

Sugar Bowl Regatta
Southern Yacht Club — Fleet 62
New Orleans, Louisiana
December 27-28, 2008

- 1 Daniel Moriarty
- 2 Larry Frost
- 3 Cal Herman
- 4 Scotty Barrett
- 5 Thomas Meric
- 6 William Baxter, Sr
- 7 John Womble
- 8 Bill Buckles
- 9 Crit Currie, Jr



by Tobi Moriarty

When my husband, Dan Moriarty, suggested we go to New Orleans for the Sugar Bowl Regatta, it was hard to say no. I love New Orleans and by the end of December it has usually been too long since sailing. Gas prices are about \$1.40/gallon and registration is Free! We asked my father, Denny Heisler, to sail with us and hoped my mother would come along for the fun. Unfortunately my Mom wasn't able to make the trip, but Kay Ward, a long-time Lightning friend of ours, joined us for the road trip and fun. Kay's plans of being "shore-crew" were changed as soon as he had the opportunity to sail with Bill Buckles again.

We arrived into New Orleans at 9pm Christmas Night, dropped the boat at Southern Yacht Club, and headed to Bourbon Street. The party was just getting started and we were there to enjoy the warm weather and care-free attitude. We made our way in and out of a few bars, killed a few hours (and brain cells) in the Pat O'Brian's Piano Bar, and then settled into our rooms for some well deserved, post-holiday rest. We had all day Friday to enjoy the town and warm 80 degree weather. I tried to wear out my three companions, but after walking all over the French Quarter, a ride on the street car, visit to my alma mater campus (Tulane), and hitting a dozen bars along the way, I realized that I was not in the company of amateurs!



We made our way back to Southern Yacht Club on Saturday morning for some fun-in-the-sun Lightning racing. We were all wearing shorts, and excitement increased as we looked out at the 10-12kt off-shore breeze while we rigged the boats. It was hard to put on spray-gear when it was so warm on land, but I have regretted that decision before. So, doing the front, I suited up and we pushed off to follow the committee boat to our race-course.

The chute was put up at the harbor mouth and the ride on the flat water was great. I let Dan and my Dad know that a nice puff was coming, and then I had to tell them that there was more and more and didn't see when the puff would end. It was great, we were on a wild plane and could carry it all of the way down to the starting line! Next thing you know, the off-shore (slightly shifty) breeze increase one more time and our "Woohoo!" feeling turned into that "Oh Crap!" feeling. Yes, we tipped over and immediately stuck the rig in the Louisiana goo at the bottom of the Lake. Eventually we got the boat up, it drained out nicely, and although the water was cold, the warm sun was warming our bodies enough to make all three of us agree that we should stay out and race – no matter how ugly the poop stain was on the top panel(s) of our Mainsail.

The wind had picked up with puffs to 20-30kts and held by the time the race started. A few of our fellow competitors decided to return to the harbor and watch from the Yacht Club bar. I am afraid our spectacular stunt helped with that decision for some. However, the Race Committee set a nice long course and we were off and racing on time. Somehow the capsized boat made our Tack-tic stop working (warranty status still pending), so we kept our eye on the locals up the beats. Fortunately, our boat speed (possibly a benefit of our 550# team weight) was great and the off-shore breeze produced shifts obvious enough for us lake-sailors to play without really needing the compass afterall. After several position changes throughout the race with Larry Frost and Tommy Meric, we won. The forecast for Saturday afternoon was correct and the breeze was continuing to increase. The decision was made to return to the harbor and resume racing the next day.



Saturday night the SYC Lightning Fleet hosted a great party at the beautiful home of Cal Herman. They served homemade Gumbo, Jambalaya, grilled sausage, and plenty of beverages for all tastes. It was great to chat with the other Lightning sailors and exchange old stories and plans for the upcoming 2009 season. After the party, Dan, Denny, Kay, and I returned to the French Quarter. My Dad went to bed as soon as we arrived at our hotel, as he was quite exhausted from trimming the spinnaker and hiking in the big breeze. Dan and I ventured out to be a part of the ever-growing late-night crowd on Bourbon Street for a while. But we were humbled when we ran into Kay "The Professional" on the street. Dan and I were headed back to our room and Kay was on his way to another club to catch more live music. Who needs sleep?!

Sunday brought cooler temps and lighter winds. We raced three races before packing up and hitting the road. Dan did a great job of driving in the lighter conditions despite our weight. We won the first two races and finished second in the third race of the day. Scotty Barrett and Bill Baxter Jr. played a left shift nicely up the first beat of the last race. We were able to cut our losses leaving the rest of the fleet on the right half-way up the beat. We tracked Baxter down the last 50 yards of the last run, but Mr. Barrett was launched and won the race handily.



Southern Yacht Club plans to have their new clubhouse completed this summer. It looks amazing already although still under construction. Fleet 62 is so hospitable and friendly. They really did a great job of making us feel welcome. We hope to return to the Sugar Bowl Regatta next year for more fun in the Big Easy.