

# The Steketee Trophy

by Audrey Matteson

The Steketee Trophy is awarded to a Fleet rather than to an individual. It was deeded to the Class by Neal Steketee, printed of *Flashes* from 1944 until his death in 1972, on the eve of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the association of Steketee-Van Huis, Inc. of Holland, Michigan, and the ILCA. Among his words at that time, in addition to congratulating the Class for its growth and advancement, commending the able leadership and enthusiastic guidance of all its International officers, and paying tribute to the devotion and concern of Mrs. Helen Limbaugh, Executive Secretary of the Class, he added: "One final word — My continued wish for ILCA is that it will continue to grow. It is imperative that each district and fleet continue to feed to local news media publicity on their regattas and activities. They will be more than happy to publish these events. And don't fail also to send news to your Executive Secretary for publication in the *Flashes*. I hope that the "Neal Steketee Trophy" will play a small part in promoting the International Lightning Class Association, and be a constant reminder to each member, district, and fleet to help promote the continued growth of this fine Association."

The Trophy deed stated:

"The Neal Steketee Permanent Trophy will be awarded at the North American Championships to the North American Fleet who has been outstanding in furthering the purpose of the I.L.C.A. in promoting and developing racing in Lightnings.

Such things as maintaining entire fleet membership in good standing with I.L.C.A.; interesting new people in the sport; publishing the most interesting and best newsletter; conducting an outstandingly fine Regatta; insuring high activity in racing in its fleet; providing a top notch Junior sailing program; placing a high percentage of its Fleet in the Top Flight District and/or North American Championship; etc. The trophy will be placed in contention annually for one or a combination of the above or similar accomplishments, as determined and announced by the Executive Committee or a panel of judges appointed by the Executive Committee.

The trophy will be held by the Fleet until the next North Americans, but is to remain the property of I.L.C.A. who will have it properly engraved with the year, name, and number of the Fleet receiving the award."

Lake Fenton, Michigan, Fleet 53 was the first recipient when, according to the "Terms of 1969 Award", the trophy was awarded to the Fleet with the highest rating on percentage of I.L.C.A. membership of its Fleet in 1968 and in 1969 as of May 20, 1969, plus points for each additional I.L.C.A. member from May 20 to July 24, 1969.

The trophy was then awarded each year through 1977 to the fleet which had done the most to promote the Lightning Class. The 1970 award went to Fleet 274, Memphis, Tennessee, for their outstanding news coverage of the Fleet's activities in their newsletter, write ups and photographs as submitted for *Flashes* and as covered in local newspapers, especially the section in the colored magazine section of their newspaper, which is most unusual; also their continued ad in the classified section of the yellow pages. Fleet 274



*Commodore Esther Callahan and Bob Mathers of the Pontiac Yacht Club recipients of the 1989 Steketee Trophy Award.*

Photo credit — Hank Callahan

received the Steketee Trophy again in 1974 when it was judged the North American Fleet having the best program for showing Lightnings and for getting non-Lightning sailors into the Class. (I understand they were close again in 1989 and when you read Crit Currie's article in this issue, you'll see why.)

The 1971 award was also made on the basis of the portfolio of news coverage, *Flashes* and Yearbook coverage and newsletters which had been submitted for the competition and went to Washington, D.C. Fleet 50. In 1972 the "Terms of Award" called for the best overall growth rate, with several factors taken into consideration. And the best was shown by Fleet 229, Chinook Lightning Fleet, Pacific Northwest District, with honorable mention to second best, Fleet 227, Lake Bomoseen, New England District.

Unfortunately Class records of the recipients in 1973, '75, and '77 are not available. The trophy was in need of repair and it is possible it may not have been awarded those years.

The trophy was reinstated in 1980-81 in conjunction with the membership drive which was then conducted to be awarded to the fleet which showed the greatest increase in its membership. It was awarded at that time to the Pontiac Yacht Club Fleet 54, Michigan District, who also received the trophy in 1982. Cedar Point Yacht Club Fleet 126, Connecticut/Rhode Island District showed the greatest increase in membership ending with a total of 32 active members in 1983 over 21 in 1982. The Fleet Captain was Guy Moulton and Fleet Secretary Edson White.

There was a tie for the Trophy in 1984 between the Lake Washington Fleet 132, Seattle, Washington and Columbia Fleet 283, both in the Pacific Northwest District. It was determined the Trophy would stay with Fleet 132, and Host Fleet for the 1984 North Americans.

Pontiac Yacht Club Fleet 54 under the leadership of Fleet Captain, Louis Nickels and Fleet Secretary, Jim Bowers again won the trophy as they went from 49 to 59 members in 1985. Runner-up that year was Devil's Lake Yacht Club Fleet 31, Michigan District, led by Captain Bruce Goldsmith and Secretary Jack Tibbs, showing an increase from 15 members in 1984 to 23 in 1985. In 1986 the Willow Bank Yacht Club Fleet 164, Central New York District, Alister Thomson, Secretary, was awarded the trophy for an increase from 15 to 21 members. There were five fleets with increases of four members each for Runners-up honors: Fleets 1, 152, 215, 314, and 484.

Lavallette Yacht Club Fleet 104, Central Atlantic District, increased their membership from seven members to twenty-one in 1987 and the trophy was presented to Fleet Captain, Chris Larsen and Fleet Secretary, Bill Dacosta. Runner-up in 1987 was again Devil's Lake Yacht Club Fleet 31, going from 21 to 26, according to Fleet Captain, Bill Rogge and Fleet Secretary, Jack Tibbs.

In the anniversary year 1988 the trophy was awarded for the best coverage of the 50th Anniversary and it was fitting it should go to Skaneateles Country Club Fleet 1. Fleet Secretary was Anne Roth Hueber and Fleet Captain was Frank Haas. President Anne Allen wanted a Service Award to go

to the Fleet with increased membership for 1988 and the award went to Mission Bay Fleet 194, San Diego, increased by 15 members.

The Steketee Trophy is an impressive one, rather large, and has caused some anxious moments. In 1974 the trophy was delivered to CYC in a locked box — without the key! During the presentation in 1972 the trophy was being displayed on a huge metal case. The Fleet representative reluctantly accepted the trophy, thinking that he had to pack the metal case home 3000 miles in his boat. (It was an ice chest, not the packing case!)

At the time when Neal Steketee deeded the trophy to the Class it was designated for North America only since shipping this trophy overseas was impractical. In 1980, a special award was presented to the overseas fleet which was credited with the greatest increase of dues paid owner memberships. The recipient of the award, a brass tray, was Fleet 249 Flotte del Garda, in Italy. Records indicate the award was to be presented annually to the European or South American Fleet which best furthered the Lightning Class, however there is nothing available which indicates the award was presented following the initial presentation. Vice President Nando De Amicis has been contacted about whether or not Fleet 249 has the tray at their Club.

It has been suggested that Fleets in Europe and South America would like to participate in competition for an award. If there is widespread interest, and if the award from 1980 or other trophies are made available, terms of award could be set up.

### Pontiac Yacht Club Fleet 54, 1989 Steketee Trophy winner.



# Mr. Lightning of Michigan

by Esther N. Callahan

He is "Mr. Lightning of Michigan", although he does not think of himself in that context. He promotes, teaches, recruits and supports the Class.

Serving on the membership committee for Pontiac Yacht Club for many years he has managed to bring in at least one new member a year himself. He encourages new members to participate in club activities, finds places for them to crew, and helps to educate them about the Lightning Class. One of his most recent recruits sailed with him for a year, then bought his own boat. In addition, the son joined junior sailing and promises to be a good sailor in his own right.

The Steketee Trophy has been awarded to Pontiac Yacht Club four times due principally to this man's efforts. He personally contacts all boat owners and encourages their participation in the Lightning Class Association. A total of 68 Pontiac Yacht Club boats were registered with the Class this past year.

The "Team Races" at Lake Fenton have always been a favorite of this skipper. He organizes at least one and sometimes up to three teams to participate in the Lake Fenton Team Regatta.

His Lightning was a family boat from the start. Both his son and daughter crewed with him when they were young.

His son John went on to skipper, participating in the Michigan Juniors and buying back one of this father's Lightnings, which he titled *Born Again*. John also taught sailing at Pontiac Yacht Club for several summers. Father and son have participated for many years in the annual Crescent Sail Club Father's Day Regatta.

Ask any of his crew — past or present — he appreciates their importance to his success. He recognizes them at regattas, plans for their comfort and rewards their efforts at the Annual Banquet.

Selling tickets for Class raffles or other memorabilia and serving on the Lightning Class Governing Board are a few of his "Class" activities. In addition he is always encouraging boat owners to promote Class participation.

He has either skippered or crewed in the majority of "North Americans" held in the last twenty years. This past year for the first time he also skippered in the North American Masters and finished second.

He exemplifies the term a "gentlemen's sport", always sailing fair, but to win, and with respect for the rules.

Although many do not know his name or recognize his face — they know *Evergreen* — and the man at the helm is Bob Mathers, "Mr. Lightning of Michigan!"

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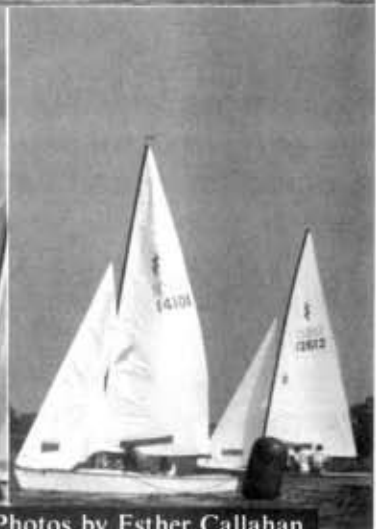


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Fleet Racing



Photos by Esther Callahan



# Ethics in Sailing

by Cully A. Cobb, Jr., M.D.

Crit Currie and Audrey Matteson caught me in a weak moment after the Bluenose Regatta and extracted an agreement to say a few words on this topic for the younger (read faster) generation. I speak from the survival position of three score years and ten; and the Lightning racing posture of two score and counting!

I have made fast, though not especially frequent, friends all over the place and among three generations of Lightning sailors in these years. Experience and friendships gained in the excitement and at times stress of small boat racing have to do with sharing moments of highest emotion, along with times of relaxation and marvelling at the wonders of nature. No one understands the elements as sailors do and no other sport is as finely tuned to the vagaries of the wind; sometimes soft, sometimes smashing, but always changing, always new.

If this is sounding like a sermon, that's what it is! The sailboat racing is something serious. No missionary is more zealous than a sailing partisan, especially one of the Lightning stripe.

We owe the sport, therefore, our best in effort, intellect and character. And mostly they are all there.

Sailing is a permanent learning process and any neurologist can tell you all about learning. As the brain nerves pick up myelin (insulation), in the first couple of years, suddenly there is memory. Instantly follows learning. The brain of a five year old is like fly paper. Any knowledge sticks if it passes near: the ability to talk, comprehend, add another spoken language, read, learn to shoot baskets, sail a boat. In late teens the flypaper begins to harden. Knowledge is added by grasping and clutching, not just passing by! One of the great things about sailing is that old and young can compete together (if not equally). There are enough overlapping variables so that a sailor of forty years and one of twenty-five feel like peers, and the camaraderie extends a lot further still. This is the mission thing, there is more to all this than boat speed alone.

There is really no more to be said about ethics. If this sport is to have the deep meaning we want it to have we can only give it our best. Our best of honor, fairness, fellowship. If the beauty of nature can be enhanced by a fleet of sailboats, it is our duty to see that mankind, God's greatest creation, in this case sailors, accept the responsibility to further enhance the scene with human virtues deserving the lineage from the sportsmen of Corinth. It should be the fairest of sports, both ways, and it is our duty to make it so.



Photo by Janette Conaway

**Bluenose Regatta — Nashville**



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