



Rhumb Runner History

After Boca Ciega Yacht Club Women's Auxiliary disbanded, sixteen women attended the first Rhumb Runner meeting held on August 15, 1979. In June of that year fourteen women had signed up to take sailing lessons in the Boca Ciega Yacht Club's Opti Prams. "After tossing a million names into the cockpit," they came up with the Rhumb Runners. The original dues were \$1.00 and that was to give the Treasurer a job. By the end of the fiscal year, the group had voted for a dramatic increase to \$5.00 only to raise the dues again the following year to \$10.00. Sailing was on Tuesday evenings and later moved to Saturday afternoons. They had already learned the importance of working together by creating shifts, one to put the boats in, and one to take them out.

September of 1979 the group was invited to join Florida Women's Sailing Association for the first time. In the annual report Captain Betty Belting wrote how much Rhumb Runners had enjoyed meeting and competing against the women of Venice, Sarasota, Tampa, Clearwater, Dunedin and St. Petersburg area clubs. While they did not win any trophies the group was gaining confidence and was looking forward to the next season.

Much of the money earned for their Treasury was by collecting aluminum cans, masts, holding bake and sandwich sales on club workdays, and auctions of "Treasures" at the monthly dinners. Their strategy for increasing membership was to promote Rhumb Runners visibility by volunteering for many of the club activities, a practice that is still followed today. As the membership grew Rhumb Runners began offering sailing classes for the beginner and experienced sailor.

1990/91 seemed to be a pivotal time for the Rhumb Runners. Ruth Komp had placed third at the Lucus Cup Regatta. Dues were abolished, all club women were automatically made RR's and the yacht club subsidized the group. Women were actively sailing Sunfish and participating in the well known Pixie Circuit. Crews were entering the Suncoast Championship Regatta (The Bikini Cup) but membership did not improve. By 1996 a small group of Rhumb Runners were sailing Sunfish monthly. They assisted with a four week Sunfish class that was offered after the club biannual Adult Sail School. Finally, the group seemed to naturally dissolve.

There were attempts to resurrect the Rhumb Runners, once in 2000 and again in 2009. Finally in 2014 Commodore Cathy Talisman put out a plea for the club to once again find ways in which to support women in sailing. January of that year the newly reformed Rhumb Runners met for the first time. During the those early meetings the group created a mission statement, started Sunfish training classes and began offering education programs. An important component that was added this time was that of social activities. Rhumb Runners have enjoyed kayaking, attended plays, art classes, hosted Arts and Craft fairs, and are the sponsors of the Women's Challenge Regatta held in the spring. Since that first meeting, the Rhumb Runners have continued to grow and evolve as we seek to define ourselves. We are excited as we approach our future by joining our sister sailors in the Florida Women's Sailing Association.

In the service of the Boca Ciega Yacht Club Rhumb Runners,
Barbara Meyer
Past Commodore 2003