

## **Beginnings:**

### *A Beehive of Activity*

The month of June is always an active one, with our annual Challenge Cup races and traditional Commodore's Ball. Both events draw from past history, with the Invitational Regattas of the 1950's and 60's paving the way to our current Challenge Cup event, and the dance socials from the 1900's leading to the addition of a "commodious dance pavilion" to the Clubhouse in 1913. Indeed in 1913, SBYC was recognized as a major tourist attraction, where visitors were invited to the "spacious club home of the Sodus Bay Yacht Club" to participate in a number of events that featured program cards, music and dancing. Ladies Day was a special feature on Thursdays, and the Commodore always appointed a Reception Committee for each Saturday evening. As told by Charlotte Bloomer in our history book, "on Saturday evenings a certain number of well-behaved boys from the summer school on Eagle Island were invited to join in the dances. There was always entertainment, usually musical, preceded by dinner." Certainly then, the addition of bathrooms and a kitchen in 1913, had to have been a most welcomed relief!! (That with a refrigerator which cost \$5.00).

In August of 1953, SBYC hosted its first Invitational Regatta, inviting skippers and crews from neighboring clubs to participate in two days of racing and camaraderie. That first regatta saw a fleet of 20 Lightnings, 15 Snipes, and 14 Internationals. The Invitational grew into a premier annual event at the Club with upwards of 100 boats participating in any given year. Held the last weekend of August, participants came from all over the state and beyond. Classes varied year to year with Lightnings and Rhodes Bantams leading the charge. Other classes included Dragons, Sailfish, Thistles, Snipes, Comets and Jolly Boats. Most boats came on trailers, so you could imagine the parking lot, the launchings, traffic control... but how could you miss not having a good time at a regatta that featured Jolly Boats! The Invitational Regatta was held well into the 1960's and beyond, but as time went on interest in one-design small boat racing waned, as a new world of fiberglass racer-cruisers entered the scene ushering in with them new rating systems.

The tradition of "invitational" racing continues today, with our current Challenge Cup Regatta held annually the last weekend of June. In 1983, then Fleet Captain, Chuck Willette, approached the Fair Haven and

Pultneyville Yacht Clubs, with a request to contribute funds toward a new trophy, the Challenge Cup. Dedicated as a team trophy, and awarded annually to the Club with the best overall corrected time of its leading yachts, it replaced the former "Little Brown Jug" retired in 1982. Participation increased over the years to include other clubs from around the lake, as efforts of continuing fleet captains and race committees seek to promote this event as our premier regatta.

On display in the SBYC Trophy Case is the Challenge Cup, Little Brown Jug, and other Regatta and Invitational memorabilia.

Rosemary Willette