

Joseph Robison McLoughlin 1920 - 2001

A Memorial Statement

When I joined the Saratoga Lake Sailing Club in 1964 I found, as so often happens, there were several Movers and Shakers who were the core upon which the club survived. But there was one mover who although soft-spoken – up to his boiling point – seemed to see the proper course of action, set the club in that direction, then visibly and audibly shake up those who were not moving at flank speed to obtain that goal.

And thus I was introduced to Robison (Bob) McLoughlin, one of the greatest of our sailing generation!

There are many words you can use to describe Bob: words like Scientist, Innovator, Brusque (when the occasion demanded it) Loyal, Dedicated, Superb (as in sailboat racing), Endearing (as he devoted countless hours teaching the kids during Junior Sailing). In short, Bob, in his own way, became an icon of the club's desired image, particularly if you sailed a Jet 14!

Bob's most outstanding effort came when we were trying to negotiate our new home with the Melanders. They were adamant that they would not break up the property of 300 acres @ \$155,000. Bob lead a Property Committee delegation to them and negotiated a deal for the 12 best acres, 600 ft. of frontage for \$100,000! With this news, \$40,000 in signed pledges were made in half an hour.

The McLoughlins were club members as a family. Bob was elected Commodore in 1971 and his wife Janet co-chaired the office of Flag Lt. House with Elly Rice when we first took over our new home. Son Chad and daughter Joan completed the family circle. Tragically, Janet suffered an aneurysm while riding her bicycle in 1981 and is confined to a wheelchair.

Many people have many memories of Bob, but the two that stick in my mind are:

1) Bob told us about the 30 ft. sailboat he was building in his basement. Of course our reaction was: "How will he get it out?" Bob fooled us all by building it in two lengthwise halves – each of which slipped easily out of the basement door. He stepped two masts with Jet 14 sails. Some people believe this may have been the first J-24.

2) He then proceeded to build his own airplane. When he took it to the Saratoga County Airport for its first flight, he found there was a crosswind from the right. Therefore on takeoff down the runway his plane started to veer to the left towards the airport wind tee. Few things stopped Bob, so he hollered "Starboard" three times. However, the tee didn't move and he crashed into it!

Bob passed away this year, but for all those who knew him he will be in perpetual memory!

Randall H. Rice
SLSC Historian