

BURGEE – April 2011 - Luffing Lassies

Springing Forward

Ellen McKeefe

There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes.

Old Norwegian adage.

This past winter caused a major fashion shift among the LL's. For years, quick drying shorts and t-shirts or tank tops dominated the SSS runway. The Winter 2010-2011 look was sleek and unforgiving of any unsightly bulges. Wet suits of all varieties were the fashion statement of choice. Multi-colored, long and short sleeved, knee length and long, usually accessorized by booties. One observer noted that perhaps the level of sailing expertise increases with the amount of neoprene worn by the sailor. If that is the case, the LL's are one hot sailing club. But we already knew that, didn't we?



Gillian Whatmore makes a fashion statement. Photo by Rachel Harvey

“This winter some of us have spent more time on other FWSA clubs’ waters than our own,” Captain Linda Schwartz noted accurately.

One windy March day five LL’s invaded Tampa Bay as described by Michelle Lee; “The Lassie Plan to rule the world by dominating all the Interclub races is proceeding well. The last group of defenders (St. Pete and three other invited clubs) were so intimidated by the Lassie horde that they didn’t even put up a token resistance. Lassies swept all awards in the Sunfish class due to the fact that the only Sunfish racing were Lassies.”

Diane Banyard sailed in a pram. The 1-2-3 Sunfish were Ursula Olson, Michelle and LL Captain Linda Schwartz. Sally Miller rounded out the fleet. Sources tell me that Michelle won one race, which means she bested Ursula. We don’t see a lot of that.

Our other hot-shot Sunfisher, Rita Steele, was up on Choctawhatchee Bay competing in the International Masters Championship at Fort Walton Yacht Club. She placed 19th of 42 over all in nine races. The following day the Sunfish Midwinter National Championship got underway at the same venue. Ten races later, Rita was 30th of 47 boats, competing against those crazy kids from the Caribbean and Latin America who are gearing up for the 41st Sunfish Worlds in Curacao in June.

LL’s hosted an Interclub with the Salty Sisters that resulted in 2nd and 3rd place slots for Diane Banyard and Kimberly Duplissey respectively. New to the LL’s this season, these two competitors are moving up in the Pram standings.

It should be noted that despite the lousy weather this year, our Race Committee stalwarts were always there for us. And for our Interclub guests. And the Social Committee provides lunch and support whenever needed. Heartfelt thanks from the wetsuit crowd.

While the SSS hosted the Annual One Design Midwinters some sixteen LL’s and supporters sponsored a work party. Squadron staff gave Captain Linda a to-do list that included dock repair, trash hauling, tree trimming, kitchen scouring, painting and other tasks. The pavilion was momentarily pristine and organized by First Officer Linda Tiffan and her elves. Then the One Design competitors came in off the water and the chairs were no longer arranged by size and color. Nevertheless, Linda enjoyed her “Martha Stewart moment.”

One of the pillars of recent LL history is Margaret Swift. Since 2006, she has served on the LL Board as Treasurer. Good memories and gratitude filled the air at a farewell dinner as Margaret departs for coastal Leland, North Carolina. Margaret recalls that the 2005 LL class was filled but thanks instructor Ursula for squeezing her in. "I was hooked after that class and could not believe how kind and patient everyone was...I looked forward to every Thursday." Margaret's daughter lives in Sarasota so we know she'll be back.

Bringing this full circle, new and energetic LL Gail Seidman stepped in to take over the Treasurer duties. Gail is now part of a long line of women who made commitments to this organization. And to sailing.

The 30th Annual FWSA Rainbow Regatta will be at the St. Pete Yacht Club in early April. Dozens of Prams and Sunfish from the member clubs will fill Tampa Bay southeast of the St. Pete Municipal Pier. At this writing, thirteen LL Sunfish will arrive with the Pram teams. Many LL's will be overnighing in St. Pete the night before so expect some pre-Rainbow parties at waterside pubs. And some bright-eyed competitors the next morning.

Luffing Lassies at Work



Christine Brown takes on a nasty task. Photo by Rachel Harvey



Julie Burnett, Suzy Conover and Diane Banyard work on dock repairs as the Mid-Winters fleet sails out. Photo by Rachel Harvey