

BURGEE – Luffing Lassies, March 2011

Sunfish Genealogy and Other LL Winning Traditions

Ellen McKeefe



We really should trace the genealogy of some of the Sunfish in our fleet. Pram Captain Jane Owens recently purchased Renate Mamula's Sunfish after selling hers to new LL Jacki Booker. And Renate bought that Sunfish from another LL. Does anyone know how many Sunfish once owned by Rita Steele and Carol McDowell are still sailed from the Squadron on Thursdays? My 1999 Sunfish was purchased new by Elfriede Needham, sold to Sue Allen in 2004, who then sold it to me in 2007. If you have a Sunfish that has made her way through the LL membership, let me know. Just curious.

Jane named her “new” boat “Lady Bug.” She was christened one chilly morning in February. Does champagne taste better in plastic glasses?

Speaking of chilly mornings, we have had more than our share this season. Too many Thursday mornings have found an intrepid group, optimistically clad in cold weather gear, gathered in the clubhouse holding coffee cups to keep their hands warm. On those mornings, when going out on the water was not an option, we were grateful that Ursula Olson and other veteran LL’s passed along racing counsel and other boaty inside information.

On good days, LL’s went out there and raced even if it was not on Sarasota Bay. Early one sunny February morning six LL Sunfish and two Prams traveled to Davis Island for a Dinghy Dames-hosted Inter-Club race. Every season, novice LL’s quickly learn that following Ursula on the race course usually pays off. The operative phrase here is “usually.” On this day Ursula had a string of Sunfish following her as she added a third lap to a two-lap course. Laughter echoed across the water. The coveted annual Turkey Award may have a winner.

Despite that momentary lapse, Ursula finished 1st over all, leading an LL Sunfish sweep. Sunfish Captain Dottie Schell placed 2nd and Carol McDowell took 3rd. (Isn’t it nice to have Carol back sailing with us?) LL Captain Linda Schwartz, Lisa Dodds, Sally Miller Sunfished. Gail Seidman and Jacki raced prams while new LL Sue Tschesnok was a spectator.

A couple of weeks later, a fearless foursome drove up to Clearwater the day after Saint Valentine’s Day with temperatures in the 40’s. Three former LL Captains (Ursula, Lisa and Dottie) and current Captain Linda trailered their Sunfish to the “For the Love of Sailing Regatta “ sponsored by the FWSA Solmates. Air temps reached the 70’s, water temps stayed in the mid-60’s on Clearwater Bay; winds 5 to 10. Lisa noted that Captain Linda’s hands-on coaching from Ursula is “starting to rattle some chains.” Lisa added, “She (Linda) and Dottie were neck-and-neck for 4th and 5th place so she is someone to watch out for.” Ursula once more sailed to first place; no surprise there. The competition joked about banning Ursula from future events but Dottie reminded them that if they did that LL’s would just bring Rita instead.

1-2-2-2-1-1-1 = 10. That impressive string is Rita's results at the Charlotte Harbor Regatta where she left seven other Sunfish in her wake. The second place finisher scored a total of 20. Poor *guy*. The Regatta website commentary concluded, "Rita Steele of Sarasota, Florida, took charge in Sunfish Class Sunday and the overall title."

Did you know that *SAIL* magazine says Charlotte Harbor is, "One of the top ten greatest places to sail in the United States." Well, Rita sure likes it there.

Mark your calendars. The 30th Annual FWSA Rainbow Regatta will be sailed from the St. Petersburg Sailing Center on Tuesday, April 5th. Hosts this year are the Salty Sisters of the St. Pete Yacht Club. Captain Linda, "We are already working on the Pram team and it would be really great to get as many Sunfish sailors as we can this year. In addition, we would like to have a support team go up with us to cheer us on as well as help to load and unload our boats. Our tired bodies can especially use the help after coming off the water. The Luffing Lassies will pay for the registration/lunch for all the sailors and the lunch for all who go up to support our sailing group."

LL Historian Jane Owens dug up some Rainbow Regatta history, "In an effort to distinguish the (FWSA) club pram teams from one another, colored ribbons were tied to the tops of the sprits. Someone remarked that the ribbons looked like a rainbow." Who knew? I thought it had something to do with "The Wizard of Oz" or Drag Queen Bingo.

Robin Wall continues to work on the LL website www.luffinglassies.com with assistance from Tom Schwartz and photog Rachel Harvey. Robin wants everyone to know, "The news, calendar and race results sections have been updated." And the photo galleries are also current.

###