



by Chris Bradshaw, HCA Women's Rep.

Shegatta. Yep, it's just what it sounds like; a regatta just for the ladies. Well, okay, not completely as there were still more than enough guys hanging around the campfire. I do have to admit that they guys play a key role throughout the event. They assist with trailering, boat rigging, loading and unloading boats, running race committee, manning the chase boats and most importantly cooking exceptionally tasty meals. Thanks guys for taking such good care of us Hobie gals!



Recap

The Shegatta Regatta is hosted every year by Fleet 23 and organized by Sheila Holmes. It actually takes place in Mark Ralph's and Sheila's very spacious twelve acre

Shegatta

A Division 14 Tradition

backyard that literally opens up right onto Lake Ray Roberts, Texas. There were fourteen boats that participated with a total of 26 women and youth sailors. Almost every Hobie class was represented with H16s, a Wave, a H20 and H14s in attendance.

Saturday turned out to be perfect conditions with winds around thirteen knots and building as the afternoon wore on. Three great starts were pulled off and the racing was close and competitive within the different classes. Due to some ominous dark clouds, the race committee played it safe and called it quits a little early. So we headed on in to enjoy the shrimp boil the guys had been slaving over all afternoon. It was literally one of the best regatta meals I'd ever had! No knives, plates, or forks were allowed! The shrimp, corn on the cob, sausage, potatoes, garlic cloves mix was drained and spread directly all over the paper lined tables where the food was a free for all. It was quite a sight to watch, especially as the rain started to downpour on our dinner!

We didn't make it back out on the water again on Sunday due to poor weather conditions. But I think everyone was satisfied with the great winds we had on Satur-



day. What was most inspiring was the continuous chatter about new experiences and lessons learned throughout the weekend. Though I was a first time attendee of this event, I could see the incredible effect it had on promoting our sport, not just for women, but for all sailors alike.

Making it Matter

The Shegatta event deserves much admiration. For the last ten years, it has helped promote and grow Hobie sailing during a time when most of our fleets are

experiencing unfortunate declines. And it has been able to build up two of our minority parties: women and youth.

What makes this event such a success? There are a few “Key Factors” that are important to recognize:

#1 Sacrifice. The men of this division (and some women, but em-



phasis on men) were willing to give up an entire weekend of racing and skippering their own boats to assist and encourage others to take the next step in their sailing education. This was a big step. As a skipper myself, I know it's tough to step back and release your grip from that tiller, or even harder yet to let someone borrow your boat. But seeing the excitement it brings to a novice skipper as they start to figure things out and things start to 'click' makes it well worth it. Plus, it'll bring some good competition for you a few years down the road

when all these newbies aren't quite so new anymore!

#2 Pre-planning and Preparation.

Incredible pre-planning, organization and advertising to participants goes into this event every year. (Thanks again to you wonderful ladies who sacrifice hours of planning to put on Shegatta. You Rock!) These things are important with any regatta but they're even more important when you're dealing with youth school and sports schedules, women who have to line up baby-sitters, find someone else to caravan their kids around for the weekend, find a crew or skipper of the appropriate gender, figure out where they're going to find a boat to sail on and get up the courage to just go sailing! Somehow you've got to find a way to make this event a priority for youth ladies, moms, and women who could be doing a gazillion other things.

#3 Reputation. Shegatta has a reputation that has spread far beyond the boundaries of Division 14. A positive reputation of encouragement, camaraderie and support for sailors of all shapes and sizes. It's all the people and the community they've built that make it a great regatta to attend. I can guarantee you that once you've attended a Shegatta Regatta, you'll be back for more year after year!

Do you hold a similar event in your Division/Fleet? Let me know so we can help promote it and hear your awesome stories! Are you interested in putting on a regatta similar to Shegatta? I'd love to help! E-mail me at hobiewomen@gmail.com

