



COMET
80th
ANNIVERSARY
E-NEWS
LETTER
FALL 2012



“Rudy Bailey and his crew Gabi Neubelt got the top spot for five of seven races. They gave everyone a good lesson, which was to sail fast and hit the shifts!” Tallbott Ingram

COMET INTERNATIONALS CAMBRIDGE YACHT CLUB



COMET INTERNATIONALS - AUGUST, 18-19-20, 2012

The 2012 host for our Internationals was the Cambridge Yacht Club down on the Choptank River.

They were congenial to the Comet Class, opening their Club to us for this three day event. They provided lunch on the water and evening meals in their comfortable Yacht Club dining room. Many thanks to Tom Love for being the Club's liaison performing the many functions to make the regatta run smoothly. Thanks to John Campbell for providing his C & C 35 for the committee boat, to Juliet Thompson for being the PRO, and to Bonnie Urban, her assistant. Thanks to Peter Tasi and Wick Dudley for contacting the Yacht Club and making all the necessary arrangements, buying the trophies and raffle gifts, setting up breakfast, and handling the registration. It takes many busy hands to make such a regatta the success that this was.

There were three days of wonderful sailing conditions, with an Olympic course just a short sail from the Club house. The races on Friday and Saturday were held in ideal conditions with relatively steady breezes of 8 to 14 mph. It provided for occasional planning and a couple of unexpected swims. The final race on Sunday was in a much lighter breeze that made for quite a challenge to find enough wind to navigate your way through an adverse current.

The races were very competitive with positions changing on every leg of every race, though the ultimate outcome for the top spot for five of the seven races went to Rudy Bailey and crew Gabi Neubelt. He gave everyone a good sailing lesson, which was to sail fast and hit the shifts.

Going into the final race, four boats were basically tied and fighting for 2nd place overall. With light winds and an opposing current, everyone was hoping they would maneuver their way to success. Wick and daughter Elizabeth came from the right corner to take the lead at the first mark. The Ingrams were just behind having gone up the middle to be closely followed by Brad Meade and crew Teddy Schroeder coming from the left corner. It was a slow dog fight to the leeward mark. Elliot Oldak and crew Barbara Best, also fighting for the 2nd spot, were back in the fleet until the 2nd windward mark, when he found favorable shifts to overtake the Ingrams and Brad. Jim Ryan took the lead at the 2nd windward mark and held it until nearly the finish when he was overtaken by Wick, who became the runner up to Rudy in the regatta.

It is a testament to the variety in the Class that the participants ranged in age from ten to their mid-seventies, and one eighty year old! It was very satisfying to see so many young sailors competing, including several ten year olds crewing."

The Championship was a three day opportunity for everyone to socialize with other sailors as well as Club members. The Choptank provided good open water sailing without overwhelming conditions, and having the racing close to the Club was a bonus.

Talbott Ingram
President, CCYRA

**2012 COMET INTERNATIONAL RESULTS, AUGUST 18-19-20
CAMBRIDGE YACHT CLUB, CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND**

Pos.	Sail	Skipper	Crew	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total Points
1	4127	Rudy Bailey	/ Gabi Neubelt	1	1	1	1	6x	1	5	10
2	2908	Wick Dudley	/ Elizabeth Dudley	5	7x	2	3	4	2	1	17
3	4099	Talbott Ingram	/ Lee Ingram	4	2	4	7x	3	4	4	21
4	3737	Elliott Oldak	/ Barbara Best	8	3	5	2	1	5	16/RAF	24
5	3468	Brad Meade	/ Teddy Schroeder	3	6	16/DNF	4	2	3	6	24
6	4043	Chris Price	/ Max Neubelt	2	4	7	9	5	6	11x	33
7	4061	Jim Widdis	/ Elizabeth Wainright	7	5	6	8	9x	7	8	41
8	4120	Robert Perone	/ Sasha Hammon	10	9	3	6	8	8	12x	44
9	4073	Jim Ryan	/ Will Cook	9	12x	9	11	7	10	3	49
10	4137	Stoney Duffey	/ Patrick Keating	12	11	16/DNF	5	10	13	2	53
11	3453	Jasper Dudley	/ Peter Dudley	6	8	10	10	13x	12	10	56
12	3951	Joe Lauver	/ Tina Lauver	16/DNC	10	8	13	12	9	9	61
13	4077	Reed Rogers	/ Pam Dinkel	16/DNC	16/DNC	16/DNC	12	11	11	7	73
14	3973	Charles Roth	/ Eric Rice	13	13	11	15	14	16/DNF	16/DNC	82
15	3453A	Ridgely Kelly	/ Peter Tasi	11	14	16/DNF	14	15	16/DNC	16/DNF	86



Talbott Ingram congratulates crew Teddy Schroeder, 14 and Brad Meade for Fifth Place.



Jim Ryan and crew Will Cook, 10 finished in Ninth Place.

COMET ANNUAL MEETING AT THE INTERNATIONALS

Notes on the speakers and their subjects at the Dinner & Awards Presentation

Reed Rogers – Financial accounts are ok, but we need more members to replenish our funds.

Peter Tasi – Shared his thoughts from his many years of experience in the Class and feels it appears to be taking a turn for the better with all the new developments.

Rudy Bailey – The Comets are a strong and active Class in Bermuda. Most of the Bermuda Comets are double bottom and they are looking for more new boats when they become available.

Tina Lauver – Working on the web site, updating the information as people send it in. She is looking for results, pictures and information, while implementing the new web site.

Brad Meade – Mark Beaton will provide the Class with a newly designed sail made of Mylar. This should indicate to future Comet sailors that we are proactive in keeping (making) the class more modern.

Wick Dudley – Working with the new builder, Pete Mathews, having the molds built with a new deck design. The boat will have a double bottom as well as side tanks. There are bulkheads at both ends to keep water contained and to stiffen the hull. The current diamond pattern design will be on the bow and stern decks with the finer nonskid on the floor. Wick suggested that we arrange for a booth at the Annapolis Boat Show. This is an opportunity to show off the new boat with the new sails, and begin marketing the Comet on a larger scale.

Peter Dudley (no relation)– has extensive experience doing shows for his business and has offered to give us a guiding hand toward successful marketing.

Rob Peronne – Has also jumped in with lots of ideas for publicizing the Comet: to let the long time Comet Sailors know we are alive and reviving the Class. We need to reach out to the younger generation and show them that the Comet is an option for an exciting two person, self rescuing boat, It also has just enough adjustments to make make it interesting, without being overwhelming to intermediate sailors.

Mark Beaton is encouraging the class to allow Mylar sails for both the main and the jib. The Mylar will hold its shape much longer than the Dacron material. Also it will be less expensive, so the finished product will be about the same cost. The top batten will be transverse, extending from the leech to the luff. This will provide a better sail shape and maintain its shape longer. Mark was also suggesting a loose footed main. It eliminates the bottom panel and will be less expensive to make and easier to adjust. He built the first suit for testing by Talbott Ingram and Brad Meade, prior to its first public showing display at the October Annapolis Sailboat Boat Show.

Now, the Comet Class must decide whether to continue its leadership in innovation by allowing Mylar laminate fabric to be used in the construction of their sails.



MARK BEATON: ON THE FUTURE OF MYLAR SAILS FOR THE COMET CLASS

The Comet Class has a long history of innovation in the sailing world. It was one of the earliest lightweight planning sailboats. Our relatively open rules with regard to rigging have encouraged Comet sailors to experiment with all the latest trends. Our class was an early adopter of highly adjustable rigs and one of the first to experiment with and adopt polyester woven sailcloth, replacing cotton. The Class leadership, in an effort to boost the appeal of the Comet, has chosen this moment to propose a rule change allowing the use of laminate sailcloth.

Laminate sailcloth, commonly referred to as “Mylar”, is a type of fabric frequently used on bigger boats and more recently on smaller boats. Mylar sailcloth has been in common use for over 30 years. It is not new technology. The fabric consists of two thin Mylar films with reinforcing yarns laid in various patterns and quantities between them. The films are then glued together under heat and pressure. The yarns provide stretch and tear resistance to the laminate. Different types of yarn are used to reinforce Mylar sailcloth. Examples of yarns used today are; Carbon, Kevlar, Dyneema, Spectra, and Tenara. These yarns can be characterized as exotic. The Comet Class proposes using Polyester yarns. They are the least expensive of the commercially available options.

The Mylar film provides the yarns with a surface, holding them in place. All of the yarns referred to above use the same films with various thickness depending on the application. Obviously a genoa on a big boat, in under 8 knots of breeze, will require a lighter and thinner cloth, compared to a sail used in 25 knots of wind.

There are many styles of Mylar sailcloth available that are appropriate for the Comet. Consultation with our sail makers and cloth suppliers will furnish us with guidelines to help us designate cloth parameters that will provide long racing life without a weight penalty. Surprisingly, laminate sailcloths, comparable to the currently used woven sailcloth, are far less costly (about 20 to 30%). That savings will be offset by higher labor costs and



waste but the laminate sails will, in all likelihood retail for about the same price as woven Dacron sails. Because the weight of the sails will be comparable, there shouldn't be any measurable difference in performance. The competitive life of the new sails will actually be longer. Mylar sails do not stretch and blow out like woven ones. They will hold their designed shape far longer. A test set of sails has been used at a few Fall Comet regattas with positive results and good feedback. They are performing as expected and will be made available for inspection to anyone interested. The test mainsail has a full length top batten which supports the roach better and extends

its competitive life. If approved, full length top battens can be retrofitted on existing sails for minimal cost, in the neighborhood of \$75. Additionally, the test mainsail incorporates a loose foot, similar to a Laser sail. This will not affect performance, but will help our sail makers hold the line on the price of the new sails while still making a profit.

These changes in the specifications are important to the life of the Comet Class. Clearly small boat sailing in the U.S. is in a downturn. We are competing for people's free time in a crowded market. New enthusiasm for the Comet Class must be fostered. The new attractive and more comfortable deck, a new builder and new laminate sails; make this classic a modern image to sailors looking for a fun two person boat. Visually, the laminate cloth has great impact. It just looks very cool!

MARTIN MURRAY REGATTA TERRITORY III CHAMPIONSHIP GREEN POND, NEW JERSEY JULY 14-15, 2012

From 1,060 feet above sea level, at Green Pond it was two days of unpredictable air, that was stronger than normal on Saturday. Off-lake guests arrived in anticipation of another pleasant welcoming from the happy Green Pond crew. Crews from fourteen registered boats attended the skippers meeting. After the cannon went off, they slipped their racing machines into the water. Four races were completed Saturday and three on Sunday. Timing was good, so everyone agreed to attend the all-you-could-eat Beefsteak Dinner and dancing afterwards. A good time was had by all, and fortunately some only had to walk home. Trophies were awarded at 3:00 pm on Sunday. Thanks to all attending and best wishes for a good Winter. See you again in the Spring.

Sail #	Pos.	Skipper	Race	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
4099	1	Talbott Ingram		1	1	6	1	1	2	8 x	12
3486	2	Brad Meade		2	3	1	3	6 x	3	1	13
3418	3	Rob Schell		3	4	2	2	3	1	7 x	15
4086	4	Bob Griswold		7	9 x	4	8	4	4	11 x	29
4093	5	Ralph Grossman		5	2	5	9 x	9	6	5	32
4103	6	Larry Polye		4	5	3	6	8	9	11 x	35
4030	7	Richard Labossiere		6	7	7	5	5	8	14 x	38
4077	8	Reed Rogers		11 x	6	11	7	7	7	9	47
4130	9	Rick Sloan		8	8	8	DNS17X	11	10	6	51
4022	10	Bill Engles		9	12	10	10	10	12 x	4	55
4115	11	Pete Schell		DNF17X	DNF17	DNF17	DNS17	2	5	3	61
4120	12	Rob Perrone		DNF17X	11	9	4	13	14	16	67
3382	13	Keith Callahan		10	10	14	14	12	15 x	12	72
4030	14	Frank Juhazs		12	13	12	11	16 x	16	13	77
3938	15	Ellen Bakalian		DNS17X	DNS17	DNS17	DNS17	14	11	10	86
3966	16	John Engles		DNS17	DNS17	DNS17	DNS17	15 x	13	15	94

2012 DREW BOWL- SHREWSBURY SAILING AND YACHT CLUB

SEPTEMBER 22 *Sailed in High Wind Conditions*

Eleven teams of sailors convened with awareness of a 4 PM high tide. The first race started at 1 PM, which also enabled the wind to build. Early in the morning, the air was relatively light; in the 6-8 knot range. After finishing lunch the boats were launched. The wind velocity quickly built to the 15 knot range, out of the southeast. During the half mile sail across the Shrewsbury, to the starting line, the wind continued to build and several boats decided to retire. . . at least for the first race.

Eventually, the first race started with only five boats on the race course. The race committee elected to sail two triangles in lieu of an Olympic course, to avoid the risk of sailing deep angles. The air during this race was variable with gusts in the 20+ knot range. These conditions made for planing and very careful gybes. Talbott and Lee Ingram took the first race; with Stuart Van Winkle and his sister Ainsley Hilfiker, second, and Jim Brinkman and Dominique Neubelt, third.

Five boats competed in the second race, facing similar wind conditions. Thankfully the race committee shortened the legs a bit for this second, and last race, which made the beats more bearable. On the first gybe mark, Stuart Van Winkle's mast inverted and in trying to resolve the inversion, buckled the mast at the deck. In addition, on that same leg Richard Labossiere capsized on the planning leg after his rudder split in half, which fully occupied the safety boat for the remainder of the race.

The third race was canceled due to a lack of safety boat resources. The final regatta standings, following the second race results showed the Ingram's Team winning the regatta; the O'Brien Team taking second, and the Brinkman team taking third. Submitted by Jim Brinkman.

Skipper/Crew	Race 1	2	Total
1 Talbott & Lee Ingram	1	1	2
2 Mike & Cathy O'Brien	4	2	6
3 Jim Brinkman & Dominique Neubelt	3	3	6
4 Stu Van Winkle's & Ainsley Hilfiker	2	DNF	9
5 Reed Rogers & Ridgely Kelly	5	DNC	12
6 Richard Labossiere	DNC	DNF	14

*These teams were DNC for both races:
Wick Dudley Bill Engels Jim Widdis
Brad Meade Peter Munger*

ANNUAL PUMPKIN BOWL, CORSICA RIVER S.C., MD. OCTOBER 27



Tailgating atmosphere at the Club grounds on the Corsica River.



Reed Rogers, Ridgely Kelly and Talbott Ingram.



Larry Suter and crew repair their wood mast.

Due to continued Club House construction at Severn Sailing Association, their Comet Fleet decided to sail the Pumpkin Bowl across Bay. Seven Comets sailed. Talbott and Lee Ingram, and Larry Suter attended from Shrewsbury and Mattituck Fleets respectively. We were pleasantly surprised to see these competitors arrive, eager to race, considering Hurricane *SANDY* was fastly approaching the Chesapeake Bay area. Five races were sailed. After three races it appeared that Elliott Oldak and Barbara Best were on their way to victory. But Talbott and Lee would have none of that, fighting back with high finishes, while Elliott and Barbara slipped off the pace in the last two races. Talbott and Lee won the Pumpkin Bowl (their first time, believe it or not!) Elliot and Barbara won the second place tied with Larry Suter, sailing his pretty wooden boat. Commodore Andy Wood, Wick Dudley and Sandy Downes, with short notice, did an excellent job of organizing the event. Norman Davidson and his Race Committee performed flawlessly.



Andy Wood's boat, up with the leaders, was the first use of a mylar main (grey color) in a sanctioned regatta!



The Ingrams with Terry Jackson, a retired Comet Skipper.



Talbott and Lee Ingram were delighted to win the Pumpkin Bowl Annual Regatta, for the first time!

Skipper	Sail #	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Pts.	Pos.
Talbott Ingram	4099	2	1	2	2	1	8	1
Elliott Oldak	4037	1	2	1	5	4	13	2
Larry Suter	3430	4	3	3	1	2	13	3
Wick Dudley	4131	3	5	4	3	3	18	4
Andy Wood	4087	5	4	5	4	5	23	5
Jan White	4023	7	6	6	6	6	31	6
Sandy Downes	4046	6	7	7	7	7	34	7

A SUCCESSFUL SAILBOAT SHOW . . . ANNAPOLIS, MD OCTOBER 4-8

Thanks to MANY for the successful Comet booth at the Annapolis Boat Show: To Peter Tasi who dedicated untold hours working on the unique four sided COMET tower which incorporated a video screen, enlarged pictures and Class information, plus the banner and various display boards. To Wick Dudley for having the new Comet ready in time, working on setting up the booth, and breaking it all down at the end. To Peter Dudley for providing his beautifully finished wooden Comet with cradle. To Reed Rogers for making arrangements with the show office and for the endless details that a show of this type requires. And finally to the many others who helped man the booth: Andy Wood, Brad Meade, Joe Lauver, Tina Lauver, Elliot Oldak, Ridgely Kelly, Stoney Duffey, Rob Peronne, Ed McLean, and Talbott Ingram.

There was much interest in both the new glass design and the old wood Comet, from the many passing through the show. It is amazing how many people had sailed a Comet decades ago and reminisced about the many great experiences that they had. It was quite apparent there is a strong need for the Comet as there are no other two person boats that measure up to a Comet. It is not a basic sailboat, yet it does not require the skill level required for a trapeze and spinnaker boat. It is also a lot less expensive than other boats, particularly the larger three man boats.

We are actively following up with contacts who expressed an interest at the show. Many of them are in the Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey area. We have directed them to local fleet members, where they can borrow a boat to check it out and hopefully become involved.

It was felt that doing the show was well worth the time, effort and expense. By exposing people to all the positive features of the class, we hope to enlarge our present fleets as well as expand into new areas.

Boat Show Press Release: “Comets compete at fabulous regattas in Maryland, Ohio, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Bermuda. These venues provide excitement, fun, and ‘ear to ear

smiles’. Comet class members are warm and welcoming sailors who mentor new competitors by sharing strategies, tactics and technologies. The 80 year old classic Comet has been updated in conjunction with our new builder, Mathews Brothers, Denton, MD. The results are a boat that includes Mylar sails as well as the latest construction technology and materials that will appeal to racing sailors of all ages.”



“Sales Team” - Wick Dudley, Brad Meade, Reed Rogers, Ridgely Kelly, Rob Perone, Talbott Ingram and Andy Wood.

A CLASSIC COMET WITH NEW INNOVATIONS

STAYING AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION. . .



REFINED SELF-RESCUING HULL WITH IMPROVED ERGONOMICS!



GREETINGS TO ALL SUPPORTERS OF THE COMET CLASS

At the 2011 Annual Comet Class meeting which was held in Oxford, Maryland our organization approved the daunting task of refining and modernizing the Comet. The plan was to find a builder who would reconfigure the deck and cockpit design. We also wanted to consider new sail designs in an effort to attract more young sailors, thereby revitalizing the class.

Good news: We are almost there! I know that many of you saw the prototype at the Annapolis Boat Show in October of this year. The newly designed boat and sails have brought many positive comments with admirers citing cleaner lines, a more open and comfortable cockpit and to quote some of the younger sailors “way cool” sails. This has been the most attention the class has elicited from young sailors in many years which is a very hopeful sign.

The cost to redesign the Comet has been underwritten by Comet Class funds. At this time, the Comet Class is asking all past and present Comet sailors and supporters of Comet sailing to consider making a donation of at least \$100 to complete the re-designed Comet. This funding would help keep the Class in sound financial shape while proceeding with our ongoing Class development.

CCYRA is asking you for your help. Over the years the class has not asked very much from its members other than your participation. This has been a major project for the class so please help with your donation.

Thank you all very much for your continuing support,
Talbott Ingram
CCYRA President

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THE BERMUDIAN SAILING COMMUNITY IS MOURNING THE DEATH OF PIONEER SAILOR HOWARD LEE

Colin Thompson

Howard Lee, 77, passed away after a long bout with illness. During a distinguished career Lee set the benchmark for black sailors to strive for after representing Bermuda in the Finn dinghy at the 1976 Montreal Games. “Representing your country is one of the greatest things a man can ever get involved in because first of all you have to fight to get there,” Lee told *The Royal Gazette* during an interview in 2006. “When I got to the Olympics and walked into that big arena it was a hell of an experience for me.”

“Travelling overseas to compete in the Finn class enabled me to broaden my horizons and experience many wonderful things.” At age 13 Lee started sailing competitively in Comets out of West End Sailboat Club as crew for Gates Smith and Sparky Lightbourne before he eventually owned his own dinghy. In 1956 and 1957 Lee won the Long Distance Comet Race in his boat, *High Yella*, to become only the fourth skipper to win back-to-back titles behind his idol Ellsworth Lovell. He also sailed in the Sunfish and Laser classes.

Outside of sailing Lee had a passion for both football and music. He was a member of the Devonshire Lions team that lost 3-1 to Dock Hill Rangers in the 1959 FA Cup final and as a singer/musician entertained tourists at White Horse Tavern and Swizzle Inn the East End. The late sailor is the grandfather of Laser and Fitted Dinghy sailor Rockal Evans. Lee’s success inspired other black sailors such as Glenn Astwood to take to the sport.

“Howard was a huge inspiration for me because I used to watch him from a kid,” Astwood recalled. “I used to always go down and follow *High Yella* in the Long Distance Race before I even started sailing. “My father used to take us down to follow the race every year and it was always *High Yella*, *High Yella*.” Astwood later went on to represent Bermuda at the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea in the Tornado catamaran.

“I am so sorry to hear that Howard has passed because we always used to chat whenever I saw him, whether it be at the yacht club or in the street,” he added. “Howard was a very good sailor.” Alan Burland, who also represented Bermuda at the Olympics in the Tornado, described Lee as a good sailor and wonderful ambassador for Bermuda. “I had an awful amount of respect for Howard Lee who was a tremendous man,” he said. “He was a hard worker in an era when things were not easy for blacks in the sailing world.

“He had a wonderful, outgoing spirit and was always so friendly and kind and a hugely competent sailor. His grandson Rockal is obviously a chip off the old block and is a great sailor. “Howard was a wonderful good sailor and ambassador for Bermuda and supporter of the Bermuda Sloop Foundation. He wanted to help the youth and Bermuda be the best it could be.

“We will sorely miss him and our condolences go out to all of his family and friends to which there is an immense number.”