



Using the *Ariel* iceboat to raise the mast on the *Rocket*.

Ice Yachts on the Hudson.

February and March 2014 saw the greatest collection of Ice Yachts on the Hudson River since the 1890's.



The Red Bank "boys" have arrived. Bringing the trailer driving the *Rocket* out on the ice.

What made last winter so special was that fact that it brought the two rival iceboat clubs, the Hudson River Ice Yacht Club and the North Shrewsbury Ice Boat & Yacht Club together like never before.

Much of the credit for this flourishing relationship goes to the fellow that described the ice yachts in this article "On The Line", John Sperr. I have known John Sperr for at least 40 years. He is quiet, unassuming and extremely capable of doing anything he sets his mind to. Over the years as we watched winter storms create ice off of Rhinecliff it was always John Sperr, along with Reid Beilenberg, who gave us a go or no go as to whether conditions were good to go on Hudson River ice. Further it was John who went to Red Bank on almost a weekly basis to help

the "boys" at the North Shrewsbury Ice Boat & Yacht Club rebuild the *Rocket*. For the *Rocket* and the *Jack Frost* to be on Hudson River ice together with the camaraderie that was created by so many contributing people including the Lawrence's, Rick, Kevin, and Danny, and who had the skills and ability to see that the road leading down from Rokby On The Hudson was clear, was truly a phenomenal feat. (Not to mention the fact the Hudson River Ice Yacht Club treasury was depleted by this spectacular adventure.) It should be mentioned that the members of the North Shrewsbury Ice Boat and Yacht Club also contributed financially to this escapade. It was truly a once in a lifetime adventure that I doubt anyone will ever see in his or her lifetime again.



This spectacular event would not have ever taken place without the lifetime driving force, skills, patience and love of everything iceboats, Bob Lawrence sitting in back of truck. Brought down through the Rokby Fields by Kevin The Red Bank "boys" have arrived. Bringing the trailer driving the *Rocket* out on the ice Lawrence, (Grandson) with arm on Bob and "Deli" (Home health care aid) and Paul Squires, driving truck. Though Bob had a stroke and could not speak you can see by the smile on his face he enjoyed all the effort it took to get him the "boys" at the North Shrewsbury Ice Boat & Yacht Club rebuild the *Rocket*. For the *Rocket* and the *Jack Frost*

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On the Line

Puff -- An old side rail design ice yacht built in 1874 for Commodore Irving Grinnell of the New Hamburg Ice Yacht Club. *Puff's* design was a departure from most other boats of its era -- the mast is stepped forward of the plank, the boom is shorter, and the gaff is long and peaked very high. With lots of backstays, forestays, and solid rod rigging, assembly is complex and time consuming, but the boat is surprisingly fast. The boat is currently owned by Emilie Hauser and family of Port Ewen, NY.

Hound -- A well-maintained and excellent example of the typical Hudson River stern steerer from the late 1890's. This ice yacht came from the Hull Estate in Staatsburg and was likely used for recreational sailing. Hound is owned and sailed by Glen and Emerson Burger of Staatsburg, NY and is authentic in almost every detail to the original construction methods and materials.

Ariel -- Another fast Buckhout ice yacht from the fleet of Archie Rogers. These "Third Class" boats (300 - 449 square feet of sail) were light, nimble, and easy to handle and could best their bigger brethren a great deal of the time. Restored in the 1960's by Raymond Ruge, and then passed on to John Somma, Ariel is now owned by Dan Lawrence of Newburgh, NY.

Phantom -- Class A Boat sailing in the NSIBYC fleet. This boat loves to fly a runner high in the air.

Orion -- Built 1906 at the Malden Brick factory in Malden on Hudson, *Orion* spent many years in the Long Island fleet. Bob Wills of Rhinecliff, NY purchased the boat recently and christened it ORION. There were hundreds of iceboats at one time on the Hudson River that had similar origins -- locally built, owned, and sailed.

Cyclone -- A Hyde Park iceboat built by Charles Van Loan in 1901 for Archie Rogers' son, Herman. Now owned by Brian and Lisa Reid of Red Hook, NY.

Jack Frost -- Built by George Buckhout in 1892 for Archibald "Archie" Rogers of Hyde Park, an avid sailor. Jack Frost, with 750 square feet of sail, is a "First Class" ice yacht (600 square feet of sail or over) and has a backbone nearly 50 feet in length. It is one of two of the great stern steerers still being actively sailed. Jack Frost is fast and stable -- a four time winner of the coveted Ice Yacht Challenge Pennant of America, the Frost had epic racing duels with John A. Roosevelt's big boat "Icicle". Jack Frost was restored in 1972 and is owned and sailed by the Hudson River Ice Yacht Club.

Georgie II -- Built by Charles Irwin of Red Bank, NJ, *Georgie II* has been one of the fast fliers of the North Shrewsbury Ice Boat and Yacht Club since the turn of the century. Recently refurbished, it is readily distinguished on the ice by it's elegantly finished light blue and white backbone. *Georgie I* was so fast in the NSIBYC racing fleet, that some accused it's owner of not playing fair -- so he built *Georgie II* under their watchful eyes. It proved just as fast as its twin and the detractors then had two speed demons to contend with.

Princeton -- An historic ice yacht of the fleet of A Boats of the Long Branch Ice Boat and Yacht Club. Princeton long dominated the club competition and was a frequent challenger for the state championship against the North Shrewsbury Club.

Rocket 1888 -- Originally built in 1888 by George Coley was a popular sight on the Navesink River in the 1890's. Bigger was thought to be better and faster in the early days of ice yacht design and no expense was spared in an attempt to wrest the Ice Yacht Challenge Pennant of America trophy from the Hudson River sailors. The Rocket Ice Yacht Foundation was formed in 2005 to take ownership and resurrect this historic boat. The only surviving original parts were the cockpit and the runner plank. Over the course of seven years, a new back bone, spars, and all the rigging were fabricated in the basement of the NSIBYC building as the project slowly came to fruition. In 2014, with over 20 miles of ice having formed on the Hudson River in the coldest winter in recent memory, *Rocket* took its first sail in roughly 100 years.

Rip Van Winkle -- at 40 feet in length, is the largest of the Rokeby Estate fleet of ice yachts. Richard Aldrich Sr. collected many ice yachts and parts of ice yachts from the great estates along the Hudson River. "The Rip" as she is affectionately known, is smart looking, fast, and one of the best mannered boats in the entire fleet. A new runner plank was recently fabricated by Reid Bielenberg, and the rest of the yacht is getting a major overhaul this fall. *Rip Van Winkle* is one of the best mannered boats in the entire fleet. *Rip Van Winkle* is currently owned by Rosalyn Aldrich of Barrytown, NY.

Ice Yachts Described by John Sperr

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