

New Kids on the Dock

Flying Scot Fleet 211

By Nancy Molitor, FS#6149, Dixie Lakes District

If you were tasked with finding a near-perfect home to build a new Flying Scot fleet, you could do a lot worse than the Atlanta Yacht Club on Lake Allatoona, Georgia.

Situated in the Etowah River Valley just northwest of energetic metro Atlanta, Lake Allatoona was a just a quiet getaway, accessed by dirt roads, when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed its construction in 1950. But a group of sailing enthusiasts saw promise in this sizable body of water and moved quickly to found a sailing club, obtain a charter, recruit members, establish fleets of one-design racing sailboats, and build a clubhouse on land leased from the Corps. With 101 boats already registered by midsummer 1952, Atlanta Yacht Club was up and running.

Fast forward almost seventy years, and today you will find a stable, viable club that benefits from strong leadership and still adheres to its founding principles of prioritizing, promoting and supporting one-design sailing. While our complement of fleets has fluctuated somewhat over the years, AYC presently comprises five (now six!) major centerboard racing fleets – Thistles, Snipes, Y-Flyers, Lasers, Optis, and our new Flying Scots – plus, a training fleet of 420s, motor boats and EC-12s. We hold regattas and sailboat races for these fleets most Saturday and Sunday afternoons from March through November. Among those, we are proud to say, the Snipe, Thistle and Y-Flyer fleets are the largest fleets within their class organizations, and each of those fleets hosts the largest fleet-hosted regatta within its class: the Snipes' Halloween, the Thistles' Dixie, and the Y-Flyers' Beers. Suffice it to say,

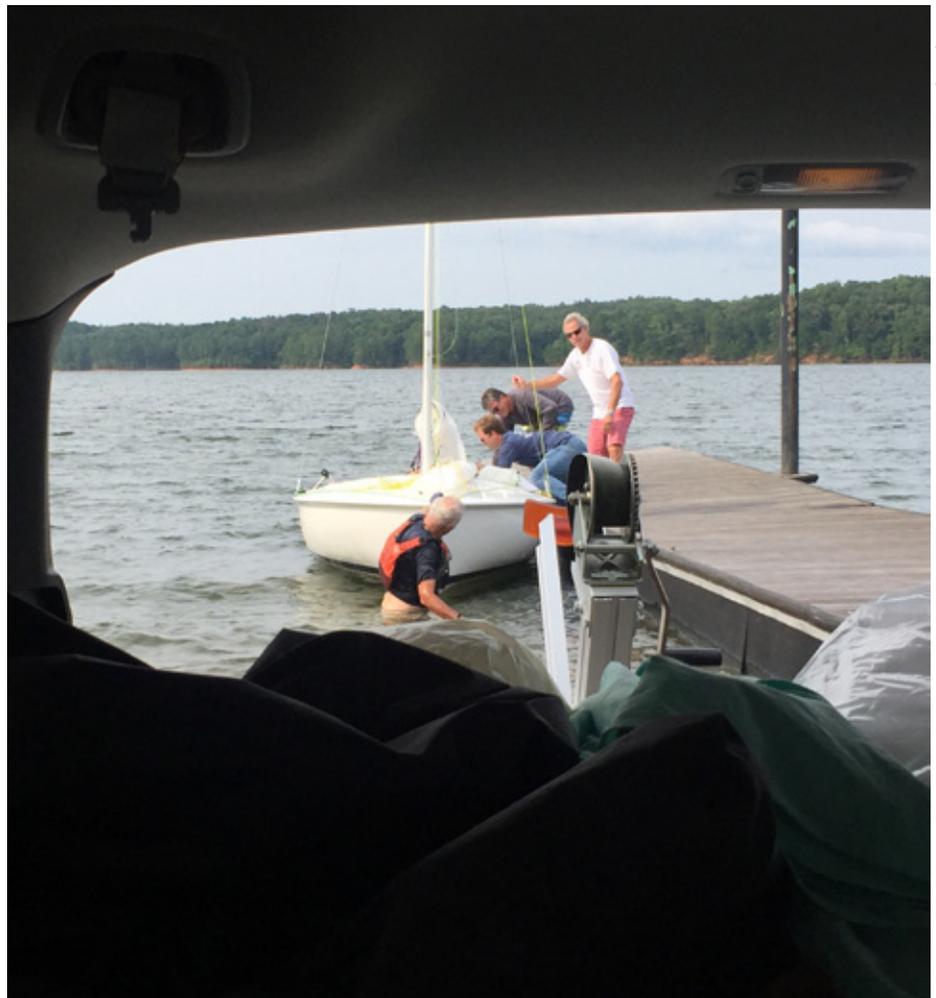


Photo by Nancy Molitor

AYC has the experience, the energy, and the expertise to welcome aboard a new fleet.

Enter now – ta-DAAH – Flying Scot Fleet #211! Any dreams of a Scot fleet at Atlanta Yacht Club had lain dormant for many years, while those who might have been a good fit for the boat were very much entrenched in other fleets – many,

but not all, in another of Sandy Douglass's creations, the Thistle. Not until recently did the question of another fleet burst to the forefront, when two retired (or about to be) Thistle sailors decided to take the plunge and give the Scot a try. The concept of establishing another racing fleet was not entertained initially, but once these two beautiful new boats made their début



on AYC’s dock there was a groundswell of curiosity and excitement that no one could quell. It seems there has been latent interest for some time in a new class boat that could meet the needs of a variety of people already entrenched at AYC — racers and non-racers alike — as well as newcomers coming through our Adult Sailing Program, and especially people who for a myriad of reasons still owned boats but were no longer getting out to sail them. You want a fresh sailing experience? The Flying Scot can provide!

Here’s a fun little anecdote. Our new fleet captain, Larry Snyder, one of our Thistle Fleet “retirees,” has for so long been enamored with the Flying Scot that he has kept a promotional brochure from 1975 filed away that features photos of FS #35 under sail. As we searched for photos for this article, we discovered that #35 is not only alive and well, but now happens to be owned by John Aquino, one of our own new members, who acquired her in 1991. From one of the oldest boats to one of the newest (#6149), even our small fleet displays the durability and staying power of the Scot. And needless to say, John was delighted to see his historic boat memorialized almost 50 years ago.

And so, Flying Scot Fleet #211 is now official! In a matter of weeks we have gone from one to two to four, six and now nine(!) members on the roster – every time the phone rings, it seems. We have not gone about “selling” the boat to members

of our other fleets or anyone else for that matter – the boat sells itself. While thirty years ago people were wary that introduction of the Scot might detract from our other fleets, today those fleets are all well established and strong enough to hold their own. In fact, reaction from the other AYC fleets to the “new kids on the dock” has been overwhelmingly positive. Case in point — in a gesture of goodwill, the Thistle Fleet here has just pronounced us their “sister fleet,” pledging not competition but support as we work to build our ranks. Thanks, Thistlers!

While sailing clubs all around the country are seeing their one-design fleets diminished by the popularity of large motorboats and cruising sailboats, the common purpose of Atlanta Yacht Club members is loyalty to small boat sailing,

ensuring that it will continue to flourish here for a long time to come. What more could we ask for to welcome the next new Flying Scot fleet? 🚤



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