



The Pennant

4 May 2014

Newsletter of the IYC Cayuga Lake Cruising Fleet

First Race Day of the Spring Series, Sunday, May 4

The Spring Series started out with a bang, not a whimper. Under overcast skies and temperatures in the mid 50s, the NW wind blew at 18-20 knots with gusts over 30.

Three boats showed up for the start of the series: Tim Bonniwell's Catalina 30, INVICTUS; Richard Stephens's Corsair 28, TREVELYAN; and Clare Fewtrell's J-24 MEHITABEL. Fleet Captain Keith Rice set a course of Far Maplewood, East Shore, Crowbar, Sycamore, and from there home to the Yacht Club.

Since TREVELYAN opted not to sail because it was too gusty, only INVICTUS and MEHITABEL actually started. But TREVELYAN's decision proved to be a wise one because during the first up-wind leg, a monster gust knocked MEHITABEL down so far that a spreader touched the water. Clare Fewtrell therefore decided not to finish the race. This left INVICTUS invincibly sailing to victory by herself.

Enjoy Charles Witherup's whimsical race report on the next page.

Second Race Day of the Spring Series, Sunday, May 18

Because many boats are being launched late due to the cold weather, it has been decided to postpone the Sheldrake Race to Saturday June 28

And since there are no Spring Series races on Mothers' Day, May 11, the next race day is not until May 18. That should get us skippers with land-bound boats enough time to get them into the water.

So the skippers' meeting for the next two races is on Sunday, May 18, at 12:45 at the South Pavilion of the Ithaca Yacht Club. We hope to sail two races. The first start will be at 1:30.

See you at the South Pavilion.

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Here is Charles Witherup's Report of the First Spring Series Race:

Wind predictions were for 18kts from the West gusting to 30ish. Temps were to hover just below 50F with a good chance of rain. The actual weather doesn't really care about predictions as it was a balmy 80F with perfectly clear skies and very steady winds from the South of 14kts.

Well. OK. Maybe not really. But at least it didn't rain! The winds were more like 18kts gusting to 30ish (I think we saw 35 or so once - when we bothered to look at the gauge) from the North (with maybe a touch of West in there from time to time). And while it didn't rain it wasn't exactly what you call sunny for most of the day. Still, with that strong North wind and a good deal of fetch for it we still managed to get wet from all of the big waves crashing on and over the bow.

For these first races of the Spring series we were a bit short in the competition area. A brief roundup of usual suspects who were missing goes something like this:

- Mel's boat is on the hard awaiting a put in.
- Eberhard's boat is on the hard awaiting repairs.
- David was up North with his boat for J-Dayz.
- The Melges? Where was she? I can only imagine!
- Richard's boat was having a technical issue as far as I can tell. Perhaps that issue was that it was really windy out!
- Cornell? Steve? Where were you?!?! We missed you out there!

With Richard's boat pulled from the race very shortly before it actually happened, his crew was spread out among the other usual suspects who were present which is to say the two competitors in today's races: Mehitabel and Invictus.

The first race was called at the 12:45 skippers' meeting as Far Maplewood, East Shore, Crowbar, Sycamore, home. It began promptly at 1:30 although it's not entirely clear that either boat crossed the line in the first 30 seconds of the race (although Mehitabel clearly beat Invictus across). Next time we will all try harder to be closer to the line at the start, I'm sure!

And off we went - each boat holding as close a line as she could. Alas, the winds were just fickle enough inshore that tacking was necessary. When I say fickle I don't mean it in the way we often using in sailing as to talk of winds that die out. Oh, no. I mean it in the sense that they were strong, changing and crazy gusty inshore. That was where Mehitabel chose to spend much of her time. Invictus was further out in the lake and even there having a pretty rough time with those fickle winds. Alas! Mehitabel couldn't hold that line inshore and had to tack out somewhere North of Near Maplewood. The tack didn't go all that well and from Invictus it looked an awful lot like Mehitabel's spreaders hit the water. Mehitabel hove-to to assess the situation and decided to abandon the race at this point. They dropped their main and headed back to IYC.

Invictus, as her name would suggest, carried on a valiant fight and finished the race in style and glory. While we, Invictus' crew, made sure to capture our finishing time I don't believe that we actually recorded it (although I might have it on my GPS if you really care to know). Suffice it to say that the race committee was more than happy to verify that we sailed the course and that we had the best TonT (or TonD or TonAnything, really) of all of the boats that completed said course. The race committee would be happy to verify, I'm sure, if we asked him, at any rate! There was no second race. The race committee pointed out that it's not a race if there's only one boat. Ah well! It was still a lot of fun being out on the water!

