

In This Issue

COMMODORE'S COMMENTS	1
VICE COMMODORE'S COMMENTS	2
REAR COMMODORE'S COMMENTS	4
SECRETARY'S COLUMN	5
2025 COMMODORE'S CUP RACE RECAP	8
AN OVERVIEW OF SAILBOAT HANDICAPPING	10
COCK OF THE WALK: FLYC'S UNFORGETTABLE SAILING THROWDOWN	13
EDITOR'S CORNER	15
2025 FLYC CALENDAR	16
2025 FLYC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION	17
EARN YOUR NYS BOATER SAFETY CARD	18

Please send any comments, questions, or corrections to:
editor@flyc.us

Commodore's Comments

by Mike Sidell

SV Delta G

The dog days of summer seem to be coming early. As I write this, it's 90 degrees at 8:00 pm. What did we use to do without air conditioning? It's great to see the lake levels finally retreating to summer levels. Nancy was growing tired of having to climb up into her boat.



I'm pleased to report that membership has been increasing. Thanks to those of you who have talked up the benefits of membership, invited a non-member to a picnic, or invited a non-member to crew on a race. Keep up the good work!

When you see Margaret Radek again, be sure to thank her for doing such a great job orchestrating our picnics. It's great to see so many members pitching in to help with set-up and take-down. Thanks to everyone for your assistance!

There has been some interest in small 12x18 FLYC burgees. The current price for one is \$27, if there's a minimum of six ordered. See me or call me at 570-404-1219 if you would like to buy one and we'll get an order together.

Our next picnic is later this month and will feature steaks. Plan to come and bring a non-member with you! We will have membership cards available to those who want them. I've been told that other yacht clubs offer reciprocity to our members, so if you're traveling anywhere, this could be useful. You can see Lynn McGinnis or Nancy Sidell at the August picnic for a card, or see me if you need one before then.

We're starting to think about the November banquet and annual meeting. Do you have any ideas for a good location we can check into? In the recent past, we've used Lucky Hare and Seneca Harbor but we're open to other options. Ideally, we're looking for a

private room and reasonable prices. See me or Margaret Radek if you have some thoughts on this.
See you dockside!

- Mike
Slip 433

Vice Commodore's Comments

by John Chesbrough

SV Plein Air

Our New Neighbor



By now everyone should be aware of a new boat in the marina currently occupying the end slips of dock 5 where the water is deep enough. The schooner *Bounding Home* draws 8'2". Messrs. Doug

Hazlitt and Beren Argetsinger, co-owners of the boat, were able to take advantage of the unusually high lake water level earlier this summer and launched the same way the rest of us normally do. I was able to speak with Doug and local shipwright, John Compton, who spent his life with the boat last winter, and continues working now, and gathered some information about the schooner to share with you.

Originally named *Savannah* she was designed by Francis Sweisguth and built by the Minneford Yacht Yard in City Island, The Bronx, NYC, in 1933. The vital statistics are LOA 52' 11", LWL 40' 10", beam 13' 3". The lead ballast "outside" is 21,500 pounds and when fully fitted (water, fuel, rum) she'll tip the scales at 50,000 lbs. *Savannah* originally had a traditional rig with a gaff foresail between the masts and proved to be a smooth and swift boat competing very successfully in Long Island Sound, New England, a trans-Atlantic race, and a Newport-Bermuda race. The schooner changed hands a few times through the 30's and 40's, at one time named *Sea Saga*, and a late 40's owner William Zeigler, Darien, Ct., renamed the yacht *Bounding Home* after his own successful race horse.

Port Tacks

Published six times a year by the Finger Lakes Yacht Club. The opinions expressed in Port Tacks are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Finger Lakes Yacht Club, its officers, directors, or members.

Club Web Site <http://www.flyc.us>

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Contact all officers at: officers@flyc.us

Commodore
Mike Sidell commodore@flyc.us

Vice-Commodore
John Chesbrough vc@flyc.us

Rear Commodore
Don Swanson rc@flyc.us

Secretary
Katie Alley secretary@flyc.us

Treasurer
Denis Kingsley treasurer@flyc.us

Assistant Treasurer
Nancy Sisbarro asst.treas@flyc.us

Directors (Terms ending 2025)
Tom Alley alley@flyc.us
Ted Carlton ted@flyc.us

Directors (Terms ending 2026)
Maggie Martin maggie@flyc.us
Margaret Radek margaret@flyc.us

Contact all directors at: directors@flyc.us

COMMITTEES & KEY CONTACTS

General Information info@flyc.us

Facebook Administrator
[Position Open] facebook@flyc.us

Newsletter Editor
Tom Alley editor@flyc.us

Race Committee
Chair: Don Swanson racechair@flyc.us
Asst. Chair: Bill Trondsen rcasst@flyc.us
Jim McGinnis mcginnis@flyc.us
Tom Alley alley@flyc.us

Social Committee Chairs
Margaret Radek social@flyc.us
Assisting: Maggie Martin

Nominating Committee
Nancy Sisbarro
[Volunteer(s) needed.]

Webmaster
Tom Alley webmaster@flyc.us

Mr. Zeigler hired Sparkman & Stevens to modify the rig for greater speed. The gaff sail was replaced by a staysail, the main mast and bowsprit were reduced, a boomkin at the stern and permanent backstay were added as well as “double tracked fisherman staysails.” *Bounding Home* responded to her new outfit with greater speed and ability to point higher upwind. Zeigler kept winning races everywhere he went.

Upon his death, Zeigler bequeathed his yacht to Tabor Academy in Marion, MA which has a famous sailing instruction program, but they soon sold it to a Tom Schiller of Maryland in 1969. Schiller and *Bounding Home* took first place in the New York Mayor’s Cup Race that autumn against serious competition to erase any remaining doubts about this boat’s abilities. *Bounding Home* continued her very distinguished career until 1983 when Mr. Schiller laid her up for a well deserved restoration.

The repairs and refurbishings were extensive, covering many years and different locations, most recently in Maine where Doug Hazlitt first saw the yacht in the mid ‘80s. A beautiful boat, with a glorious history, lying at dock underwater (because of a faulty bilge pump) would present a challenging task for anyone. The project continued without him but Doug couldn’t stop thinking about that yacht. Two more times *Bounding Home* invaded Doug’s awareness, a crippled racer begging for his attention. Eventually the opportunity arrived for two devoted sailors to own a piece of history and get the good ship ready for a new life of strutting her stuff and kicking some transom.

Last fall, 2024, *Bounding Home* was delivered by truck from Maine to a temporary tent by the southern shore of Seneca Lake to spend the winter for continued restoration. John Compton continues the endless tasks for the interior, making sure one thing is properly well installed before the next piece of equipment buries it. The masts and the standing rig are scheduled to be installed early August. There’s still more work to be done but maybe later this season we’ll be seeing *Bounding Home* striding through the waters we call home.

- John

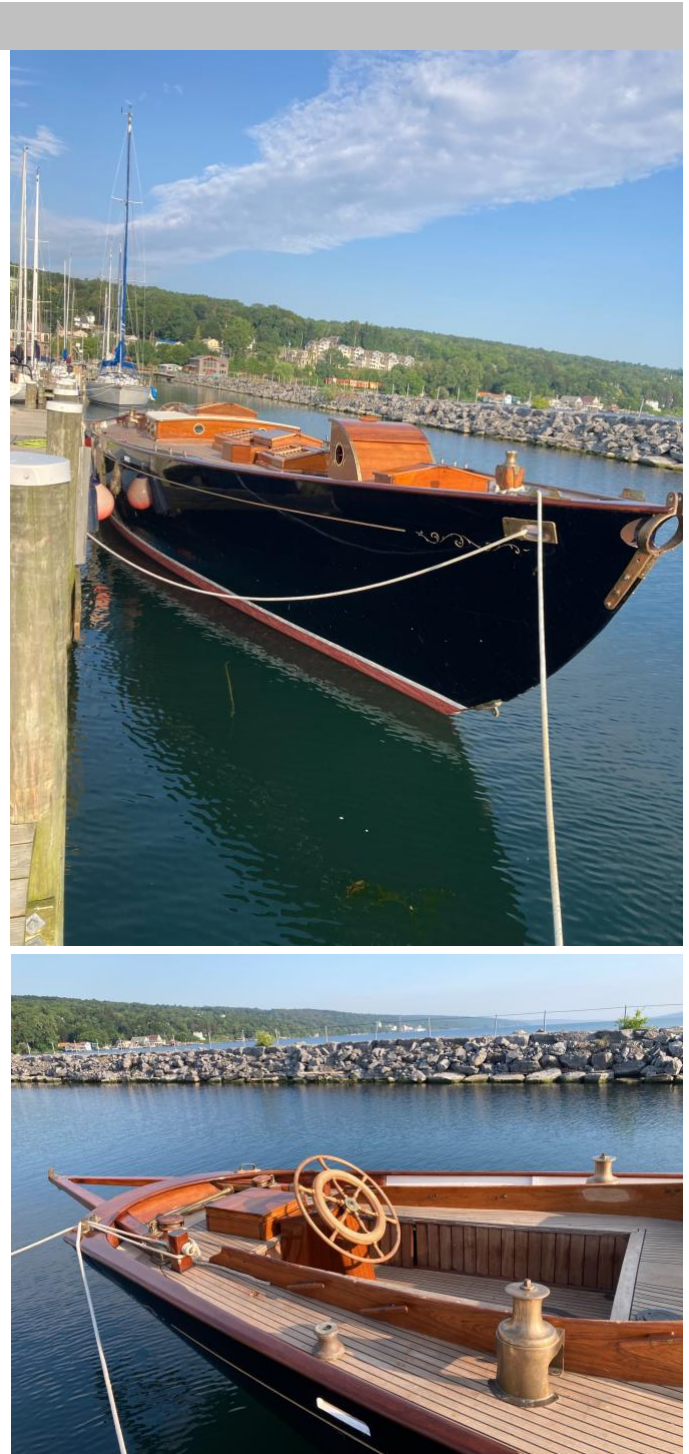


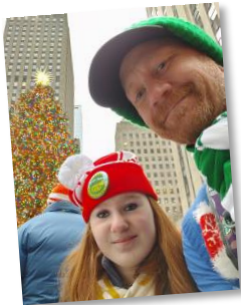
Figure 1: Two views of *Bounding Home* as she rests at the end of Dock 5 in the Watkins Glen Village Marina.

o o o o o

Rear Commodore's Comments

by Bill Trondsen

Mid-Season Racing Recap



[Bill and Don will be alternating duties to write the column for the club's race fleet. This month it's Bill's turn. – Ed.]

o o o o o

Ahoy fellow FLYC racers! As July comes to a close, we are now halfway through our racing season. The 2025 season got off to a slow start with light winds and a couple of cancelled races. Makeup races were undertaken and we are now back on schedule!

Since the last report at the beginning of June, we have run races #1 through #5. There was good attendance with boat counts between 7 and 10 per race. Wind through July has been a bit light, and from the South/South-West which has made it challenging to do anything more than the usual triangle loop.

[COW report provided by Don, *SV Skylark*]

The Cock of the Walk fun race was held on 7/26. Although the forecast was for a light and variable south breeze on the run north to our turnaround geo mark (about 1nm north of Hector Falls), we were pleasantly surprised with a rather productive southerly that managed to reach Force 3 to Force 4 at times for the beat south to the finish. We had seven

SV Ellawicious

boats/skippers enter the madness, which required skippers to start and end their race on land. The basic format was to use a staggered start with handicapping times baked into each boat's "start" time. One of the highlights was to see the both first (*Stargazer*) and the last departing boat (*Seek Ye 1st*) duking it out at the turnaround point. And even though *Seek Ye 1st* was the last boat to depart, they once again smoked the fleet to take first place. In the end, the wind was a gift and it made for a lot of fun for all those who participated.

We are all looking forward to stronger North winds as the seasons change to cooler temperatures. In August and September we have the final season races (#6, #7, and #8) coming up. By the next newsletter, we should be able to pass on the series crown to this year's winner. Points totals are close, so anyone could still take the lead...

Also, not to be missed, THE BARGE RACE in early September!

Enjoy the warm Seneca temperatures while you can. Get your swimming in, and see you for the second half!

- Bill

o o o o o



Secretary's Column

by Katie Alley

Bummer July..., But Not the Whole Summer



Summer started off great with our newest iteration of the Commodore's Cup on the solstice. Three boats, *Three Sheets*, *Imagine*, and *V-48*, ventured down from Seneca Yacht Club and joined us for the event. A total of 13 boats signed up to partake in the long-distance race up the lake.

The wind, well, could've been better. We had about 5 knots from the south, creating a downwind course. Much of the fleet utilized their spinnakers! It was also quite *hot*, with the sun beating down on us in the cockpit and the wind providing minimal relief.



Figure 2: The start.

A group of boats ended up together, leading the fleet, including *Tomfoolery*. By mid-afternoon, the wind continued to dissipate as we moved farther north, so we shortened the course to have Long Point be the finish line. *Tomfoolery* corrected to a 2nd place finish (1st of the FLYC boats). Unfortunately, we were no match for *Three Sheets*, a Ranger 22, in the light winds. But on the other hand, light air and downwind legs are not the Alberg 35's strong suit, so the crew was very pleased with the 2nd place reward for their consistent spinnaker sailing!

SV *Tomfoolery*



Figure 3: Keeping the spinnaker full.



Figure 4: Crewmember Spencer Beaver keeping morale up as *Seek Ye* 1st passes us.

After the race, Seneca Yacht Club arranged a wonderful picnic for us at their clubhouse. The two clubs had a great time hanging out together. We had many FLYC members drive up to greet us there as

well! To quote Tom West, long-time SYC member, “The sailing is great, but this is what it’s all about!”



Figure 5: Camaraderie at SYC.



Figure 6: S/V Tavernier docked at SYC at sunset.

Next on the club agenda was the Independence Day picnic. Unfortunately, my time there was cut short. I sat down with a plate of food and received a call from my boyfriend, Tommy, saying he broke his ankle in his brother’s yard and was headed to the ER, and for me to eat and then come meet him.



Figure 7: I left the picnic early, but not without snapping this picture. Thanks grill masters Mike and Tom!

Cue 2½ weeks of stress, anxiety, feeling helpless in terms of trying to make him comfortable, doing all of the housework, meal preparation (which I hate), and taking care of myself, my partner, and our cats while working 50 hours a week. Phew!

Tommy is healing from a trimalleolar ankle fracture (two breaks in the fibula and one in the tibia). He had surgery on July 9th to install screws and a plate. He was in a splint and pretty immobile until July 18th, when he got put into a fiberglass cast.

Since then, he’s been more independent and moving around our apartment, but you truly don’t realize how difficult a leg injury is to manage until you or someone in your household goes through it. At first, he couldn’t even get out of bed without severe pain, because the blood rushes to the injury the second the limb isn’t elevated. Now, he can move around on crutches, but he still cannot carry anything, not even a glass of water.

Luckily, he only has to have the cast on for two more weeks, then he will transition to a boot and be able to bear weight. Which will be great, because I’m really sick of cooking dinner and doing the dishes by myself.

Truthfully, it seems like I took Tommy’s injury harder emotionally than he did. He’s been watching TV and playing video games while being waited on (by me), meanwhile, I had to miss a couple of weekends at the lake during the best time of year to play nurse. But I guess this is what “in sickness and in health” means. (If anyone gets asked, I wear a ring size 6.)

Tommy decided he could take care of himself long enough for me to return to my recreational boating life for the Cock of the Walk Race! I love this race because it utilizes a staggered start and a racing aspect on land. I had a great time aboard *Seek Ye 1st* with Mike Crouse and his crew. The south wind surprisingly picked up, and we had a pleasant downwind ride under spinnaker to the “red roof cabin” landmark. On the way back to Watkins, we reached hull speed. And we took the win! That race was super fun and just what I needed.



Figure 9: “We need more sail area.” - Ryan Crouse

Next weekend, I’ll be aboard *Tomfoolery* for our annual trip to Sampson with ABC-FLX. (This has been on the calendar since *last* August, so Tommy will really have to figure out how to take care of himself for a weekend!) Things are looking up, and I’m optimistic for the second half of the season.

In terms of secretarial business, our club’s membership has gone up a bit this year! More people



Figure 8: *Seek Ye 1st* under spinnaker.

are finding camaraderie with our group, and that’s an excellent thing to have on or by the water.

One last unfortunate/fortunate thing - Tommy purchased his fishing license, a pole, and other equipment (totaling \$180) the day *before* he broke his ankle. So, unfortunate that he has only used it once, but fortunate that hopefully getting him to join me by the water will be easier!

If both of your legs work, make sure to appreciate that today!

- Katie, FLYC Secretary

o o o o o

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

2025 Commodore's Cup Race Recap

By Don Swanson

SV Skylark

The genesis of this year's Commodore's Cup Race happened in the depths of winter when the deep dark chill of February allows for lots of contemplation. And as I sat there, counting the days to launch a simple thought breezed into my thoughts. Why not do a distance race that really goes the distance? Here we are, on the southern end of a 35 mile long lake... let's make use of the distance. Next thing I know we're spitballing ideas at the annual race committee planning meeting. The result was not only to race the lake but to also extend an invitation to the Seneca Yacht Club to join us. After all, we have enjoyed their gracious hospitality each September for their annual Barge Race. The die was cast. We would schedule the race in June, thus bookending summer with the Barge Race and, with a little luck, more reliable wind.

Fast forward several months and after a less than stellar start of a season (remember "Monsoon May"?), decent conditions finally started to develop as we closed in on the scheduled race date of June 21st, which also happened to be the Summer Solstice – a fitting time to commence the high summer season. On a side note, the FLYC Commodore's Cup race was one of hundreds, if not thousands, of sailing events held that same day all across the continent honoring this prime celestial event. And as we drew closer to the date, invitations were sent to the SYC and race instructions, with contingencies built in for the possibility of failing wind were drawn up, leaving the only unknowns in the hands of the weather gods. Exceeding our expectations, we had over a dozen boats signed up by the time the race weekend came around.



Figure 10: SYC members at the Friday picnic with Commodore Mike.

The general outline of the race weekend was to invite Seneca Yacht Club boats to cruise down to Watkins Glen on Friday, which for them was actually a favorable day of sailing conditions. Together we kicked-off the weekend with the FLYC hosting our guests with a delightful picnic cookout. Thank you again to our Commodore/grillmaster Mike Sidell and everyone who brought dishes to pass, and especially, the desserts.

Being a race of significant distance (approximately 30nm) we naturally moved the skippers meeting to an earlier time of 0900. After a brief review of start and finish protocols we also addressed the inevitability of a failing wind. After all, the harbingers were there to see; a variable breeze coming from the south. We've seen this before. The wind is okay and workable, but around 1500 (and when the sun shines the hottest) it fades. So, what to



Figure 11: The fleet early in the race.

do? In anticipation of being sandbagged once again, we established a series of way-points and corresponding time limits to serve as interim finish lines, leaving enough time to motor the remaining distance to our eventual destination, the SYC in Geneva.

And so, the race began at 10:00 with a total of 13 boats in the fleet, three from SYC (*Three Sheets*, *Imagine*, and *V-48*; a Ranger 22, Hunter 25.5 and a Catalina 30 respectively), with the remaining participants being the usual FLYC boats. When the start horn blew, the wind was blowing from the SE at about 6-8 knots. Not great, but enough for flying spinnakers which quickly spread out the fleet. But within an hour or so, the wind veered south and nearly disappeared. By now the fleet was well on the way to Peach Orchard Point and I, for one, was pleading for more wind. My protestations must have been heard by momma nature because the wind began to fill in from the SSW but only at about 4-6 knots. It was something, but not much and it didn't stick around long enough to really move things along. In the end, and after ghosting north on a dying wind, the race committee shortened the course to end at Long Point. By then the fleet was so stretched out, messages were needing to be relayed via VHF. As races go, it was a downwind run on a fading breeze and that meant the boats flying kites early pretty much took the top three or four finishing positions. Congratulations to *Three Sheets* who took line honors and to our own Tom Alley on his Alberg 35 *Tomfoolery* (second place overall... and the winner of the FLYC Commodore's Cup 2025).

As each boat edged past the finish line skippers motored (or motor sailed) the remaining distance to rendezvous at the Seneca Yacht Club facilities where we had another delightful picnic with racers and other members of both clubs joining in the fun. Afterwards, and with some boats at SYC and others across the canal at Seneca Lake State Park, we settled in for the evening only to be awakened with blustery conditions (West at 15-20 knots), which provided some last minute challenges and excitement when leaving the SYC docks. Once again the wind failed around noon and, depending on when each boat departed to head south, each had some decent sailing – at least for a little bit.

The final consensus was favorable and we are looking forward to the 2026 Commodore's Cup.



Figure 12: Seek ye 1st! As usual... ahead.

Hope you can join us for the race or just cruise along for fun.

Lastly, thank you to all the participants from both yacht clubs who helped make this event a success. Anything we can do to help get more sailboats on Seneca is a win for everyone!

Cheers,

- Don



Figure 13: Kites a flying and pulling ahead on a southerly breeze.

An Overview of Sailboat Handicapping

By Tom Alley

SV Tomfoolery

It's been a while since I've written anything about sailboat handicapping (see *Port Tacks*, February 2020), and given the influx of new sailors into the FLYC race fleet, it's probably time for me to write about it again. Besides, there have been some rule changes over the past years that warrant a fresh look at this often controversial topic.

What is a Sailboat Handicap?

A casual stroll through our marina will quickly show you the many different shapes and sizes of sailboats. Even boats of the same make and model have significant changes over a period of years. It doesn't take long to realize that any alterations to a boat will affect its performance characteristics. Therefore, the only way to have a sailboat race that is a contest between the skippers and crews is to ensure that the boats being used are all identical. This is the concept used in "one-design racing" where all the boats are as close to identical as possible.

The problem? Not everybody likes the same kind of boat. So how can you have a race between two different types of boats? The answer is to try to calculate some sort of "fudge factor" that can be applied to level the playing field between the boat types. This "fudge factor" is referred to as a boat's "handicap" or "rating."

Major Handicapping Systems

PHRF

Probably the most well-known and widely used club handicapping system is Performance Handicap Race Fleet (PHRF – pronounced "*perf*"). This system is managed by US Sailing, the national governing body for the sport of sailing in the United States. Ratings are established empirically, using historical data to determine relative differences between boat types and classes.

Under PHRF, a boat's speed potential is expressed as a single number. This number can be expressed in a couple of different ways.

Time on Distance

The Time on Distance (ToD) rating number is expressed in units of seconds per mile and is a measure of how much longer it takes a particular boat to sail one nautical mile compared to a hypothetical reference boat. Slower boats will have higher (larger) ratings. When using ToD, a boat's elapsed time is reduced by the rating number multiplied by length of the race course in nautical miles.

Time on Time

The Time on Time (ToT) rating number is a dimensionless number that reflects the ratio of the time it takes the reference boat to sail a given distance divided to the time it takes the boat being rated to sail the same distance. Slower boats will have smaller ratings. When using ToT, a boat's finish time is adjusted by multiplying its elapsed time by the rating. ToT scoring was an attempt to be more accurate than ToD because it would compensate for varying wind conditions.

The advantages of PHRF are that it is simple, accessible, and allows a diverse group of boats to compete against each other.

The disadvantages are that it attempts to consolidate a boat's performance into a single number that is an average of upwind, downwind, and reaching performance over a wide range of wind speeds. This is very detrimental in races over longer distances. In addition, PHRF is based on average performance, which is subject to average weather conditions in different parts of the country. As a result, PHRF ratings can vary significantly from one geographic area to another.

Americap

Americap was an attempt by US Sailing to overcome some of the limitations of PHRF by using a more technically accurate formula to accommodate a wider range of boats (e.g., displacement hulls, multihulls, high-performance planning hulls, etc.). This was done by adapting features used by the International Measurement System (IMS) and by using a velocity prediction program (VPP) to

calculate a specific boat's performance potential. In addition, parts of the rating algorithm were kept secret to discourage boat designers from creating "rule-beating" hull shapes.

Advantages of Americap include that it is more accurate than PHRF and that it can handle very diverse fleets, making it suitable for mixed-class racing. It also takes into account varying conditions encountered on longer distance races.

Unfortunately, the system is complex, relying on detailed measurements and technical data for each boat, making the handicapping process expensive and time-consuming. Because of this, Americap saw only limited adoption and was phased out in the early 2000s in favor of ORC and IRC handicapping systems.

ORC

The Offshore Racing Congress (ORC) system is a more technical and data-driven approach to handicapping, using detailed measurements of a boat's physical characteristics and advanced software to predict performance across different conditions. The result is much like a polar diagram of boat performance, with each point of sail having a specific rating for different wind speeds.

As boats race, the race committee keeps track of weather conditions at the point where each boat is for every hour of the race and uses the competitor's handicap for those conditions during that time interval. At the end of the race, the corrected times for each hour of the race are summed up to get the corrected elapsed time.

As the description implies, this is a very involved process, but it provides a relatively fair system for a wide range of boats that sail long distances in changing conditions.

[If you want to see what an ORR rating certificate looks like, I'll gladly show you mine. It's a 3-page document filled with numbers! -Ed.]

Portsmouth Yardstick

The North American Portsmouth Yardstick (PY) is an empirical handicapping system that originated from an effort led by the Dixie Inland Yacht Racing Association (DIYRA) based on the Royal Yachting Association Portsmouth Numbers (PN) scheme.

Nationwide participation in the Dixie Portsmouth Numbers (D-PN) system culminated in the transfer of administrative responsibility to US Sailing, then the North American Yacht Racing Union, in 1973. The system is currently managed by the Portsmouth Numbers Committee of US Sailing.

PY is essentially a ToT handicapping system like PHRF, but it also considers a boat's performance variances in different wind conditions.

As such, it is a relatively simple system to use that is effective for mixed-fleet racing in a wide range of conditions. On the downside, it is less precise for larger, more complex boats.

Comparing Handicapping Systems

What happens when a sailboat shows up with a handicap certificate for one system when competing in a race using a different system? Well, there are two options. Preferably, you would re-measure the boat and generate a new handicap factor using the new system. This is the path taken at any sanctioned event. At the club level, however, there is an incentive to try to convert the rating from one system to the other using a mathematical formula.

The second approach is certainly easier, but the competing handicapping systems tend to be based on different assumptions. As a result, a handicap issued under one system may not translate well into a specific number for a different system.

To compensate for this, there do exist some rules of thumb to help with the conversion, but they tend to be somewhat subjective and will result in different ratings from different handicappers. At best, the equations used to perform the conversions can be used to generate an estimate under a different system if remeasuring the vessel is not feasible.

The FLYC Racing Program

The Finger Lakes Yacht Club has used the Portsmouth Yardstick system for handicapping its race fleet for many years. However, it wasn't always this way. In 2010 our club switched from Portsmouth to PHRF at the request of competitors. PHRF handicapping and scoring method were used through 2019, and then the club switched back to Portsmouth in 2020 in order to address some issues that the PHRF system was not handling very well.

One area of club racing that is problematic in every yacht club is attracting new racers. None of the handicapping system consider the experience level of the skipper and crew. They apply only to the boat and its potential speed when sailed in an expert fashion. As a result, new racers typically find themselves at the tail end of race standings for many years before they gain the experience needed to actively compete with more experienced crews.

Keep in mind that the handicapping system is only supposed to account for the differences between the boats, not the crews. The competition is supposed to be about the differences between the crews. Finishing last, however, can be demoralizing after a period of time. As a result, many novice crews give up after a few years and never race again.

The FLYC “Moss Factor”

To address crew skills and equipment quality issues, US Sailing allows local clubs to implement a “Moss Factor”, named after Dr. John Moss, the person who developed it. The Moss Factor is a subjective adjustment to a boat’s rating to account for crew experience, equipment state, or other factors that are impeding a particular competitor. The purpose of this adjustment is not to provide an unfair advantage, but to reduce the margin of victory (or defeat) between top performers and those who are just figuring out how to race.

The FLYC has developed its own version of the Moss Factor that is a bit more objective. In practice, it resembles a golf handicap more than it does a Moss Factor in that it is objectively calculated rather than subjectively applied. In a nutshell, it works as follows:

- After every race, the fleet’s corrected finish times are averaged together and normalized.
- If a particular competitor’s corrected finish time is significantly faster than the fleet average, then his rating is adjusted to make his boat appear faster.
- If a particular competitor’s corrected finish time is significantly slower than the fleet average, then his rating is adjusted to make his boat appear slower.

- Adjustments accumulate over time.

The net result is that, over time, corrected finish times will converge, making for closer racing without necessarily upsetting results. The idea is to motivate new sailors to keep building their experience and sailing skills to the point where their finish times improve to where they will “grow out of” their Moss Factor. At the same time, it holds more experienced sailors to a higher standard so they can hone their skill set to a new level of consistency and competitiveness.

Is this a perfect system? Absolutely not. It does, however, seem to work well for the relatively small race fleet fielded by the FLYC.

One of the FLYC Race Committee’s chores is to monitor the Moss Factors over time. If all of them are trending to larger and larger magnitudes without showing any regression, adjustments are made to tune the system to respond in the manner intended. These adjustments are typically made only during the off-season, and usually not done every year.

A Final Thought

Sailboat handicapping is a complex topic. The key is finding a system that is simple enough to be practical, but technically savvy enough to minimize favoritism. Yacht designer L. Francis Herreshoff was quoted to have said, “A boat is a collection of compromises.” Handicapping is no different. Each decision on how to handicap a vessel comes with multiple trade-offs between complexity, accuracy, effort, and fairness.

- Tom

o o o o o

Tom spent a number of years as the chief handicapper and measurer for the Youngstown Yacht Club on Lake Ontario in the mid- and late-1990s. He’s been on the FLYC Race Committee since joining the FLYC in 2001.

If anyone wants to learn more about sailboat handicapping and race scoring, please contact Tom. The FLYC Race Committee will welcome your interest and participation!

Cock of the Walk: FLYC's Unforgettable Sailing Throwdown

By Jessup Wilcox

SV Tavernier



Figure 14: The long, slow, downwind run that started off this year's Cock of the Walk Race as seen from Tavernier.

Picture this: An early summer morning on Seneca Lake, the sky just beginning to warm, and the breeze rolling down from the surrounding hills of the Finger Lakes. The marina is alive with tension — sailors pacing docks, last-minute rigging checks, a hint of strategy in every glance. This isn't your average sailing regatta. This is Watkins Glen's "Cock of the Walk," a no-holds-barred battle of seamanship and sprinting that turns tradition on its head.

The LeMans Launch: From Flagpole to Dock to Chaos

When the horn blares over the harbor, it's controlled chaos. Forget calm cast-offs — this is a LeMans-style launch, Finger Lakes-style. Crews explode from the flagpole to their dock scrambling to hoist sails that were once tucked away with care. Sheets fly, winches groan, and voices echo off the bluffs. You'll hear commands barked over the sound of halyards clanking and water slapping against hulls as skippers weave through the wake of their competitors.

In this melee, speed is king — but control is queen. Some teams take a bold line straight for the lake's open stretch, trusting muscle and wind. Others tack early, playing it safe for clean air. Either way, it's a spectacle of strategy and guts.

A Finger Lakes Twist: The Flagpole Start and Finale

But here's where the Watkins Glen version pulls ahead of the pack: The flagpole-to-dock sprint. Once crews circle the buoy and return to harbor, there's no time for celebration. Boats must be secured fast, and one crew member has to bolt — yes, on foot — up



Figure 15: Don Swanson and Skylark race back to the finish in the 2025 Cock of the Walk in a freshening breeze.

the dock to tag the legendary finish: a flagpole perched at the edge of the marina green.

It's part sailor showdown, part footrace frenzy. Sneakers slam on wet boards, spectators cheer from the shoreline, and for one sailor, it's a lung-busting sprint that could mean victory. This twist turns a water race into a test of all-around endurance — a nod to the rugged spirit Watkins Glen is known for.

Why It Matters: Glory on Seneca Lake

Winning the Cock of the Walk isn't just about sailing finesse; it's about composure, agility, and a dash of daring. It's where wind meets willpower, where one

wrong knot or a slow step can cost the title. And in true Watkins Glen fashion — home to racers of all kinds — it's not over until the flagpole's touched.

Whether you're on the water or watching from shore, it's one of the most electrifying spectacles on Seneca Lake. From high-stakes strategy to full-tilt sprinting, this event captures the essence of competition in the Finger Lakes: gritty, beautiful, and completely unforgettable

- Jessup

o o o o o



Editor's Corner

by Tom Alley



Mid-Summer Musings

It's finally safe to say it's "summer," although as I write this, a cold front has gone through our area and dropped outdoor temperatures approximately 30°F.

What felt like a really nice day in April now has me looking for long pants and a jacket.

Tomorrow is August 1st. If you look at our sailing calendar, we're roughly halfway through the sailing season. Emotionally, however, it feels like summer is already ending. In just over two weeks I'll be trying to figure out how to *not* throw out my back while helping my son move back into his college dorm. The schooner sailing schedule is adjusting for the shorter days and earlier sunsets. It doesn't feel right, especially after that long wait through May and half of June for things to dry out and warm up.

At the same time, we've had some really amazing events this year. You've read about the Commodore's Cup Race to SYC and the Cock of the Walk event elsewhere in this issue. Tomorrow Katie and I will be taking *Tomfoolery* north once more on our annual cruise to Sampson State Park Marina with the local chapter of America's Boating Club for a long weekend of being "unplugged." Of course, plans are already being hatched for the Barge Race at the SYC in Geneva in early September. And like other summers, the list of off-season boat projects has already started and continues to grow.

As I stated in the last newsletter issue, this is the season to DO, and I'm happy to report that as a club, we have been DOING a lot this year.

Don't Forget to DO...

While our club has been doing a lot so far this year, some casual conversations on the docks has made me aware that some of our colleagues haven't quite caught up with their to-do lists. One item that several folks have skipped is that of getting their boater safety card so as to be in compliance with New York's Brianna's Law.

SV Tomfoolery

If you don't have your safety card yet, I would urge you to make this a priority. The fine for operating a mechanically propelled vessel without one of these cards is a minimum of \$250, plus suspension of your right to take your boat out again until you obtain said card.

The good news is that the Finger Lakes Chapter of America's Boating Club will be offering another certification class in mid-August. (*see the last page of this newsletter*) It's not a free class, but I can promise you that it's much richer in content than the courses offered online or by the State. I guarantee you'll learn something new, no matter how long you've been boating. Check it out!

Not a New York resident? You still need a card from your home state to boat here. The good news is that the card issued by America's Boating Club is recognized in 33 states.

Another Serious Note

Not long ago there was a near-miss between two boats on Seneca Lake. One of the skippers involved was heard to say, "I was waiting for you to hit me! I would have cleaned up in court!" Not only is that skipper's statement incorrect, it's an extremely dangerous attitude to have.

Maritime law is not like traffic law where blame can be assigned to one party or another. Maritime law is "all-fault." Everyone involved in a collision will be assigned a share of the blame by authorities. Remember that maritime law requires you to employ any means necessary to avoid a collision. The first question you will be asked during an accident inquiry will be, "What did you do to avoid the collision?" If you say, "Nothing," then you have just assumed a substantial liability in the accident, even if the other guy caused it.

Be safe out there. See you on the water!

- Tom

o o o o o

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.

2025 FLYC Calendar

Please check the club web site (<http://www.FLYC.US>) to see the most current information. **Changes highlighted.**

Regular/Repeating Events

Post-Mortem Racing Social. After every club race at 1700 on the lawn by the marina flagpole. BYOB/Snack to share. Open to racers and non-racers alike but bragging and boasting is mandatory.

March

21 **Deadline for newsletter articles.**

April

01 **April Newsletter Publication Date.**

15 **Earliest possible launch date** (per slip contract).

May

01 **Membership renewal deadline.**

23 **Deadline for newsletter articles.**

24 ~~**Rust Removal Race.** Practice race. (1300)~~

25 **Memorial Day Flag Raising & Picnic.** BBQ Chicken. Bring a side or dessert to share and your own beverage. (1700)

31 **Summer Series Race #1.** (1300)

June

01 **June Newsletter Publication Date.**

07 **FLYC Nautical Swap Meet** (TBD)

07 **Summer Series Race #1.** (1300)

14 **Watkins Glen Waterfront Festival & Cardboard Boat Races.*

20 **Commodore's Cup Pre-Race Social.** Menu includes hot dogs off the grill with all the trimmings and your dish to pass. Racers from SYC have been invited to join us for dinner and campfire! BYOB (1700)

21 **Commodore's Cup Race.** Race from Watkins Glen to Geneva with our friends from SYC. Details TBA. (0900)

21 **Commodore's Cup Post-Race Celebration.** Hosted at the SYC club house. Details TBA.

28 **Summer Series Race #2.** (1300)

July

04 **Watkins Glen Independence Day Fireworks (2145)*

05 **Summer Series Race #3.** (1300)

05 **Independence Picnic & BBQ.** Hot dogs, hamburgers and Italian sausages will be served from the grill. BYOB and a dish to pass. (1700)

11-15 **Lake Ontario 300 Challenge, Port Credit, Ontario*

12 **Summer Series Race #4.** (1300)

12-14 **Italian-American Festival (Watkins Glen)*

19 **Summer Series Race #5.** (1300)

26 **Deadline for newsletter articles.**

26 **Cock of the Walk Race.** (1300)

August

01 **August Newsletter Publication Date.**

01-03 **ABC-FLX Cruise to Sampson. All FLYC members invited to join!*

09 **Summer Series Race #6.** (1300)

11-15 **NASCAR at the Glen*

16 **Make-up Race.** If needed. (1300)

23 **Summer Series Race #7.** (1300)

30 **Commodore's Dinner.** Steak entree. BYOB and a great dish to pass. (1700)

September

05-07 **Vintage Grand Prix Weekend*

05-07 **FLYC Club Cruise to Geneva.** Joint cruise with the ABC-FLX chapter.

06 **Seneca Yacht Club Barge Race, Geneva, NY (0900)*
All FLYC members invited to join!

06 **Geneva Cruise Social.** Held at SYC club house or at Seneca Marina Park grounds. Details TBA.

13 **Summer Series Race #8.** (1300)

19 **Deadline for newsletter articles.**

20 **Grape Harvest Race.** (1300) Join in this annual reverse-handicap race!

20 **Pierogi Day!** Kielbasa, sauerkraut and pierogis will be served. BYOB and a nice Polish side or dessert to pass..., or anything you would like to bring is just fine too. (1700)

27 **Make-up Race.** If needed. (1300)

October

01 **October Newsletter Publication Date.**

02-05 **Annapolis Powerboat Show.*

04 **Gear Buster Race.** (1300)

04 **The Great Chili & Chocolate Cook-Off.** After the race, bring your best effort in either of these two categories. Power will be available for crock pots. If you are bringing a side, please have it Mexican themed to support our wonderful chili entries or bring whatever you like to pass around, it's all good! Margherita mix, ice, salt, limes and a BLENDER will be available..., just sayin'. BYOB (1700)

09-12 **Annapolis Sailboat Show.*

11 **Make up Race.** If needed. (1300)

31 **Marina Haulout Deadline** (per slip contract).

November

TBA **Member Banquet & Annual Meeting.**

21 **Deadline for newsletter articles.**

December

01 **December Newsletter Publication Date.**

January 2026

23 **Deadline for newsletter articles.**

* Non-FLYC events in italics.

NOTE: There is a \$10 charge for non-members/guests attending FLYC picnics and meals.

Finger Lakes Yacht Club

2025 Membership Application

Membership renewals are due by May 1st, 2025. **Annual dues are \$45.**
Please send this form and a check to:



Finger Lakes Yacht Club, Inc.
c/o Katie Alley, Secretary
PO Box 224
Watkins Glen, NY 14891

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 2024 ☐

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

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 _____

8 HOUR CLASS

AMERICA'S BOATING COURSE

**Earn your REQUIRED
NYS Boater's Card**

**AUGUST 11, 18, & 25, 6-9 PM
WATKINS GLEN YACHT CLUB
300 S CLUTE PARK ROAD
WATKINS GLEN, NY 14891**



**FINGER LAKES
CHAPTER**



Learn the foundations of safe boating – federal and NYS laws, required equipment, navigation, how to handle medical and mechanical emergencies, and more. Work with our passionate instructors, who have decades of on-the-water experience, in this hands-on, in-person class. Attendance required at each session.

\$35 including a loaner copy of our Student Manual

\$45 including a copy of our Student Manual to keep

\$10 for an additional family member sharing a manual

**SCAN THE QR CODE OR EMAIL SCOTT AT
ASEO@ABC-FLX.ORG TO SIGN UP - SPACE IS LIMITED**

As of 2025, according to Brianna's Law, everyone, regardless of age, must have a state Boater Safety Education Certificate to legally operate a motorized vessel in New York, including personal watercraft.