



A group of Cruising Class Boats with spinnakers flying in 1975.

CRUISING CLASS RACING

For many racing yachtsmen, one of the most beautiful sights in all sailing is a fleet of large Cruising Class sailboats rounding the windward mark in a fresh breeze and, one after another, setting their immense colorful spinnakers. The occasional "pole-in-the-water" and "hour-glass" add to the excitement but soon all settle down and the panorama becomes breathtaking. Better to be ahead, of course, but from any vantage point it is truly a scene to behold.

The Cruising Class at RYC has experienced incredible growth in recent years, now numbering 55 boats divided into five divisions. This is by far the largest of any current racing fleet and probably the largest in RYC history. Evidence of the popularity of Cruising Class racing and its impact on the Club is that 300 skippers and crew have been out on the course for a Sunday Race on a good day.

While the sheer beauty of Cruising Sailboats is certainly one of the factors contributing to the growth of the class, there are others as well. Many sports, sailing sometimes included, tend to be a divisive force against a family, taking father out of the house for long hours on the weekend. Cruising Class sailing is different since a large crew is required and there are places for those with varying skills. Having the spouse and children aboard has become the

rule rather than the exception. At RYC in recent years at least seven boats are raced by a crew consisting mainly of skipper, wife, and three or four children, often with great success. Also of interest is that four boats are currently skippered by women.

In addition to this cohesive quality of the Class, the fact that the boats can be cruised as well as raced has great appeal. With skeleton crews these yachts frequently cruise considerable distances before, during, or after the regatta, doubling the pleasure for all aboard. A bit of comfort during the race also has its adherents.

Another factor is that long distance races in Cruising Class boats require skills in strategy as well as tactics, long term decisions as well as short term decisions. In addition to sail trim and boat-for-boat situations (tactics), the skipper must also be skilled in navigation, boat organization, sail selection, choice of course, and crew training as well (strategy). And, of course, he must also have the ability to cope with sudden extremes in weather while far from shore.

Finally, the Cruising Fleet skipper is attracted to the large number of local, interclub, national, and international regattas which provide him the chance to sail against the "best there is" at whatever level he chooses to compete.

On Lake Ontario the annual Freeman Cup/LYRA Regatta and Lake Ontario International Race attract as many as 120 participants including many from RYC. In the Lake Erie Race and two Mackinacs, RYC skippers match their skills against the finest on the Great Lakes. Further afield, Club boats have raced the famous Bermuda Race and the fiercely competitive Southern Ocean Racing Circuit, with excellent results.

A perennial problem in Cruising Boat competition is to rate fairly boats of greatly varying sizes and characteristics so that they can race together on a handicap basis and, also, to provide some means for older boats to compete with newer designs in a reasonable manner. These two issues which first became problems at RYC in 1877 have been the subject of continuous serious discussions ever since, probably never to be satisfactorily resolved.

To sail in all Club sponsored events in a season, plus the four principal area long distance races, and the LYRA Regatta requires a Cruising sailboat to travel about 1400 miles on its own bottom between Memorial Day and mid-October, never leaving Lake Ontario. Many RYC skippers take in all of these races which is an indication of the immense interest in racing in this fleet.

To those who have experienced the excitement (sometimes accompanied by panic) of approaching a turning mark with 15 or 20 other 30 to 40 foot sailboats within boatlengths of each other, to those who have navigated for hours through the night to make early morning landfall hitting the finish on the nose to be the first boat in, to those who have slogged for 24 hours from Stony Island to Rochester into the eye of fierce winds and seas bringing the boat and crew home safely, to those who have spent quiet hours rafted with friends from far and near before and after the race, there are few things in this world to replace the satisfaction, pleasure, and feeling of accomplishment that goes with racing in the Cruising Fleet.



DYAD, owned by Ed Cowles, in 1972.

<i>YACHT</i>	<i>SKIPPER</i>	<i>YACHT</i>	<i>SKIPPER</i>	<i>YACHT</i>	<i>SKIPPER</i>
<i>DIVISION I</i>		<i>DIVISION II</i>		<i>DIVISION III</i>	
Rampage	Odenbach	Newsboy	Hay	Sheedevil	Raleigh
Sideband	Stolze	Rex	Moran	Alarm	Handler
Bete Noire	Lerner	Intruder	Cannon	Umi-Taka	Schwenk
Susan B. Anthony	Williams	Persephone	Young	Albatross	Brown/Hiatt
Mallard	Shumway	Foxfire	Newell	Jeremiah	Pruitt
Audacity	Lyke	Zest	Ingerson	Apogee	Liberto
Capsule	Strasenburgh	Panache	Clarridge	Soolaimon	Buerman
Latent Image	Ainslie	Ping	Robfogel	Wotan	Armer
		Tarlin	Polidor		

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<i>DIVISION IV</i>		<i>DIVISION V</i>			
Yellow Fever	Colway/Hyde	Iroquois	Van Voorhis	Velero	Hartsig
Hippocampus	Coleman	Pied Piper	Rueckwald	Chubasco	Wright
Venture	Sertl	Fantasy	Holahan	Petrel	Woodams
Cherokee	Fischer	Sandpiper	Hubbel	Macushla	Woodstra
Touche	Baker/Gugler	Sea Oats	Burks	We Two	Coombs
Pong	Alter	Jubilee	Dailey	Chutzpah	Statt
Pegasus	Allen	Cheemaun	Weld	Bobcat	Rekers
Lysistrata	Van Fossen	Hi-Lo	Hickey	Rapid Transit	Polsky
Chimera	Low	Blue Horizon	Field	Katrinka	Bauman
		Infinity	Scott	Whaler	Schultz
		Kindo	Poole		