



Dartmouth Corinthian Yacht Club

Annual Alumni Regatta & 60's Reunion

It all came together Saturday night at the DOC House on Occom Pond. Art Allen '32, looking for all the world like a reincarnated Ross McKinney, and his wife Dobbie rose and stood there against the stone fireplace, and, as the scene unfolded before them, he said, "I would not have believed it!" Spontaneously, in the middle of a 60's style hootenanny led by 60's alumni playing four guitars, the recent alums and undergraduates rose to their feet, locked arms around shoulders and began singing the alma mater. I swear there was not a dry eye in the place. Almost 90 people, spanning 69 years of Dartmouth tradition, picked up the words, with the old alums joining arms with the undergraduates, to sing all the verses. Though round the girdled earth they'd roamed, her spell on them remained!

The Dartmouth Corinthian Yacht Club (DCYC) of today is the product of the hard work of Art Allen '32 and Capt. Bill Hurst. Over 25 years they have successfully combined the twin threads of recruiting and teaching talented sailors to become national champions under the Dartmouth banner. They raised funds, developed two additional boathouses, and culminated their efforts with the fund raising, purchase and dedication of 24 new Flying Junior (FJ) sailing dinghies on May 10, 1997. This legacy has been passed to the current coach, Brian Doyle, who, in addition to coaching the DCYC Women's Team into the National Championships this year, will be going to England this summer to coach a US team against the best the UK has to offer, and a year ago did the same with an exchange team in Japan.

Each year DCYC holds an Alumni Regatta and invites past graduates to test their skills against the current varsity team. This year, Steve Blecher '64 and Rick Van Mell '63 had dinner in New York early in the year, and thought it would be fun to gather DCYC members from the 60's for this year's regatta and dedication of the new 1997 boats.

The 60's generation had built a fleet of their own 14 foot "Darts" in the woodworking shop of the then newly opened Hopkins Center. Working through most of the winter, DCYC members finished off fiberglass hulls with wooden decks, masts and rudders. An article about, and picture of the first new boat rigged outside "the Hop", appeared in the February 28, 1963 edition of The Dartmouth (then costing 7 cents an issue). Culminating a weekend of sailing films in Spaulding Auditorium, 1962 America's Cup Skipper Bus Mosbacher '43 and his wife came to Dartmouth in May of 1963 to christen the six new boats.

More than 36 people from the 60's were invited to this year's dedication, 13 showed up, and with wives and children, totaled 23 strong. They gathered at the Hanover Inn for dinner on Friday night: Mel Converse '60 and daughter Mate, Tuck '97, Brian Klinger '62, Rick Van Mell '63 and

Annual Alumni Regatta & 60's Reunion

wife Sandy, Barrett Johnson '63 and wife Merry Ann, Steve Blecher '64, wife Amy and son Jeff '98, Jay Evans '64 and wife Hasty, Tim Bryant '65, Rob Overton '65 and wife Andi, Rich Miller '65, wife Cheryl and son Dave '97, Bud Heerde '66 and son Matt '98, and Halsey Bullen '66. Norm Carpenter '61 and Stu Russell '65 joined the group on Saturday. Also at dinner were Art Allen '32 and wife Dobbie, Capt. Bill and Chris Hurst, and Brian Doyle. Though many had not seen each other in over 30 years, the sounds and laughter, the banter, the jokes and the spirit were immediately recognizable. Special recognition was given to the 60's wives who had come – none of them had known their mates while they were at Dartmouth.

As Friday's dinner came to an end, Brian Doyle mentioned that the recent alums were likely to be gathering across Main Street at Murphy's on the Green. A core group ventured across the street and were soon sharing pictures, quotes and stories with returning recent alums, including nationally ranked All American women DCYC sailors Blair Seidler '96, Whitney Conner '95, Carey Clifford '94 and Kristen Doyle '94. Also looking forward to sailing together once again were Ashley Bowen '94, Daan Goeedkoop '93, Tim Guy '90, Darren Doyle '90, Karen Bleckman Kharitonov '90 and Ken Hadley '87. Fortified by a few pitchers of Sam Adams, some impromptu singing erupted, led by Barrett Johnson, Mel Converse, Brian Klinger and Rick Van Mell, though by midnight the "Old Salts" had drifted off to their trundle beds.

Steve Blecher had arranged a group rate at the Holiday Inn Express on the "new" Route 120. Saturday morning found this august group from 30 years ago gathering for a light breakfast and looking out the window at a steady rain. Understand that they had come from as far as Switzerland and California to race little dinghies on Lake Mascoma. Though the air temperature was 45 degrees, the ice had gone out but two weeks ago, the water temperature was maybe 40 degrees, yet, they looked at each other and out the window, and, with the dedication of the new fleet scheduled for 11:00 am, decided it was time to go.

The old saying, "Rain before seven, clear by eleven," almost held. The 60's contingent arrived to find that the hardworking undergraduate sailors had most of the 24 new boats rigged and tied to the docks in the still morning air. Wisps of cloud hung on the far side of a glassy calm Lake Mascoma, above the shrine of Our Lady of LaSalette, and a fine damp mist hung in the air. Six boats were aligned at the top of the jetty, ready for the dedication ceremony. Each represented some key connection to the life and spirit of DCYC sailors. Six bottles of champagne held by six presenters faced the assembled throng of about 90 strong. Individuals who had donated a whole boat, named the boat themselves. Dick Jeager '59 christened the yacht 'Alexis' named in honor and memory of Alexis Boss '94. Bill Hurst christened the yacht 'Jennifer Crary' named in honor and memory of Jennifer who was killed in a car accident on the way back from a competition in Boston in the spring of her freshman year (1985). Art Allen '32 christened the yacht 'Capella'. Ed Scheu Jr. '46 christened the yacht 'Shoo-Fly'. Steve Blecher '64 christened the yacht 'Jest' and Dr. David Tabors '65 christened the yacht 'RDT2'. Those six boats were christened in a symbolic gesture for the whole fleet of 24 boats. The Champagne corks flew, the crowd cheered, and then it was time to go racing.

Of the ninety plus sailors in attendance, the oldest was from the class of '32. Bud Heerde '66 came the farthest (from Switzerland) among the 13 alumni from the classes of '60 - '66. There

Annual Alumni Regatta & 60's Reunion

were eight alumni and current collegiate All American sailors present at the event. They included Tim Hogan USC '70 (father of Casey), John Fallon '92, Kristin Doyle '92, Whitney Connor '95, Carey Clifford '95, Blair Seidler '96, Leigh Lucas '98, and Casey Hogan '99.

A finger of wind had pushed across the slate mirror waters of Lake Mascoma. Spreading first on the water north by the Enfield bridge, then south past the point, and down over the docks, it built to a fine 10 knot sailing breeze. A triangular course was set with the start in the middle of the weather leg. Life jackets were donned, pictures were taken of people who had not been in a dinghy in 30 years (much less on Lake Mascoma), the current undergraduates and recent alums eagerly and happily pushed away from the dock, and 24 boats headed for the starting line.

Now a Flying Junior (FJ) is a very light, responsive boat, used at the pinnacle of collegiate racing around the country. They are 13 feet long with 22 foot tall masts, two sails, main sail and jib. It is usually crewed by a two person crew nominated with the highest skills and lightest weight possible under the prevailing conditions. Some of the "senior alumni" crews averaged perhaps 150 pounds more than the undergraduates and recent alumni. This was apparent first on the starting line as the lighter boats quickly accelerated away from the "heavies" and, even if the cunning, skill and luck of the plus 50 crowd managed to reach the weather mark first, the lighter (and better) crews smiled as they surged past on the off-wind legs. After three races we returned to shore for lunch.

Picnic tables, just the same as they were 30 years ago, held an array of burgers, buns, hot dogs, salad, chips and cheese. The smoke from the barbecues still blew in your faces, whether tended by the likes of Chris Hurst, young and old alumni or the parents of current DCYC sailors. The rain had stopped, the wind increased. But it was still hard to put on those wet gloves, sweaters and life jackets to go back out for the rest of the afternoon.

Sail we did, as patches of sunshine changed the surrounding hills to green, and increasing wind driven waves reflected patches of blue sky. In the last race of the day, Jay and Hasty Evans converged with a multitude of port/starboard racers and wound up swimming briefly in the frigid waters of Lake Mascoma. The rescue boat, capably handled by undergraduates, was quickly on the scene and pulled them aboard. After a fast trip to shore so Jay and Hasty could change clothes, the rescue boat returned to right the dinghy and place an undergraduate aboard to sail it back to the dock.

As we wrapped up sailing on Saturday at Lake Mascoma, Brian Doyle announced that four time All American Whitney Conner '95 and Carey Clifford '95 had the alums in first place, putting them ahead of the varsity for the first time in many years. Rob Overton '65 and wife Andi were the senior alumni winners for the day. Rob, it might be mentioned, is a United States Sailing Association judge who is assuming the responsibilities for evaluating the results of the new racing rules, and will represent the United States' interest in the racing rule revisions for the year 2000. Then we headed for dinner at the DOC House on Occom Pond.

Steve Blecher '64 had arranged to use the DOC House as DCYC had done in the 60's. Amy Blecher worked up a chicken and lasagna buffet dinner through Bloods Catering which was

Annual Alumni Regatta & 60's Reunion

delayed only slightly by the setting up of several extra tables to accommodate a completely full house. Around the room a 60 year span of DCYC sailors mingled, getting acquainted, telling stories of regattas won and lost, and looking for all the world like a group who had known each other for many years.

Dinner was compliments of DCYC, fortified through generous contributions of the senior alumni. As seconds and dessert disappeared from plates, the assembled throng moved into the great room flanked by fireplaces at either end. "Take up a piece of floor", accompanied the distribution of small, green and white bound, 30 page editions of folk songs and sea chanteys sung by the 60's alums in various incarnations of a singing group which had called themselves "The Yachtsmen".

Almost 90 strong around the room, the evening events began. Coach Brian Doyle masterfully revealed the day's results, starting in 24th place. By 17th place he had passed the "Old Salts", bonded in their protective armada astern of the undergraduates and recent alums to protect them, "lest the old traditions fail." Sisters stood by brothers, 'til the leading recent alums were capped as the leaders, to the cheers of everyone present.

Now the focus shifted. Word of the deeds of these "60's alums" had been spread by Coach Brian Doyle. Indeed there was some genuine anticipation among the undergraduates and recent grads. But, the moment of truth was at hand. Could alums 30 years out *possibly* say *anything* that would keep the wonderful momentum of the evening going. It took just moments. Rick Van Mell '63 called on 22nd place Steve Blecher '64 (a past DCYC Commodore, donor of one of the new boats, and co-organizer of the event) to start by sharing a memory of DCYC as he had known it. One by one, a dozen tales were told: Stories about the building of boats in Hopkins Center; Sugar Bowl regattas in New Orleans; scrambling to find crews; standing on a corner in the middle of the night in a town a thousand miles away waiting for the promised ride to the regatta to pick you up; finding companionship on beaches; being offered houses (and dates) because a well meaning alumni ran the boat they were to practice on aground; and freezing at the Timme Angsten Regatta in Chicago.

Along the way those present added the names of several classmates and teammates who had helped build those memories. They included Connie Born '60, Tad Kiefaber '64, Gil Kruschwitz '64, Andy Curtis '66, and Mark Tuttle '66. A copy of the cover of the first issue of what is today Sailing World magazine was passed around showing Cole Letteney '63 in a scuba diving suit on the docks of Chicago Yacht Club at the Timme Angsten Regatta in 1962 – it was the first time a "wet suit" had been seen in collegiate sailing.

Another salient point was DCYC's role in the early support of women in the sport of sailing. In the early 60's, the official New England Intercollegiate Sailing Association (NEISA) did not allow women to skipper in its scheduled regattas. Women crewed, and skippered boats in other venues, but were not recognized as serious contenders. DCYC started invitational regattas on Lake Mascoma in 1959, and had pictures of the fall 1960 Women's Regatta for all to see. In November 1962, DCYC hosted the first Women's Intercollegiate Sailing Association (WISA) championship. Dartmouth provided the boats and race management for these all women's events, and threw in Friday and Saturday night parties too – appreciated then as much as they are today.

Annual Alumni Regatta & 60's Reunion

As late as April 5, 1963, the NEISA schedule had this to say on page 12 about WISA, "While the Women's Intercollegiate S.A. is not a part of NEISA, our Association is offering its cooperation and assistance in building up intercollegiate sailing for the fair sex including administrative aid and regatta site assistance." DCYC's women's team was 1st in the 1992 U.S. National Championships, 2nd in 1988, 3rd in 1994, 95 and 96, and has qualified for this year's National Championships in Oregon. They are one of the very few Dartmouth teams this year to compete in a national championship in any sport. As the saying goes, "You've come a long way, baby!"

Then the acid test arrived. Mel Converse '60, Brian Klinger '62, Barrett Johnson '63 and Rick Van Mell '63 picked up guitars and announced it was time for an old DCYC tradition. It had been over 30 years since they'd hit notes and chords together. But hit them they did, and in a single voice the assembled crowd joined in. Firm, strong, and joyful, the likes of "Sloop John B", "Swing Low", "Scotch and Soda", and half a dozen more filled the room. As Art Allen '32 put it, "I would not have believed it." It was then that the recent alums and undergrads rose, joined arms, and launched into the alma mater. No sooner was it done than they started calling out page numbers and songs to sing. They danced and sang for almost an hour.

It had been great fun, but other things called. A little before eleven, the recent alums and undergrads headed off for at least two additional parties. With many thanks and invitations to join them later that night, they gathered up their friends and soon the hall grew quiet. Someone noted that in all the excitement there had not yet been a single picture of this singing crew from the 60's. An octet quickly formed before the fireplace, guitars in hand: Barrett Johnson, Tim Bryant, Norm Carpenter, Mel Converse, Steve Blecher, Rick Van Mell, Stu Russell, and Brian Klinger. They didn't pose, they sang. It took the benevolent look of Brian Doyle and the DOC House caretaker to remind them that the witching hour had passed. The stars above the golf course witnessed the long good-nights, the reluctance to yield friendships so wonderfully and spontaneously renewed.

Sunday morning dawned with a little more promise, though some alums had to head for home. Rich and Cheryl Miller headed back to California, Barrett and Merry Ann Johnson, and Tim Bryant headed back for Florida, Norm Carpenter was already back in Vermont, Steve and Amy Blecher headed off for a Mother's Day commitment, and Brian Klinger also headed for home.

At Lake Mascoma it was business as usual. The new boats were rigged and ready again thanks to the efforts of the undergraduates. It was decided to sail the full set of races, then declare the regatta finished and come ashore for a late lunch – avoiding the necessity of putting on those wet garments once again after lunch. The wind was brisk and shifted toward the west. Occasional whitecaps punctuated the drumbeat of waves moving down the lake.

Gusts of wind darkened Mascoma despite the blue sky patches and rays of sun. At the second mark, on the first race, one of those puffs caught Mel Converse '60 and his Sunday crew Jeff Blecher '98. Together they scrambled over their capsizing boat, sitting atop its whale shaped form like Captain Ahab astride a conquered Moby Dick. Now most folks would retire gracefully at this juncture, but Mel and Jeff would hear nothing of the sort. As soon as the rescue boat had come alongside and Jeff had righted the craft, they climbed back aboard and sailed all the rest of the races.

Annual Alumni Regatta & 60's Reunion

In the last race, in the neighborhood of that same mark another boat, with Lauren Tulp '00 aboard, met a similar fate. They too were hauled ashore. Everyone pitched in to unrig 24 boats and stow them in their respective places. Again the coals were lit for lunch, the smoke seemed to behave a little bit better, and the increasing sunshine soon had everyone relaxed and smiling. After making sure that Lauren was safe and warm, parents Sheff and Debbie Tulp cooked and served hamburgers and hot dogs until the last was served. Dessert was once again a series of delicious cakes baked by Chris Hurst and laid out on the picnic tables.

Brian Doyle announced the alumni as the winners for only the second time since the Alumni Regatta began in 1984, thanks, of course, to the All American skills of the recent alumni.

Sunshine flooded Lake Mascoma and the campus that Sunday afternoon May 11, 1997. Rick Van Mell '63 and Sandy walked the length of the Green, into Baker Library and up and across the Tower room. As they emerged, they looked at each other and finally took a deep breath - the splendor and the silence among those studiously studying demanded no less. Resting for a few minutes on the steps of Webster Hall, they were engulfed by Baker's chimes echoing down the valley. Completing a rounding of the Green, they met up with Rob Overton '65 in the Hop, headed for a short nap before its cathedral windows. Andi Overton walked by after a visit to the Hood Museum to say one last good-by while Rick and Sandy were sitting on a Wheelock Street bench. Then, in the lengthening afternoon twilight, walking down Main Street, they said good-by to Mel Converse '60 and daughter Mate, Tuck '97, licking two wonderful ice cream cones. It doesn't get any better.

By: Rick Van Mell '63

DCYC Alumni Regatta & 60's Reunion - May 9-11, 1997



Saturday Morning 5/10/97



The New Fleet Waiting For The Wind



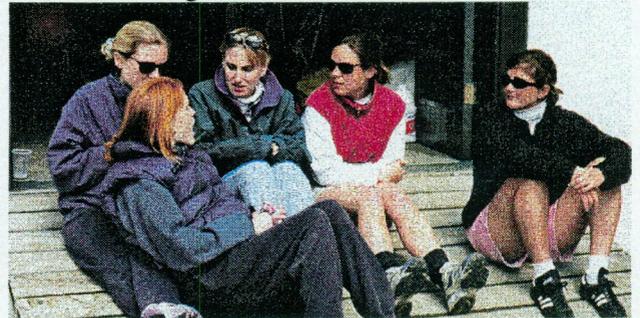
The Victorious Alumni Team



DCYC Regulars 1997



Heerde, Bullen, Overton, Van Mell, Converse, Russell



All Americans Clifford, Seidler, Doyle, Conner, (left to right) and Ashley Bown



Fleet dedication, l to r: Dr. David Tabors '65, Ed Schieu Jr. '46, Dick Jeager '59, Bill Hurst, USN Ret., Art Allen '32, Steve Blecher '64, and DCYC Team Coach, Brian Doyle.

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Rick Van Mell '63 & Stu Russell '65



Coach Brian Doyle



Steve & Jeff Blecher



Rich & Cheryl Miller



Art & Dobbie Allen



The Crew Enjoys The Stories At DOC House



Stu & Halsey Tell Stories



All Americans



All Generations



Let's Have Another Verse, That's Worse Than The Other Verse...



The Yachtsmen: Barrett Johnson '63, Tim Bryant '65, Norm Carpenter '61, Mel Converse '60, Steve Blecher '64, Rick Van Mell '63, Stu Russell '65, and Brian Klinger '62