces.

As we headed upwind, The Bruces and I made the decision to go to the east end of the channel, with Tyler choosing the west side. Lizzie and I shifted gears from reach mode to upwind mode. This involved a lot of talking about how the boat felt, which was initially a bit constrained and overpowered. We talked sail trim and strategized on the tradeoffs we were going to make over what was going to be a long upwind leg, knowing that we were going to have a screaming reach or run once we got into the Gulf. We were pleasantly surprised to find ourselves keeping up with The Bruces in about 20 knots of steady breeze. Our tuning was working. When we were reviewing RaceQs later, we were hitting a consistent five knots upwind. RaceQs had even higher upwind speeds, some pretty consistent numbers in the 5.5 to 6.6 knot range, which I'm a little skeptical of as the hull speed of an Albacore is technically 5.19 knots. From my perspective, it was a pretty stable and dry ride. I'm not sure Lizzie would agree on how stable or dry the upwind legs were, but they were a blast!

The breeze died once we turned west into the Channel and we started heading out into the Gulf. We were still crossing The Bruces. Bob Bear, who had been out of sight for much of the upwind leg, was still in breeze and was closing the gap to 10-12 boat lengths.

As we approached the Gulf entrance, the breeze started picking up significantly and the wave amplitude was getting larger with the frequency increasing.

This is when I made the call. In our minds, it turned out to be a brilliant call, though it meant that we technically didn't complete the race. During the Skippers Meeting, mention was made of rounding Mark 8. There was one map which I did not take a picture of, which meant I missed that Mark 8 was in the Gulf, not in the Channel, because it was not on the map. I was also not right next to the person holding the map and couldn't see where the finger was when the mark was pointed out (note: we didn't make either mistake the next day). There was a Mark 8 in the Channel in Sarasota Bay which seemed perfectly logical to round. In the spirit of sportsmanship, we tried to let The Bruces know that they needed to round the mark, but they seemed very confused. We understood why when they separated from us and headed to another mark in the Gulf.

My call was to head down on a run about 300 meters off the shore in the Gulf. The water seemed plenty deep, the rollers were big but not as close together, and I could see it getting hairier the further that The Bruces got out. In fact, it looked like they were struggling. And as a backstory, this regatta was the first time that I had sailed USA 8125 in 3.5 years, and the first reach or run that I had done in 3.5 years. So had we gone further out into the Gulf, there was a little question of my skill and ability. I had no qualms about Lizzie's confidence or skill level.

On a very conservative run, with full board down for stability, marginal pumping, marginal movement, and steering with the breaking waves, we were planing and averaging 10-12 knots. It got very calm and very quiet, almost trancelike, which was highly unusual for the two of us as there is normally a lot of back and forth. We were both a little nervous as we'd never gone so fast doing so little work. Lizzie took the opportunity to berate me as I hydrated and had choice words when I offered her the water bottle. Apparently, as USA 8125's newly appointed Boat Safety Officer, I had chosen a bad time to take care of my insignificant need to hydrate.

Turning into the New Pass Channel back into Sarasota Bay we saw some of the biggest rollers of the day. This seemed to me to be a great time to practice gybing on top of a wave. It was an incredible, beautiful gybe. Once it happened, we shot off into the Channel, only to come to a screeching stop as the breeze shut off a couple of houses into the New Pass Channel.

Lizzie, now enjoying her role as Boat Safety Officer, deemed it an appropriate time to engage in personal care such as hydration and chapstick/sunblock application, and informed me as such. This felt like a good time to let Lizzie know that the outhaul wasn't working, and that the rudder had been popping up. When we got to shore, I found that the 12 year-old outhaul line had broken where it was knotted into a hole in the boom. As for the rudder tie down, I'm not quite sure what happened there.



*Author & Helm Michael Heinsdorf and crew Lizzie Ellis Photo credit M. Heinsdorf.*

Once the rudder and outhaul were somewhat fixed, we launched the boat to honour Mark 12 for the finish and had an amazing reach out and back, hitting over 15 knots. We completed our entire ten-nautical mile trip around the island in just under an hour and a half. Over the next couple of hours, boats came in one or two at a time. Notably, Lloyd Leonard showed up with a mast that had clearly met the bottom somewhere and lost. The tip of the mast was about two feet back from where it would normally be. Chris Gorton's initial comment was along the lines of, "I've never fixed anything that bent." However, Bruce rose to the challenge and a couple of hours later, with the help of a couple of palm trees and Tony Zakrajsek, it ended up respectably straight.

## Saturday

For our second day of racing, the plan was to engage in buoy racing using preset marks in the Bay. Breeze was in the mid-teens when we left the dock and stayed in the mid to low teens all day. The water was generally flat but there were still small waves to deal with.

Once the right mark was found and all had congregated around it in preparation for the rabbit start, we had a slight delay to the start of the racing. The rabbit went down the hole. Specifically, Eva Hogan (USA 7970) dumped about a minute or two before the start and they spent some time enjoying the waters of Sarasota Bay. Once she hauled her crew back into the boat, we started - and that's when most of the fleet went to the wrong mark. Only The Bruces managed to get to the right mark. Everyone else was chasing Barney and someone else, when the fleet suddenly turned downwind, and not around a mark.

This turned into a legit race, and once Lizzie and I got clear air, we popped ahead on a planning run, closing a gap between us and The Bruces. We rounded the windward mark in second, with a pretty significant lead over third, and managed to extend that lead upwind. Downwind we played an angle that kept us in between The Bruces and the fleet, resulting in a second-place finish.

The second race saw the wind die down a bit, but it was still pretty breezy, calling for a good amount of vang and the skipper and crew to hike.



*Dave Huber and Chris Maslowski. Photo credit M. Heinsdorf*

For this race, we, along with the rest of the fleet, rounded the proper upwind mark. We were in third at the upwind rounding, headed down, playing the middle of the course with the intent to go down, when the bungee on the jib stick snapped.

Luckily for us, the jib stick stayed in place and I was able to continue on our course downwind, ultimately rounding in second place at the downwind mark. However, there was an issue - what do we do upwind with the pole? There was no quick way to untie or move the pole. So I had Lizzie cut the pole line, which launched the pole right into the water. Oops.

Our second downwind was done college-style, with the skipper holding out the jib, and we quickly learned that the pole is essential for sailing deep angles in the Albacore. We went from second to seventh as a gaggle of boats passed us. We had to work around these boats and ultimately got into a pinwheel at the downwind mark. There was a hole, a very, very tiny hole, just behind The Bruces, and the windward boat that we punched in, did a crash tack onto starboard, accelerated away from The Bruces, and then got back on to the favoured port tack and rode a lift to a fourth-place finish. Racing was canceled for Sunday because of the forecast (which turned out to be wrong).



Ultimately, the top three boats, Christine and Tony, Greg Jordan and crew, and myself and Lizzie, tied with a total of 6 points. This brought in the US Sailing tiebreaker rules, both of which had to be applied. Lining up the scores in order of best to worst finish, first place resulted in a tie since both Christine and I had a 2 and 4. The second tiebreaker rule counts results from the last race.

### **Final Results:**

First Place - Christine and Tony Zakrajsek

Second Place - Greg Jordan and crew

Third Place - Michael Heinsdorf and Lizzie Ellis

## A Slice of Albacore History from Manitoba

*By Tom Saunders, Commodore of West Hawk Lake Yacht Club*

I sail on a lake in Manitoba, just west of Kenora (ON) and I'm a long-time Albacore fan. I have taught in albacores for fifty years, starting in the early seventies. My father and several of his friends brought six Fairey Marine boats over as kits from the UK in the early sixties. We were KC 1228.

Over the last several years, my friends and I have been slowly rebuilding an Albacore fleet at our club in Manitoba. We sail on West Hawk Lake (MB), a meteorite crater that is perfect for sailing. It's round and has no islands or no rocks. In August, the southwest winds blow all the way from Montana. I live in Ottawa now. I am sort of like a kid in a candy store when it comes to buying used Albacores. I pick up boats in reasonable shape, restore them, and then trailer them west to Manitoba when we go out to the cottage. I focus on Skenes. Most of our boats are in the 4500 – 5500 hull number range. We presently have four albacores, with the fifth one coming out this summer and another slated for completion in 2024.



Ideal for sailing: West Hawk Lake. Photo credit: Tom Saunders

**Back to the Fairey Marine boats...** I was four or five years old when the Fairey arrived. All I remember was it was the middle of the night (or seemed like it) and it came in a big wooden box. That was post-assembly. As I understand it, the boats came from the UK as a kit and my dad and his buds assembled them. How they decided on Albacores, I don't know. They were all in the Air Force during the war and likely would have seen Fairey Marine Mosquito fighters and perhaps connected that way.

**Fun fact....** I understand that immediately after the war, when Fairey went back to boat building, they had lots of mahogany plywood that had been pre-painted for Mosquito construction, so many of the first boats came out in RAF grey.

There were four Faireys on West Hawk Lake and two on Caddy Lake which is the next lake over. They were all gone by the early seventies. When I was teaching at Gimli Yacht Club in 1976, I saw one of them there in the lot but as for the rest, unknown. Except for one more...

**Finding my Dad's boat again...**In 2016, we had just walked into the cottage. I had literally just turned on the power and the phone rang. This woman on the other line asked if I was me. I said yes. She said (wait for it) that her father had bought my dad's Albacore, and that her dad had just died. Would I like to buy the boat back? I wasn't so sure I wanted a 55-year-old Albacore, but I was certainly interested in seeing the boat after all those years. So, I agreed to drive to Winnipeg to see it.

The boat was sitting inside a single-car garage. The trailer was last registered in 1971 – in Manitoba, you have to register your boat trailer like your car. The story went like this (and it's a familiar one): her dad had bought the Albacore to take the kids sailing. Dad takes the kids out in a blow, scares the kids silly, and thereafter, they refuse to ever go sailing again. The boat never sees water again. But here's where it gets stunning. Her dad puts the boat in the garage, where it sits for 45 yrs. Untouched. Imagine: for over fifty Winnipeg winters, he parked his car outside in snow and ice, the - 35C temperature, the sun, rain, and hail, while this boat that he doesn't use sits safely inside his only covered parking.

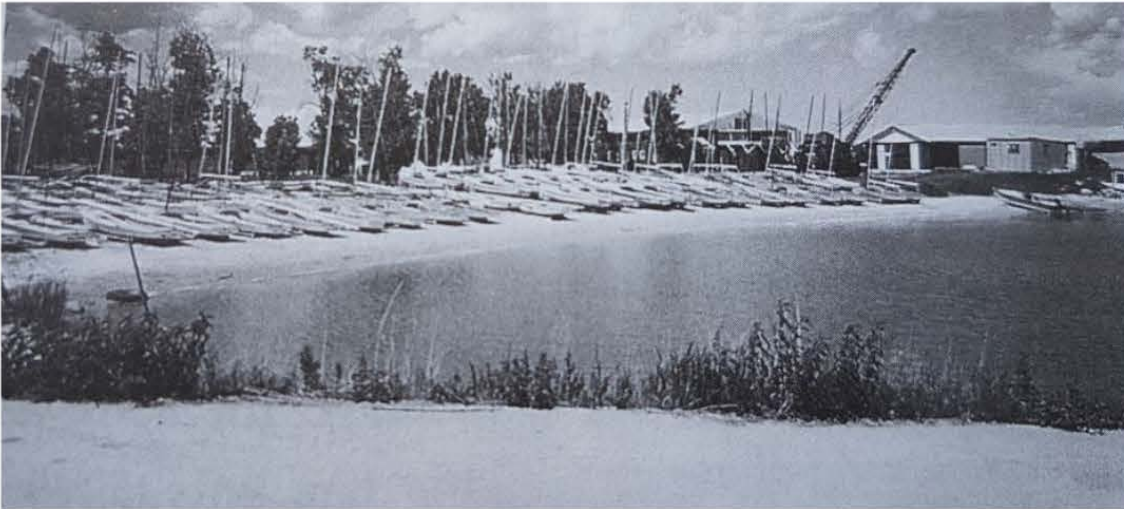
As for the boat, it looked just like it did the day it left our cottage (probably in 1971), right down to the LOWISA decal on the bow. LOWISA stands for Lake of the Woods International Sailing Regatta. These days it's a week-long cruise fest. But back in the sixties, this was a seven-day marathon of hard-core racing. Legs were 20-40 miles around LOTW. In dinghies! This boat had done that regatta in 1968, finishing second in class.

But alas, there was to be no fairey tale ending. First, I really didn't want "another boat" (as my wife would say) and certainly not a wood boat. I was certainly interested from a nostalgia point of view but if I really wanted a wood Albacore, I would be looking for a modern wood Albacore. Not one with a steel c/b that used a block and tackle to raise and lower it. Second, these folks thought they were selling a vintage 1930s Chris Craft runabout – they wanted \$5000 for it. I got a hold of Jeff Beitz and Henry Pedro. Henry put me on to a guy at Hapco who knew wood Albacores. All were of the same view –there was generally no market for wood Albacores and the Faireys were never particularly great boats. They thought it was worth \$1000.

I offered \$1500 just because. But the owners probably took my offer as an insult and then never answered my voice messages or emails. I have no idea where the boat went. And that was the end of me and KC 1228. A sad story, but a better ending than if it sat outside at my cottage, rotting.



**Competitive Albacore sailing in Manitoba** was centered at the Gimli YC through the 1970s. GYC was purpose-built for the sailing competitions that formed part of the 1967 Pan Am Games and had no dinghy sailing background. The arrival of a former 420 world champion Don Freudenberg from Britannia YC changed that.



*Gimli YC Albacore Fleet in the 1970s. Photo credit: Tom Saunders*

Don had two young daughters and needed a “family boat”. Lake Winnipeg, as it turns out, is an ideal Albacore lake --- often with a huge running sea (people in the east just don’t realize how big it is) for which, of course, the Albacore was made for. So Don bought an Albacore, raced it successfully and others followed.

**Manitoba’s local boat maker...** While there were some Skenes and McGruer boats, the vast majority of Albacores in Manitoba were made by a company called Western Sailcraft. Western Albacores were not particularly well-made (I am being kind here) but were the go-to boat for many, simply because they were cheap and easy to buy locally. Nine times out of ten, an Albacore for sale in Manitoba will be a Western boat. The boat company was owned by a doctor in Carmen (MB) who, as a side business, owned a company that made septic tanks. I guess one day he looked at one of his septic tanks and realized if he cut it in half, he’d more or less have an Albacore hull. I know of no other reason why he started making boats. As far as I know, he didn’t sail.

I was the head instructor at the sailing school which Don Freudenberg ran. We had 15 Western Albacores in the fleet. Don died in the early eighties and competitive Albacore sailing in Manitoba more or less died with him. I have heard some older members at GYC are presently restoring some hulls (likely all Westerns) that were lying around in their bone yard. I wish them luck.

## Memories of Albacore Sailing in the 'Good Old Days'

By David Weaver, IAA Chief of Specifications

My first Albacore was AKC 73, a 1961 Whitby Boats GRP hull that weighed in at something over 280 pounds and had a ¼ inch-thick aluminum centreboard (CB). The CB slot was only ¼ inch wide so a thicker wood board could not be accommodated. The CB had a slot cut to the pivot hole and was dropped in place after the boat was launched. Thus, it had to be tied to the boat since it could fall out in a capsize and sink to the bottom of the lake. Racing with these handicaps was good for honing one's sailing skills.

I had chosen an Albacore because it was a popular boat, supported by many active fleets from Ottawa to Sarnia, and was stable enough for sailing with youngsters while being sufficiently nimble for wild planning in a breeze. The quality of sailing was also excellent. Canadian Olympic sailors like Roger Green and Bill Gooderham sailed Albacores as did the British Olympic FD sailor Keith Musto.

By the mid-sixties, the fleet was growing in leaps and bounds and there were too many competitors wanting to sail in the Canadian Championships to accommodate them properly in a single fleet. These regattas were all held on either Lake Rosseau or Muskoka – magnificent venues but not so good for large fleets. The small lake sizes apparently did not permit the use of separate courses. In 1966, the fleet was split into A and B fleets with performance in qualifying regattas required to sail in the Championship fleet. A year later, the sailors were divided into three fleets and, in 1969 with a record number of entries at 187, a Master's fleet was introduced for sailors over 40 years old. Multiple fleets worked well unless we all sailed on the same course and the winds were light. While the fleets had indexed starting times, they could sail into one another and mark roundings could become a fiasco. I was never that fond of light winds in any regatta and trying to round a mark with 40 boats locked gunwale-to-gunwale with everybody screaming at each other was not my idea of fun sailing. However, I must confess that watching it from a safe distance could be quite entertaining.

By the early 1970s, Canada had over 90 sailing clubs with Albacore fleets. 75% of new Albacores were being bought by Canadians, most of them being built here. That record has been consistent all these years – about 75% of newly built Albacores are still bought by Canadians even though we have no current builder. With so many active Albacore fleets, Ontario was divided into 12 districts, each having its own championship. There were regattas practically every weekend and we travelled to different clubs regularly for competitive sailing and comradery with fellow sailors.

The first World Albacore Championships (a title we were allowed to use back then) were hosted in 1971 by the RCYC and attended by the Governor General, Roland A. Michener. Jack Langmaid, sailing with his daughter Nancy, won the Governor General's trophy using his well campaigned molded plywood Fairey Marine AKC 618. He used a simple eye bolt for his jib fairleads. I recall being horrified to see all the holes he had drilled in his deck for fairlead adjustment.

In 1972, I upgraded to a McGruer & Clark GRP hull, AKC 4554. They had managed to reduce the hull weight to the minimum permitted (240 pounds) but the hull was so thin that it was quite flexible. It seemed that one needed a wood boat to get the optimum combination of weight and stiffness for the best boat speed. The downside of owning a beautiful, fast, molded plywood boat was maintenance and the cost of repairs, should a hull become damaged.

The 1975 Worlds were hosted at the Association Island US Sailing Center with the North American and World Championships held back-to-back. One of the UK competitors, Glynn Meredith, had imported a UK-built David Linton composite Albacore, A 5852, for the events with the intention of selling the boat after the races. The GRP hull was very well designed and the deck was a very pretty mahogany with Sitka spruce trim. It was named Merry Eagle and, naturally, I had to have this boat. I recall that my wife was not that impressed when I came home with two boats.

I mentioned earlier that I was not a person who liked light air much, especially drifters. More to my liking was the 1986 Canadians which were sailed out of TS&CC. There were 80 boats registered, the sun was shining brightly and the wind was blowing 15 – 20 knots. Only 16 boats finished the first race, and we were sixth. Not bad, I thought, for a guy my age who spent his working life behind a desk. The second race was cancelled because there were too many capsized sailors and insufficient rescue boats. Everybody went in, but I stayed out for another couple of hours because this was Albacore sailing at its best as far as I was concerned. Merry Eagle was having a great time and so was I. Currently at 48 years old, Merry Eagle is still up to it, but her skipper has slowed down quite a bit.

*Thanks for your personal reflection on albacore history, David!  
We appreciate all your efforts on behalf of our community.*



*You've made it to the end of this extra-long issue of Shackles & Cringles. See you on the water!*