



Nancy sailed with Reggie Corwin and Babs Shethar Everett, and one key to their success may have been the daring practice run they made just before the races. It was blowing hard on Lake Michigan and other teams chose to be conservative. When the AYC team flew their spinnaker, the opposition was unnerved. Reggie Corwin sailed on a record six North American championship teams, and others who sailed on AYC Adams Cup teams included Ellen Kelly, Ella Manny, Cindy Mathews, and Carol Walter. The AYC skippers—Rusty, Reggie, and Nancy—usually relied on

Sound and AYC.

expert or Lorna, who delighted in introducing open-water horizons to harbor racers. Nancy Meade, AYC's winning skipper in the 1958 Syce and Adams Cup races, had sailed out of Great South Bay since she was 16. She was no stranger to national competition, having reached the North American finals six times. The Adams Cup was held by Chicago Yacht Club and it was particularly satisfying to bring it back to Long Island Sound and AYC.

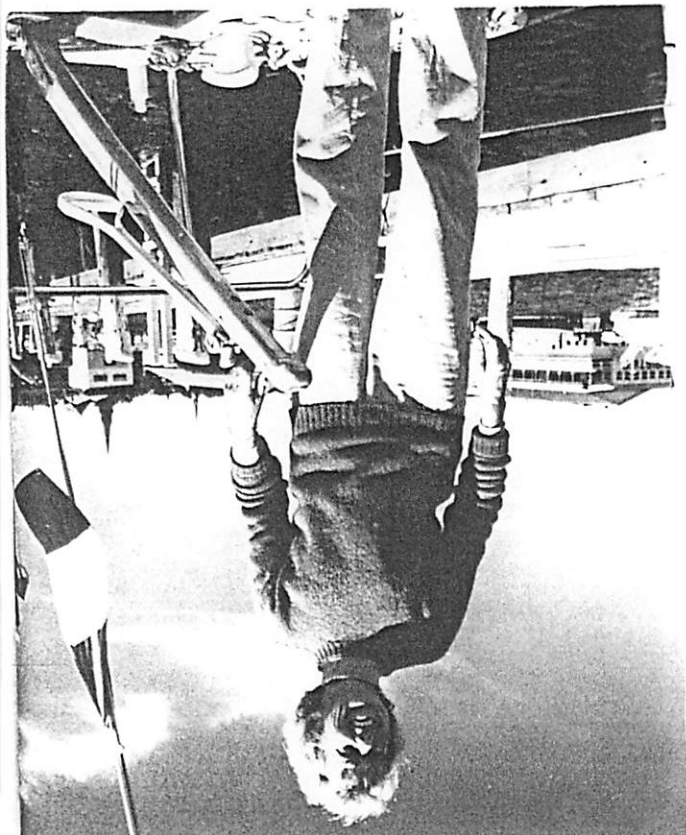
Reggie to hoist the spinnaker and keep it filled. "The Spinnaker Queen" they called her, and Nancy went further: "No other woman on any team handled a spinnaker better." Watching the Chicago races, Jack Shethar, whose racing daughter that year was Babs, reportedly bit off the end of his pipe when the spinnaker was raised upside down. He needn't have worried, however; Reggie got it down and reset before other boats had their chutes pulling.

Donated by Henry S. Morgan in 1964, to promote women's racing in small yachts, the Morgan Cup is a team prize in a five-club competition between Seawanhaka Corinthian, Indian Harbor, Cold Spring Harbor, Manhasset, and AYC. The races are often reunions and spirited rematches between women who first raced each other in junior regattas. Like the Adams Cup and the Syce Cup, the Morgan Cup has been a familiar sight in AYC's trophy case. AYC won it 11 times in the last 20 years. *



Lorna Hibberd.

Rusty Shethar Everdell.





Left to right: Rusty Shethar Everdell (skipper), Reggie Corwin, Betsey Walter, Lois Shethar Smith.

Larchmont. Later, the family could have held their own Saturday regatta when three generations sailed on the Sound. Rusty's sisters Lois and Gwendolyn and her brother John all sailed at least twice on teams that won national championships. Once, after Rusty had moved away, Lois and Rusty found themselves on opposing teams in the Adams Cup finals. Rusty eventually skippered four North American women's championships, three of them for AYC.

The runner-up cup for the Syce races was donated by Leggie Mertz and stands as a reminder of the problems a young sailor faced in the 1920s, if she was a girl. The cup was originally the consolation prize given to 12-year-old Leggie by Bayside Yacht Club when she won in the club's midget races but couldn't compete in the interclub races because the boys wouldn't crew for a girl. Far from being discouraged, Leggie persevered and compiled a remarkable sailing record, including five North American women's championships, four as skipper and one as crew, all for AYC.

In 1953, to interest other women in sailing and to share her expertise, Leggie began a ladies' sailing program that eventually developed a unique teaching staff. In 1958, the seven women on the committee for ladies' sailing were all members of North American championship teams and three were championship skippers. Among those who gave their time and talent in support of ladies' sailing were Beverly Compton Becker, twice on AYC Adams

Cup teams, and Jo Whittemore, who was on an Adams Cup team from Indian Harbor YC.

Leggie won five Syce Cup competitions and was ready to rest on her abundant supply of laurels when she was called upon to fill in as skipper in the 1975 series. Leggie was tied for first when she became ill and Peggy Comfort took over to clinch AYC's eleventh Syce Cup.

Before she came to AYC, Lorna Whittelsey was the opposition; she sailed out of Indian Harbor Yacht Club and skippered five North American women's championships, the first in 1927 when she was 15 years old. When she married Fred Hibberd of Larchmont they joined AYC because it was halfway in between their former clubs.

In the years since her first race at the age of 6, Lorna has raced nearly everything that could hoist a sail, from a frostbiting dinghy to an America's Cup contender. Willing and able to cover any racing position whether in the afterguard or on the foredeck, Lorna also shinnied up the mast for in-race repairs and dove overboard to aid rescues.

In the 1980s, Lorna raced as part of the AYC syndicate that owned the N.Y. 36 FAIR AMERICAN. Dooie Isdale attested to her skill and stamina in a 1982 race when she handled the N.Y. 36 spinnaker for the entire 27-mile downwind leg in a stiff breeze.

The junior big-boat program at AYC was Lorna's special interest. It was difficult to judge who enjoyed it more, the young people who learned from an

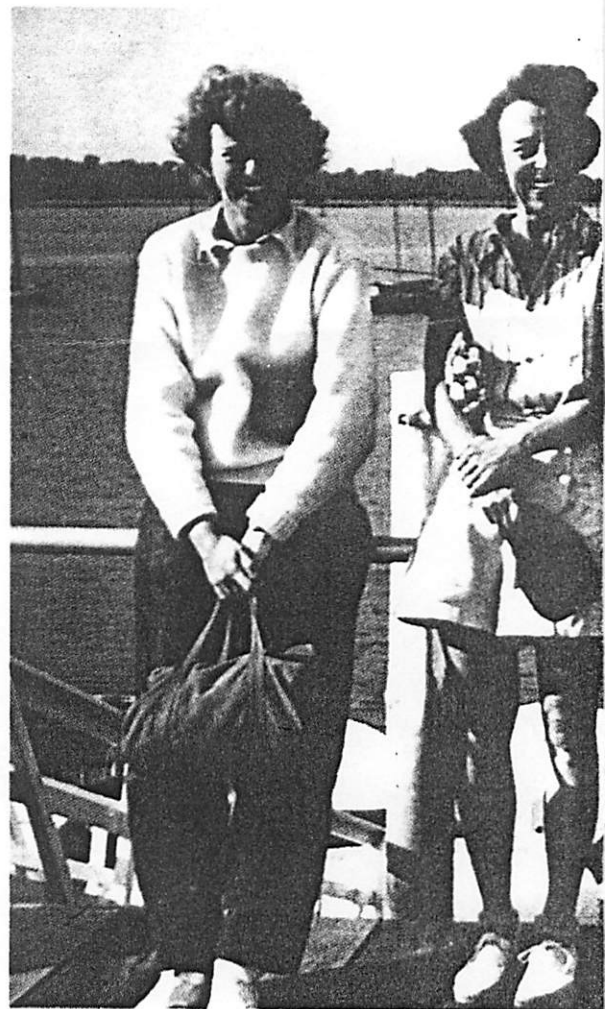
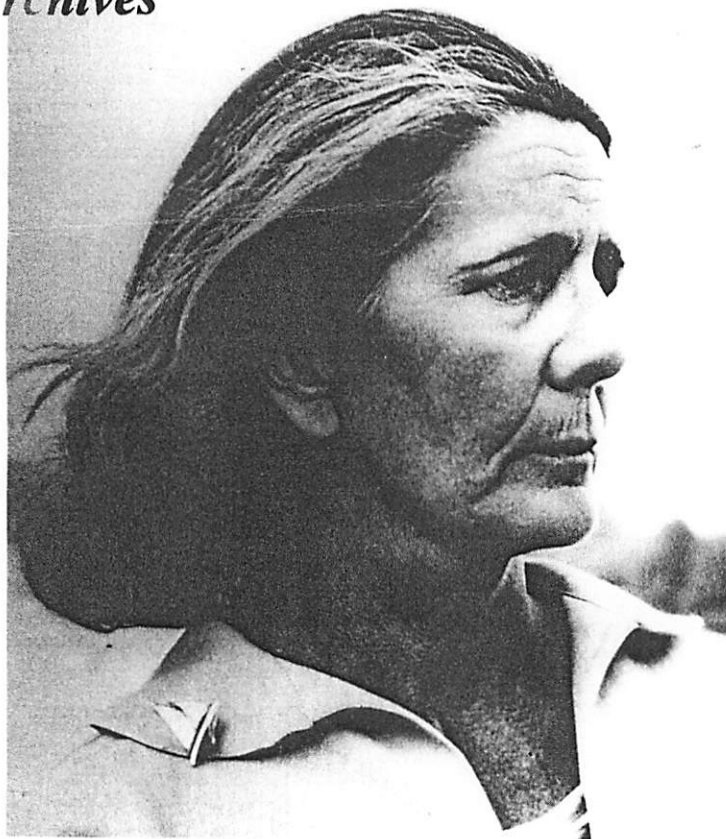
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her playground. At the age of nine, not able to face another whole year before joining JAYC, she painstakingly wrote a formal request to be admitted early. She was accepted and soon provided stiff competition for her older companions.

In her first Syce Cup races, as the 14-year-old skipper of the AYC team, she faced formidable competition from Lorna Whittelsey of Indian Harbor YC and Leggie Knapp of Larchmont YC. Rusty's first successful Syce Cup competition for AYC came several years later in 1937.

Sailing was a family affair with the Shethars, and when she was 11, Rusty crewed for her father Jack in frostbiting races at

AYC 1983
CENTENNIAL
HISTORY



Women's Sailing Champions of AYC

In 1963, AYC won its tenth Long Island Sound women's sailing championship and retired the Syce Cup for the second time. Skipper Reggie Mertz and crew Lois Smith, Betty Duncan, and Lucia Elmore then traveled to the finals at Manchester, Massachusetts, and won the North American championship. It was AYC's eighth Adams Cup victory, a total unmatched by any other club.

The AYC women who sailed competitively were also the mainstay of the Club's sailing programs. National champions, whose sailing records were the stuff of legends, encouraged and taught junior sailors, racers, and even rank beginners. They

initiated and administered sailing courses, boosted Club competitions, sailed with family and friends, and radiated an enthusiasm for sailing that influenced the Club for many years.

In the 1980s, who could fail to be inspired by the sight of Lorna Hibberd smoothly maneuvering her windsurfer through the moorings on a summer afternoon fifty-five years after she won her first national championship, or of Reggie Mertz, pacemaker or no, in the thick of the action on the annual cruise Race Committee boat?

In earlier years, the newspapers dubbed the women "sailorettes"

or the tongue-twister "skipperesses" and quipped about wind taking the curl from their hair or the time needed to stow powder puffs before the race. The tone of the articles shifted, however, after the races began; one reported that the 1940 AYC team "displayed rare helmsmanship in the pinches, handled sails with perfection, and managed to remain in front whether going to windward or leeward." This was the team of Rusty Shethar, skipper, Reggie Corwin, Betty Richards, and Babs Shethar.

Rusty was AYC's own home-grown champion. She lived on Stuyvesant Avenue—when she wasn't at the Club—and Milton Harbor was her backyard and