

The History of the C Scow Blue Chip Regatta

Gleaned from the PYC 1990 Yearbook

In the spring of 1960 Rear Commodore John E. Looze along with Dr. Alex Pomierski and Dr. Ralph Pomierski approached the Board of Directors of the Pistakee Yacht Club to request permission to have the club sponsor a post-season regatta to be held the second weekend after Labor Day. The regatta would be called the Blue Chip Regatta and would be limited to the Class C fleet champions of all Inland Lake Yachting Association member clubs plus the winners of major regattas. Since Looze and the Pomierski brothers promised to underwrite any losses, while any profits would accrue to the club, the board accepted the offer! The First Annual Blue Chip Regatta was held September 17 and 18, 1960 with a fleet of 13 boats.

Looze assumed from conception that the ILYA member club secretaries (then 26 in number) would make note of their respective club champion and the chairs of the seasons' regattas would note their winners and ultimately send him "legal certification" of qualifiers for the Blue Chip. A breakdown in communication brought only just a few more boats the next year, 17. The following year brought 21 qualifiers and then in 1963, he had 27 qualifiers.

It was at this point Looze conceived of the idea of increasing automatic qualifiers to include the top several finishers in each of the major association regattas and to eliminate the champions of member clubs. He also decided to appoint a secret and anonymous committee of five inland sailors known only to him and not even to each other. The "Fearsome Fivesome" was born! They had the task of determining who, beyond the automatic qualifiers, were most deserving of an invitation and then had to submit a ballot by mail of their top picks. It was Looze then who made the final decision to bring the total boats sailing to 25.

By the mid-60's Looze, looking for new ideas to improve the regatta, decided to change the format from three races to five. And to add a little more excitement he

conceived of the idea of inviting a “Mystery Guest” to test the best the “C” fleet had to offer.

Beginning of the Mystery Guest

John Looze, founder of the Blue Chip, decided in the 5th year, 1964 to add an element of surprise to the regatta. The first year, as the fleet sailed from the club and headed north to the starting line, out from behind Eagle Point to the east sailed a stranger with a “ ? “ on the sail. “Calamity Jane” Wiswell-Pegel, a current Class M Champion, was sailing the boat while maintaining a low profile in the cockpit! She surprised them all and finished in the top half of the regatta! Thus was born the annual selection of a special guest to compete against the invited C skippers. This year, 2014, the term “mystery” guest has been replaced by “celebrity” guest, so that our skippers can know ahead of time who they will sail against.

Friday Pork Chop Dinner

In the late 1960’s, as more and more sailors began to come from Minnesota, Iowa and Michigan, often arriving the night before the regatta, it was thought that a Friday evening social get-together would be in order. A group of Wisconsin sailors spearheaded by Tom Sawyer, Wally Schmidt, Lou Morgan and Bob Schieble agreed to host an All-You-Can-Eat Friday evening pork chop and corn roast. This annual Friday night party continues to this day as a marvelous kick off to the regatta, allowing sailors to get acquainted and exchange ideas on equipment, rules and techniques. Conveniently, back in the day, the ILYA Class C Fleet Committee convened its fall meeting at “High Noon” on that Friday before the Blue Chip and then descended en mass upon the pork chop party to dispense all sorts of wisdom resulting from the previous hours of “beery rumination”.

From Pistakee Bay to Okauchee Lake

In 2012, a cooperative agreement was reached to transition the Blue Chip Regatta from Pistakee Yacht Club to Okauchee Lake Yacht Club. It was agreed that Pistakee would operate the Blue Chip in 2012, and that Okauchee Lake Yacht Club members would

support their efforts by assisting with the running of the regatta that year. This joint effort would not only assist Pistakee in running the 2012 event, but also help Okauchee get a better understanding of how the regatta was run and of its wonderful traditions. The agreement allows for Okauchee to operate the regatta starting in 2013, and Pistakee would act as a mentor during the transition. It is the intent to have the regatta operate in the approximate same fashion as it had since its inception. This cooperative effort between Pistakee and Okauchee was founded on the two lakes' long and close linked history. Both lakes look forward to the **Original Blue Chip** successfully moving forward to the next 50 years of its existence.

A New Agreement is Reached

During the winter 2016/2017 agreement was reached between the OLYC Board and the PYC Board that the C Scow Blue Chip travel back to its original host club, the PYC every 5th year. The 58th Annual C Scow Blue Chip returns to Pistakee in 2017. In 2018 it is back on Okauchee Lake.

