

Western Y Weekend

On July 30-31 ten Y Flyers participated in the Western Y Weekend at Pigeon Lake, Alberta.

There were five local boats from Itaska Yacht Club:

- Y 693 Steve & Leslie Holmgren
- Y 935 Brian & Barb Johnston
- Y 980 Jack & Bill Haliburton & Don McClymont
- Y 1042 Bob & Kristina Mitchell
- Y 1093 Paul & Theresa Johnston

And there were 5 visiting Y Flyers:

- Y 94 Gerald & Annie Swartz (Lacombe, AB)
- Y 1085 Richard Quinlan & Dee Kennedy (St. Mary's Sailing Club)
- Y 1097 Murray Olson & Amanda Schafenaker (Argentia Sailing Club)
- Y 1775 Jacob & Domiec Holwerda (St. Mary's Sailing Club)
- Y 2502 Carl Swail & Phil Renaud (Norway Bay Sailing Club, QC)

We held a "Y Flyer Show and Shine" on the beach of Zeiner Park, Pigeon Lake. Sailors proudly displayed their Y, described her history, repairs and upgrades, and any unique rigging they had installed. Sunshine and a light offshore breeze allowed us to display the boats with sails up along the sandy shoreline. It was a lovely sight for any Y Flyer enthusiast to behold! We saw Gerald's fine restoration of Tanker Jones's 1954 Canadian Championship Y 94. Steve Holmgren wowed the crowd with his gorgeous mahogany plank deck on Y 693. Other fine wood deck restorations could be viewed on Haliburton's, Mitchell's and Quinlan's Y Flyers - all original Alberta-built Booth boats from the '60s. Johnston's showed off their nicely-preserved wooden Y 935 as well as their early Booth fiberglass boat. The Holwerdas also showed us their Alberta-built fiberglass Y. Carl described his much newer Turner fiberglass Y flyer. It was interesting for the westerners to view this eastern boat with some interesting innovations.





Towards the end of the Show & Shine I got a call from Paul Flesher, our on-water support for the "Poker Sail". He was concerned about increasing cumulous clouds and asked us to get moving. So we immediately held a Le Mans start to get the Poker Sail underway. The offshore wind was 5-6 knots by that time but was puffy. This caused big gaps to develop between boats on the water. Paul Flesher kept took an adaptive approach and combined pre-determined stations with some chasing of early and late boats to ensure we were all "dealt" our 5 cards for a poker hand. By this time it was hot but big black clouds were looming to the west. Paul wrapped up his on-water support with a thorough roundup of sailors and then notified us that a severe thunderstorm watch had just been issued. We all retreated to a variety of ports around the western end of Pigeon Lake and pulled out from the lake. About an hour later a strong line squall hit followed by a real cracker-banger of a storm. Paul managed the afternoon superbly by slightly shortening the rally, prompting us off the water, then checking we were all safely ashore prior to the storm hitting.

On the tail of the thunderstorm we gathered at the acreage of Steve and Leslie Holmgren for our Western Y Barbecue. Our generous hosts had demonstrated great foresight in erecting tarps and awnings that morning. We had a pleasant dry evening of Alberta beef, classic rock music and sailing talk. Poker hands were compared with top 3 prizes (nautical glasses sponsored by Dee Kennedy) won by Gerald and Annie, Jacob and Domiec, and Jessica Mitchell in her Minisail. We had welcomed sailors of other classes from the local club to participate with the Ys in this event and had been accompanied by Jessica's Minisail as well as Dave Haliburton's Fireball, Gordon Mackenzie's Laser and David Alton's wooden Flying Dutchman. Glenmore Boats provided draw prizes for this event. Gerald Schwarz provided a highlight of the evening when he brought out his

10% model of a Y Flyer, with fine detail right down to 10% scale blocks and operational running lines.



On Sunday we awoke to a chilly, cloudy, windy day. About half of us were staging from the southwest side of the lake and we had an offshore wind, which was hard to judge. We'd have to sail 5 km across Pigeon Lake to join the Itaska Yacht Club races. Some opted to stay ashore while several of us set sail. With increasing distance from shore the wind became stronger and waves got bigger. Two judged conditions to be excessive and turned to tack back to the south shore. By race time there was a sustained wind speed of 16 knots with frequent shifty gusts up to 22 knots. Several boats did not start in these challenging conditions. But a handful of us did, along with a few boats of other classes – Finn, Laser, Laser 2, Flying Dutchman, and others. The

racing was superb! Race Officer Gordon Mackenzie gave us 3 races using a triangle-sausage modified Olympic course. Our race area straddled the wide unobstructed lake and the more sheltered Moonlight Bay. This allowed for strategic sailing. Choices had to be made between favorable shifts in sheltered areas vs harnessing the power of full-on big winds and waves! There was a lot of back and forth throughout the races but Dee and I had a great day and managed to win. Local knowledge by the two Johnston boats paid off, raising them to place 2nd and 3rd overall. The Canadian Y Flyer Association (CYFYRA) sponsored plaques for these top three finishers. Carl Swail received a traveller award in the form of a customized Itaska yacht Club Y Flyer shirt.



Thanks to Itaska Yacht Club, the CYFYRA, Glenmore Boats, and the many individuals who helped organize this unique event – David Alton, Paul Flesher, Steve Holmgren and family, Bob Mitchell, Gordon Mackenzie and family, Brian Johnston, and others. This was the largest Alberta Y Flyer event in many years and hope it will provide some momentum for ongoing rejuvenation of this fun and unique sailboat.

Richard Quinlan
Y 1085