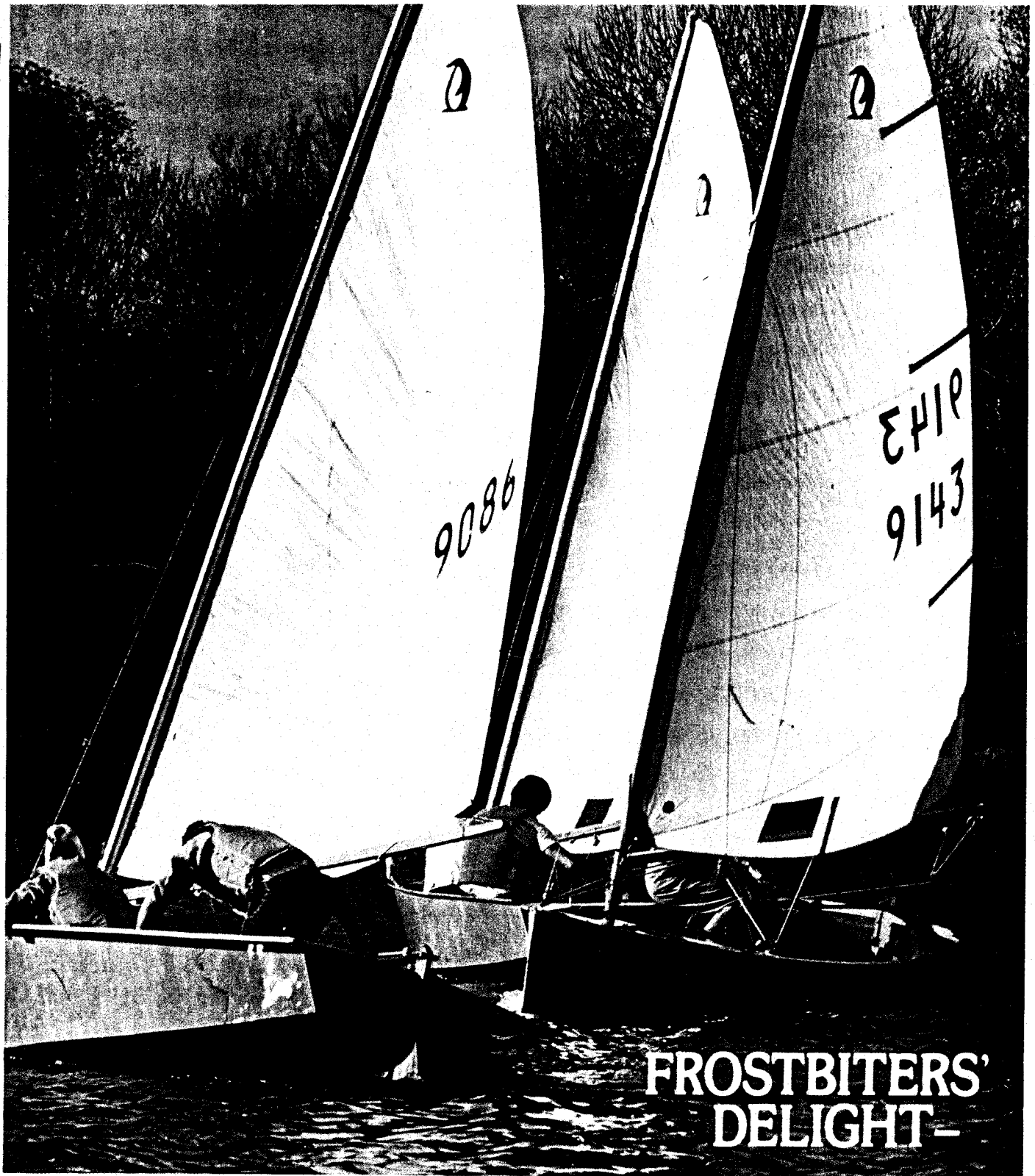


SKOKIE LAGOONS PENGUIN FLEET



40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

1954 - 1994

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4/2/94

Pre-History

Back in 1949, two WW II vets at Wilmette Harbor, Lou Quinlan and Mac Bercaw, built a couple of Penguins from kits so they could race in the off-season against other dinghies.

The Beginning

They raced Fleetwin Arrows off the beach in Highland Park in the early 50's. These were nice, light, plywood boats but you had to build them, no one else did. This group decided to use their skills and build Penguins for racing on the Skokie Lagoons as a season stretcher. Skip Wynkoop was the ringleader of the group which included Gunnar Schwandt, Larry Abt, Dick Lepman and John Keim. They found some kindred spirits at Wilmette Harbor in Dick Stearns, Bob Rodgers, Elliott Muther and Gus Martin (who eventually built 4 boats). Morrie Potter lived in Winnetka and joined in, building at least 3 - 5 boats himself.

Five boats slid into the pond for the first racing day on Oct. 11, 1953. Dick Stearns won the first Fleet Championship. On 3/10/54 the Fleet charter came from the Penguin Class.

Skip was the Fleet President and devised this wondrous course chart to simplify things. 60% of the marks were rounded to starboard and sometimes to both starboard and port in the same race. After all there were 8 marks and 24 course options. On a small pond you have to utilize every nook and cranny.

In the fall of 54 a rookie joined the Fleet. Frank Flaherty had boat #2227 with a 2 piece mast and a mitre cut, orlon Murphy-Nye sail of undetermined vintage. When he took it in to Murphy-Nye to be recut, they cut off the label.

The spring of 55 saw 16 boats on the course and by fall it was 20. Starting all races in the center of the pond meant short legs and there wasn't enough space. The Fleet Division system was inaugurated. There was the Main Fleet for ordinary guys, the Black Watch for hotshots and the Red Fleet for beginners. Nobody wanted to be in the Red Fleet so that ended that, but a lot of heat was generated as skippers fought for a spot in the Black Watch, limited to 1/3 of the Fleet, over the next 21 years.

The real heart and soul of the Fleet who kept it going and growing was Larry Abt until he had a stroke in the late sixties. Those attending Fleet meetings in his home well remember Col. Randolph 100 proof bourbon.

SLPF - Best Game in Town

Penguins on the Lagoons were the best game in town...and the Fleet did a lot to make it that way.

- In 1955, with 31 members, a fall sailing school was started for beginning members on 3 Sundays in Sept. It was on the schedule until 1962.
- The Trivium Regatta was inaugurated in 1955 with 3 boats from each of 3 fleets. Columbia and Wolf Lake were the other two. We didn't win it until 1958.
- We tried summer sailing too, on the Lagoons in '55 - don't know if anyone showed up. The next effort was in '59 at Wilmette Harbor on Thursday evenings with some action.
- Turkey Day became a fixture in 1959 though the hot buttered rum didn't show up until much later.
- The Greater Midwest Puddle Championship came on the scene in 1962 with 25

boats on the pond. 13 were visitors from 7 fleets including San Francisco and Gardiner Cox from Philadelphia. Goldsmith won and Flaherty was second. Ask them about the fog.

And So It Grew

A new kid on the pond showed up and did the unmentionable. Bill Richards joined the Fleet in 1957 AND won the Fleet Championship that year - must be a mistake somewhere. With Dick Holmes he started the East Fork Boat Works in 1959 and the Penguin world changed. In the ensuing years over 130 Salentine boats were launched; on the Lagoons, in Chicago and points East. They were pricey, \$599 in '62, but the availability of good competitive boats sparked our growth and that of the Class.

Several other newcomers made their mark on the pond.

- Dick Tennerstedt came out in 1960 though he had had his baptism among the ice floes crewing for Gus Martin in the infamous 1955 Fleet Championship at Montrose Harbor. He won his first Fleet Championship in 1964.
- 1962. Tom Provencher showed up with Dick's old boat and became one of the four Class presidents from our Fleet. Also in the Class of '62 was Dick Mayne, another president-to-be.
- Bruce Goldsmith came on the scene in 1962 and gave us racing lessons - winning the Fleet Championship and placing 2nd at the Internationals in Sayville, Long Island. From then on the Fleet was bigtime at the Class Championships.
- The ball kept rolling. By 1968 there were 48 members. Around 31 showed up on 10/13/68 and the average turnout was 23 boats that fall.

Watch Out World - The International Scene

Richards, Tennerstedt and Flaherty showed the Fleet flag at New Orleans in 1960. Fortunately the results can't be found. Since then Fleet members have been to almost every Class Championship except for some in South America. We've raced in varied places; New Orleans, Detroit, Rio, Lake Dillon Colorado, Longueil (Quebec), plus up and down the East Coast.

Consistent top five finishers over the years have been Dick Tennerstedt, Mark Kastel, Sandy Rapp, Don Casey, Frank Flaherty, Ron Meissner, Bob Johnstone, Bruce Goldsmith, and Bill Richards.

The big heroes who snatched the gold are Bob Johnstone (69), Sandy Rapp (68&93) and Mark Kastel (90).

Our big event was the 1969 Class Championship at Wilmette Harbor. Would you believe, 47 boats showed up from 24 fleets. Bob Johnstone won it for the home team with Rapp 3rd, Goldsmith 4th, Tennerstedt 5th as the Fleet captured 6 of the top 10 places.

What's Up Now

Since 1970 a lot of other small boat games have come to town and the Fleet is down in size to those who love the boat, the action and the competition. The Lagoons are still the most exciting racing around. Current membership is around 25. In the past several years 6 of the hot shots (Black Watch descendants) have purchased new boats. 4 to 6 boats go to all regattas including the Class Championship and are always up front and tough to beat. The Skokie Lagoons is, as it has been over the last 40 years, a great place to race with a lot of wonderful people.

Note: In the course of time, probably 200 people have been members of the Fleet. Many have done significant things or have just been great fun to know. Who could forget Don Newhall's wonderful cartoons or Harry Slaght in his wet suit pulling out the marks in Jan? The stories are endless and there are new ones every season. The brevity of this history cannot begin to do them all justice.

RACE COURSES

SEE CHART

CAPS-BUOYS TO STAR

lc to port

#	WIND	STR	COURSE	BUOYS	FIN
1	N • 1	BLU	KEM-STN-PTR		BLU
2	N m	BLU	KEM-STN-PTR-KEM		blu
3	NNE m	BLU	KEM-STN-PTR-lpm		GRN
4	NE 1	grn	lpm-kem-shw		grn
5	NE m	grn	lpm-kem-shw-lpm		GRN
6	ENE m	grn	lpm-kem-shw-stn		RED
7	E 1	red	stn-ABT-LPM		GRN
8	E m	red	stn-kem-wnk		red
9	ESE m	wht	MTH-ABT-STN		RED
10	SE 1	wht	mth-kem-abt		wht
11	SE m	wht	mth-kem-abt-mth		WHT
12	SSE m	wht	MTH-PTR-KEM-MTH		WHT
13	S 1	blu	ptr-stn-kem		blu
14	S m	blu	PTR-ABT-KEM-PTR		BLU
15	SSW m	blu	ptr-lpm-PTR		BLU
16	SW 1	GRN	SHW-KEM-LPM		GRN
17	SW m	GRN	shw-lpm-kem-shw		grn
18	WSW m	GRN	SHW-KEM-LPM-SHW		grn
19	W 1	RED	wnk-shw-KEM		blu
20	W m	RED	Wnk-KEM-STN		RED
21	WNW m	WHT	ABT-KEM-STN-ABT		wht
22	NW 1	WHT	ABT-STN-MTH		WHT
23	NW m	WHT	ABT-STN-MTH-ABT		wht
24	NNW m	BLU	KEM-STN-MTH-kem		blu

