

December 2024

Volume 20, Issue 6

Port Tacks

The Finger Lakes Yacht Club, Village Marina, Watkins Glen, NY

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Please send any comments, questions, or corrections to:

editor@flyc.us

Commodore's Comments

by Mike Sidell

SV Delta G

Thanksgiving has just passed and I'm feeling grateful for a lot of things. First, I appreciate your confidence in me as your new Commodore. I hope to keep FLYC moving forward by enlarging our membership and keeping everyone connected.



I appreciate our past Commodore, Terry. He's such an asset to the marina and the Finger Lakes region. I'm excited about our current slate of officers and directors too.

I'm thankful for the friendships we've made at the marina and our ability to enjoy ourselves while helping others. I appreciate good health, the opportunity we have to spend time doing the things we love, and the chance to live in a beautiful part of the world.

I'm sure you have a lot to be grateful for too. Enjoy the upcoming December holidays and think spring!

- Mike

Vice Commodore's Comments

by John Chesbrough

SV Plein Air



Every year at this time of non activity with the boat I do a mental checklist of the various winterizing steps taken only a few weeks ago. That gallon of anti-freeze that

disappeared into the engine stayed in the engine. The internal water lines are either empty or full of antifreeze. Should I build a wind propelled venting apparatus on the hatch? No, that can wait until next year. Each year the boat survives without dire problems, the wintering efforts did not fail. Bags of Damp Rid and a bucket of charcoal serve to absorb moisture which would otherwise produce undesirable mold and odors.

Moisture has not been a concern here recently. We in the northeast are experiencing an official drought. The severity varies from place to place. In some areas the drought accounts for as much as an 8-inch water deficit. The NYC reservoir system is at 65% capacity, well below the normal 80%. NYC now has a voluntary water use restriction. Prospect Park in Brooklyn had two of its acres burn away, attended by 100 city firefighters. This fall fires in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut have numbered 400+, burning over 7700 acres and causing two deaths.

These statistics don't stand up to the west coast's fires but they are nonetheless very much a concern. Philadelphia, Newark, Wilmington, Norfolk and Central Park had no rain in October. The new normal?

Meanwhile summer temperatures were high, particularly July, which dehydrates surface areas and contributes to algae blooms. Usually the northeast has a steady supply of low pressure systems providing predictable rainfall. This fall much of the eastern US was covered by a stubborn high pressure system. Some of the regions in the Central Appalachians that were flooded by hurricanes this fall are now in drought condition. These weather patterns are being exacerbated by

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unusual atmospheric conditions known as climate change. We need rain but not all at once. What does this have to do with our boating activities? Any storm activity can cause floating debris in the lake. Sudden volumes of rain can cause erosion in streams and lakefront. Lack of precipitation will cause lower lake

levels. The conditions on Seneca Lake will be determined by Mother Nature.

- John

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Rear Commodore's Comments

by Don Swanson



Well, it's happened again. Another sailing season is in the books and the long dark months of winter are now staring us down. But as the cold winds howl and the snow flies, there still exists a myriad of ways to keep this restless sailor going.

Be it boat projects or armchair sailing, I find ways to get through the off season and patiently await spring launch. I trust you have your own projects (boat or otherwise) so I am not likely to recruit your help, but as for the armchair sailing I invite you to come "aboard" to enjoy the thrill of sail racing vicariously via the wonders of YouTube and the interweb. So in addition to my now annual accounting of our season "by the numbers" this month I will serve up a couple ways to do some serious armchair sail racing. We will continue on a topic from an earlier Issue (April 2024 Port Tacks); The Vendee Globe and the IMOCA 60 foiling boats racing this year and finish up with an overview of the annual Rolex Sydney Hobart on Boxing Day.

2024 FLYC Racing Season "By-the-numbers":

Number of Summer Series races: 8

Number of fun races: 4

Number of Summer Series races occurring on the scheduled date: 4 (50%)

Boats that participated in EVERY race (SS and fun): 0, but there were a couple boats/skippers who missed only 1 or 2.

Total number of boat/skipper entries for summer Series races: 58.

Boats that participated in ALL 8 SS RACES:

1 (RC)

SV Independence

Average boats per race:

- SS races 7.3
- Fun races: 5.25
- All races: 7.0

In addition to our own race schedule and related activities we also had a good showing for the annual ABC-FLX cruise to Sampson State park and at the annual SYC Barge Race in September. Hope to see you and your crew next spring and don't forget to encourage your dock neighbors to give racing a try... and while they are at it, join FLYC!

Vendee Globe 2024

Back in April I wrote about the final qualifier race for skippers competing for a spot in the 2024 Vendee Globe - the non-stop, unassisted, single-handed around the world race keeping the three "marks" (Capes: Good Hope, Leeuwin & Horn) to port circumnavigating Antarctica via the southern ocean. The Vendee Globe is considered the Holy Grail for solo blue water racing sailors. Setting sail from Les Sables d'Olonne France every four years, the 2024 Vendee Globe race started on November 10th, 2024 and as of this writing, the fleet is pushing south in the Atlantic with the first "mark", the Cape of Good Hope in their crosshairs.

The Vendee by its nature is brutal, dangerous and by any standard, a risky undertaking. If sailing the southern ocean wasn't difficult enough, the loneliness and self reliance that these skippers endure is beyond most of our desires or expertise. Imagine facing endless low pressure systems, with 50 knot winds and 40 ft seas alone, non-stop, and completely unassisted on a foiling IMOCA capable of 30 kts plus! What makes this year's race more accessible than ever before is the ability of skippers and their

vessels to connect with the outside world via satellite telecommunications technologies. Never before has the armchair sailor been so connected with what's happening on board and in real time. Should make for some thrilling rides and exciting viewing come the southern ocean.

By the time you're reading this, the 2024 Vendee will have been underway for about 3 weeks. Shortly after the boats set off from the start line (Les Sables d'Olonne, France) on November 10th, their first challenge was a line of nasty squalls off Cape Finisterre, Spain. Though a trifling matter compared to the southern ocean it would still provide the first real test of each sailor and vessel, resulting in the first retirement (Maxime Sorel, Fr.) due to a injured foot and an irreparably broken mainsail track. While Sorel's nightmare was playing out, another skipper faced an equally difficult challenge.

On the morning of November 16th, skipper Louis Burton was alarmed to heard a very worrying noise: a "big crack" on board his IMOCA 60 "Bureau Vallée". Upon investigation he discovered a significant structural failure. A large fissure had developed on the midship port side hull topside leading up to and onto the top deck. Using material and tools kept on board he undertook remediation efforts while continuing underway. Recent updates indicate his work was successfully completed and he continues to race. But one must wonder if the starboard side with the same design will fail; and most critically, can his repairs stand up to the relentless pounding awaiting the fleet in the southern ocean? Time will tell. This race has always had a high attrition rate so who knows what will happen? It will be a whole new race when they reach the high latitudes of the southern ocean. After all, there they face the roaring forties, the furious fifties and the

screaming sixties that ring Antarctica in an unbroken ring of treachery.

Interested in more information on the Vendee Globe?

<https://www.vendeeglobe.org/>

On YouTube; Seawolves daily update (user created content) is a bit amateurish, but provides an easy way to stay up to date on the Vendee Globe. The host is a sailor and is technically well versed with both the IMOCA class and ocean racing.

<https://youtube.com/@seawolvestv?si=y0UNeNmNkfIZ8Z3q>

Video; [This is IMOCA sailing](#). A short (~5 minute) video that captures the essence of these amazing sailing vessels and what its like to be foiling at 30 kts.

https://youtu.be/Er0fezf_IeI?si=wYFaNfFCpHCR1T12

Rolex Sydney Hobart 2024:

If the Vendee wasn't enough to keep us armchair sailors attentive this winter don't forget we also have the annual Rolex Sydney Hobart race to look forward to. This venerable Aussie tradition of 78 years features an open ocean sprint from Sydney, Australia across the treacherous Bass Strait to Hobart, Tasmania. So come Boxing Day and you're looking for a distraction from the post holiday slump, tune in to this years Sydney Hobart.

For more information:

<https://rolexsydneyhobart.com/>

Cheers,

- Don

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2024 Season Race Results

The FLYC Race Committee

FLYC Season Race Scores - 2023

			Throw-Outs								2
			Date ->								
			6/1	6/8	6/22	6/29	7/6	8/10	9/14	9/21	
			# Boats ->								7.3
Boat	Owner	Type	Race #1	Race #2	Race #3	Race #4	Race #5	Race #6	Race #7	Race #8	Total
Ellawicious	Bill Trondsen	Pearson 26	1	2	2	8	2	5	1	1	9
Independence	Don Swanson	C&C 25	3	9	4	1	3	6	3	4	18
Tiny Tina	Jeff	Sabre 28	10	5	1	8	1	2	9	3	20
Skylark	Bob Hansen	Sea Sprite 30	5	1	3	8	7	3	9	8	27
Dry White	John O'Brien	Pearson 28-2	12	11	9	3	5	1	7	8	33
Seek Ye 1st	Mike Crouse	Islander 36	12	11	9	8	8	8	2	2	37
Brewster	Jim McGinnis	Hunter 336	12	11	5	8	4	7	5	8	37
Sweetest Thing	Chad	O'Day 28	8	10	6	2	8	8	6	8	38
Tomfoolery	Tom Alley	Alberg 35	12	3	7	8	8	4	9	8	38
Lanikai	Tony Kut yana	C&C 25	4	4	9	8	8	8	9	8	40
Brock	Brock	Yngling	2	11	9	8	8	8	9	8	43
Plein Air	John Chesebrough	Hunter 30T	6	6	8	8	7	8	9	8	43
Voyager	Tom Keebler	CS30	12	11	9	8	8	8	4	8	45
Zephyr	Kris & Jim West	Hunter 306	9	7	9	8	8	8	8	8	47
Ruthie	Howard Cabezas	Catalina 25TR	7	8	9	8	8	8	9	8	47
Magdalena	Margaret Radek	Cal 2-29	11	11	9	8	8	8	9	8	50

Secretary's Column

by Katie Alley

SV Tomfoolery



2024 Annual Meeting

The 2024 Annual Meeting took place at Lucky Hare Brewing Bar and Grill (2 Seneca Harbor Drive, Watkins Glen, NY 14891) on Sunday, November 10th. We gathered at 1100. We enjoyed a burger bar provided by the restaurant.

Agenda items included the presentation of club awards, nominations from the floor for club offices, and election of officers. The summer racing awards were presented at this meeting as well.

The offices that were up for election are listed to the right. Terms of office began immediately following the elections by the membership. Officers serve a one-year term.

The Board includes up to six directors (currently four), each serving a two-year term. Terms are staggered such that half of the directors are elected each year. Nominations for people to fill these offices were made before the elections were held at the Annual Meeting. For a nomination to be valid, it must be seconded and agreed to by the nominee. Voting was done in person and by written proxy submitted to the club Secretary prior to the election. Per the club bylaws, each membership (i.e., each family) has a single vote in club elections.

Following the elections, the new Board appointed the club Secretary and Treasurer, as specified by the bylaws, as well as Chairs to the various standing committees. At this point, the floor was opened to new business.

Current Directors with one year remaining of their term:

- Tom Alley
- Ted Carlton

Directors whose terms were over:

- Sue Morris
- Maggie Martin

Nominations approved at meeting:

- Commodore: Mike Sidell
- Vice-Commodore: John Chesbrough
- Rear Commodore: Don Swanson
- Secretary: Katie Alley
- Treasurer: Denis Kingsley
- Asst. Treasurer: Nancy Sisbarro
- Director (2 yr): Maggie Martin
- Director (2 yr): Margaret Radek

Our club has multiple ways to become involved, both formally and informally. We are always open to new ideas for social events, races, and newsletter content.

- *Katie, FLYC Secretary*

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You can follow Katie and what she's up to on Facebook at "Katie Alley Art" or on Instagram at @katiealleyart.



Figure 1: Our past commodore, happily relieved of his duties.



Figure 2: Don Swanson recaps the 2024 racing season for us.

Socially Speaking

by Margaret Radek

SV Voyager

Hello everyone. Your new “Social Secretary” here. Now, truth be told, I have absolutely NO secretarial skills whatsoever. However, I do love bringing people together and setting a nice table with good eats. So, I hope those skills will help me from getting fired my first season, LOL!

We wrapped up the year at the Lucky Hare where we enjoyed burgers with all the trimmings and marble cake. It was great to see everyone and be able to say so long until next season. That being said, this coming season I am hoping to bring a few more “interactive” and perhaps “theme-oriented meals” to the show. And who knows, I might be able to persuade some of us who are musical to put together

a few tunes after one of our dinners (fingers crossed on that one). Really, the sky’s the limit.

You will be getting heads-up about our dinner plans in our newsletters. Please, if there is something you would like to see happen at the dinner table, just reach out to me and we can try to make it happen.

Happy Holidays to all of you!

- *Margaret*

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Social Committee Chair: Margaret Radek

You can contact me at: social@flyc.us if you have any questions.

From the Outgoing Social Committee Chair

By Maggie Martin

SV Plein Air

We ended the season with our Annual Meeting Event at the new Lucky Hare located at the Marina on November 10th. There were about 35 members attending. It gave many of us a chance to see the changes at the Marina bar. After social hour and a trip through the 'Burger Bar Buffet' they set up for us, we held the meeting outside on the patio led by outgoing Commodore Terry Stewart. Nominations of new officers were announced, and the election was held.

Margaret Radek will be taking the lead on the social committee next year, and is enthusiastic to bring in fresh energy and plans. Let's show her the great support that we have enjoyed that makes it all run smoothly. Have a great Holiday Season and see you in the spring!

- *Maggie*

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True Crime on Cayuga Lake

Reminders for Boating Responsibly

By Katie Alley

Like many others, I am drawn to true crime documentaries. I find the dark side of human nature fascinating as much as it is disturbing. I like learning about how detectives work backwards with evidence to form an incident's story. And as a young, petite woman, I always want to learn new ways to protect myself, avoid dangerous situations, or recognize warning signs of a dangerous person.

I regularly watch *Forensic Files*, an American documentary TV program that shows how forensic science is used to solve crimes and mysterious accidents. A lot of the time, I'll turn it on as background noise on the TV to sleep. I like the narrator's voice and there's a nostalgic, oddly comforting sense to the show, since my mom used to watch it all the time.

This article is nautical, I promise. One Sunday afternoon, I put *Forensic Files* on the TV and crawled into bed to take a nap. The introduction of the episode immediately caught my attention – it mentioned a place called “Cayuga Lake.” In my head, I said *no way, not our Cayuga Lake* – but sure enough it was! I skipped the episode, since I wanted to *actually* watch it and not sleep through it.

The episode, which originally aired in 2006, covered a 2002 boating incident that resulted in the death of a young man named Harry Uhl. Some of you may remember this incident, but for me, it was my first time learning about it and I believe it includes some vital reminders for us to this day as boaters.

On August 17, 2002, 27-year-old Harry Uhl took his fishing boat out on Cayuga Lake for a nighttime cruise with three of his friends. Around 2 A.M., Harry brought the boat back to shore at Myers Point to allow two of his friends to get off and use the bathroom. (Myers Point is a sizable marina and park located on the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake, 10 miles north of Ithaca in the town of Lansing.)

Harry and his 18-year-old friend Nasreen Raza waited on the boat. They did not tie the boat to the dock and the navigation lights on the boat were off. They drifted a short distance from shore into the boating lane. Harry sat behind the boat's wheel and Nasreen sat towards the bow.

SV Tomfoolery

Suddenly, another motorized vessel came out of nowhere at a high speed and plowed directly over Harry's boat, making a very loud noise. The vessel went airborne over the small fishing boat. Witnesses claim the vessel circled without stopping and then left the scene.

Harry stood up, likely to figure out what was coming at them, and was hit directly by the hull, resulting in his death. Nasreen's arm was torn up by the propeller. Though she survived, her arm is permanently disfigured. The state of the fishing boat was absolutely gruesome.



Figure 3: Image via forensicfilesnow.com.

The incident rattled the community and stumped investigators. The town had to reach out to the state for help from vessel-accident reconstruction experts. No one had claimed responsibility for the accident and over 1,200 boats were thought to be docked on Cayuga Lake at the time. Not to mention, the numerous boat launches where anyone could trailer in a boat. Investigators did fly overs via plane and rides via patrol boats looking for any signs.

From the damage done to Harry's boat, investigators were able to determine that the criminal vessel had an inboard/outboard motor and a “v”-shaped hull, as well as a broken propeller.

Harry's autopsy provided more insights. There were chips of white paint found in his wounds. However, no marine life was found in his wounds, leading

investigators to conclude that the criminal vessel was likely trailered and launched shortly before the accident.

This information was released to the public and anyone who knew anything else about the incident was asked to come forward. A few days later, a passenger on the criminal vessel named John Ottenschot contacted police.

John claimed that he was riding on his coworker's boat the night of August 17th and that they had hit something, but they didn't know what since it was dark and cloudy. He identified his coworker and the boat owner as Floyd Wright – who had refused to go to the police with him. John also confirmed that they had trailered the boat and that the boat was on Floyd's property.

The police questioned Floyd and he also claimed that he did not know what they hit. He recalled that they slowed down and turned around after the hit but did not see or hear anything, though witnesses had reported hearing Nasreen's screams. Floyd also stated that he had been drinking that day, but insisted he was not intoxicated at the time of the hit.

With a warrant, police examined Floyd's boat in his barn. Recent, sloppy repairs to the fiberglass and paint on the bottom of the hull were evident. Additionally, a very damaged propellor was found in the barn – which held key evidence for solving the case.

A small piece of foam was lodged in a crack on the propellor. By analyzing the foam under a microscope and shining infrared lights through the foam to determine the chemical makeup, scientists were able to match the foam to the padded seats on Harry's boat. Furthermore, the chemical composition of the paint on Floyd's boat matched the paint found in Harry's wounds.

35-year-old Floyd was charged with failure to stop and report a boating accident (a misdemeanor) and tampering with physical evidence (a felony). He was convicted in 2003 and given the maximum sentence of 4 years in prison. Unfortunately, since there was no way to know his blood alcohol content on August 17th, so he could not be charged with anything relating to DWI. Though, it is worth noting that Floyd's driver's license was suspended in early 2003 due to driving while intoxicated.

John received immunity in return for his testimony. Since the trial, John has admitted that they were both intoxicated that night.

It sounds like this incident had a huge impact on the Finger Lakes boating community at the time. Harry Uhl was considered a local celebrity as a stock-car-race driver. He graduated from Lansing High School, was a talented auto machinist, and loved fishing on Cayuga Lake.



Figure 4: Harry Uhl via forensicfilesnow.com.

It's great that this case received national attention in 2006 on *Forensic Files*. It was certainly a successful example of science bringing about some form of justice, but it also brings up valuable reminders for boaters:

- Fatal accidents do not only happen on big bodies of water or at busy marinas. They happen here, at home on the Finger Lakes, too.
- Always turn your running lights on when operating a vessel between sunset and sunrise, or in conditions of poor visibility.
- Do not drift or loiter in a marina lane, canal, channel, or any traffic lane.
- Never operate a vessel while under the influence of alcohol (or drugs).
- Use extra caution when operating a vessel at night or in poor visibility conditions.
- Always maintain a lookout.
- Proceed at slow speeds when navigating in the dark, poor visibility conditions, unfamiliar areas, busy waterways, or close proximity to shore or harbor entrances.
- Always report boating accidents.

- After a collision, ensure the safety of your crew and your vessel. Then, check the scene and assist other vessels involved if you are able. At the very least, stay at the scene.

This accident and loss of life was ultimately preventable and reminds us all to be responsible boaters. This case particularly hits home for me since I used to boat regularly on this part of Cayuga Lake. Additionally, the victim, Harry, was only 27. He was a well-loved figure in the community and had most of his life ahead of him. Unfortunately, it was abruptly cut short. This is why it is important to teach responsible boating to everyone on the lake.

As an interesting side note, the *Forensic Files* episode got two Finger Lakes facts incorrect (or needed to add more context). First, the episode names Cayuga Lake as the “biggest” Finger Lake. It

is the longest, but Seneca is the deepest and has the largest volume of water. Second, the episode mentions that “the currents were unpredictable” when discussing how debris from the accident would be difficult to find. Cayuga Lake does not have official currents like the ocean, though determining the direction debris may have floated could be difficult.

You can read more about the case [here on forensicfilesnow.com](http://forensicfilesnow.com). You can also read more about the court case [here on justia.com](http://justia.com). And finally, you can watch the [Forensic Files episode, Season 11, episode 14, “Dark Waters”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...), for free on Youtube.

- Katie

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Editor's Corner

by Tom Alley



'Tis the Season of Busy

Thanksgiving is just a few days away as I write this. All I can think about is the 5-week blur of activities that this holiday will usher in.

After a very busy summer, I'm not sure I have the energy to keep going full-throttle for more than another month.

We've all had it pretty well drilled into us, first by our parents (and later by our spouses) that doing nothing is not necessarily a good thing. However, our doctors will also tell us that constantly working isn't a good thing, either. How do we find the balance point?

An interesting article I read this week actually provided a glimpse of the answer. While the article wasn't about being over-scheduled and over committed, it did have a paragraph in it that seemed quite relevant to this question of activity by classifying our actions and efforts according to their results. In short, the article asked the question of whether we are producing "works" or "fruits".

"Works" were defined as being results that are temporary in nature. Results lasting anywhere from

SV Tomfoolery

a few moments up to a few years. While these works may take a great deal of effort on our part to produce, they will quickly fade away once we no longer put effort towards them. This eventually leads to a host of negative emotions for the one creating these works when they repeatedly fade away.

"Fruits", on the other hand, were defined as results of more permanent stature, lasting well beyond the efforts expended to bring them forth. As you can imagine, this can lead to a great deal of satisfaction and joy for those who helped bring them about.

So if you find yourself racing from one deadline to another with very little time to catch your breath, ask yourself, "Am I simply creating works or am I being fruitful?"

Here's to the fruits among us. Enjoy your Holidays!

- Tom

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Well, your editor has opened his big mouth again. If you wish to agree, or (more likely) to tell him he doesn't know squat, please send your comments to editor@flyc.us.

Membership Hint...

Each February the FLYC Board of Directors gets together to plan events and set dues for the coming boating season. However, if you renew your membership before the new dues structure is voted in, you can be grandfathered in under the old rate.

There happens to be a membership renewal form at the end of this newsletter. Just sayin'...

Finger Lakes Yacht Club

2024 Membership Application

Membership renewals are due by May 1st, 2024. **Annual dues are \$45.**
Please send this form and a check to:



Finger Lakes Yacht Club, Inc.
c/o Katie Alley, Secretary
295 Stillwater Drive
Horseheads, NY 14845

Are you also a member of America's Boating Club (US Power Squadrons)? If yes, check this box.

Application: New Member Renewal

Important: Please include the names of all of your household family members. This will ensure that membership privileges are awarded properly.

Name(s): _____

Contact Info: Renewing members - check this box if your address is unchanged from 2023

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please list all email addresses you would like to receive digital communications to.

Boat Name _____ Location/Slip # _____

Make/Model/Year _____ Length _____ Type Power Sail

Please indicate which areas interest you:

Racing Cruising Social activities Newsletter Other club activities you'd like to see? Email secretary@flyc.us
 New Women's Sailing Team Boating/Sailing Classes

By this application, I/we promise to uphold the By-laws of the Finger Lakes Yacht Club, Inc. and to comply with its rules and regulations.

Signature(s) _____ Date _____