

# TIME-ENOUGH ALWAYS PROVES LITTLE ENOUGH

by Barbara Baxter

In June of 1980, when Bill's term of office as Commodore began, we were unable to attend the District Regatta. However, a kind friend brought us three gray, steel file boxes and a verbal message from Mitch Bohnenkamp, the previous Commodore, that "these boxes house all the available resources for a successful term." As they rested stark and diminutive in the center of our den carpet, I think we must have felt a wave of trepidation; but the first box we opened disclosed a District scrapbook dating from the early 1960's. As we turned the pages, glossy photos of former Commodores in white slacks and blue blazers, accompanied by elegantly dressed ladies sipping cocktails, alternated with candid shots of crew-cut sailors and pedal-pushed wives eagerly rigging for the races. Commodoring began to look like a lot of fun! We hoped it would be, for by some trick of fate, Bill was simultaneously the Commodore of our Memphis sailing club.

Bill's first official move was to publish a newsletter reporting on the District Regatta, our entrants' successes in the North American's, and on the new skippers who had recently joined the various fleets. Boat numbers, throw-outs, averages and places never seemed to stay in their proper columns — the Tab Stop on our typewriter is diabolical; but at last, all were typed properly, a mailing list compiled, and a hundred-plus envelopes and stamps licked and sealed. The Baxter children were coerced into this with a little help from the dog, who sleeps with her mouth open. In September, still high on our vision from the album, we and the Sharpe family made our reservations for the 1981 District Regatta at the Ken Lake State Park for the following June. We decided to go up the Monday before the races on Saturday and Sunday, so we could have a few days of family vacation plus plenty of time to organize the events of the weekend with the Sharpes' kind offers of help.

Our local sailing season is over the first of November, so the first winter months were relatively quiet. Nancy Breazeale introduced us to an artisan from one of the local craft fairs whose work in brass she had admired. He agreed to make the trophies for the Districts and promised to send us a prototype in four or five weeks. One November day, Bill rushed home at noon to tell me that we had to write a District report for the Yearbook. I said, "Fine, when is it due?" "Last week," he sheepishly replied. "Damn." Despite frantic typing, we were too late; but, bless his heart for guessing our predicament, Lal Burridge had submitted one under the wire.

February was devoted to local club affairs. Arkabutla Lake is part of the flood control system for the Mississippi River; and, because of the drought, the water was falling so low that the docks had to be moved out every week. Also, the toilets in the bathrooms had to be drained as a prevention against freezing; the benches on the deck needed repairing; the ceiling beams in the pavilion were delaminating; and everything needed repainting. Bill assured me that each of these things was the personal responsibility of the Commo-

dore. But I know too well that his sense of duty was outweighed only by his landlocked, winter libido screaming for weekend release.

We had no sailing during March and April, a nadir in the history of Delta Sailing Club, because the water was still so low. For a couple used to the diversion of sailing both Saturday and Sunday, nine months out of the year, our marriage was on tenterhooks. My list of home repairs was getting quite lengthy, because I had so much time to notice the things I generally ignore; and Bill's excuses for avoiding them were running out—all the club repairs had long since been completed. Bill was also edgy because we had yet to receive a sample trophy, promised no later than January. The phone rang continually on Saturday mornings, as frustrated club members half-heartedly asked if any races were scheduled. As tensions built, calls ranged from belligerent demands to pathetic pleas. Fortunately for Bill and a number of the other sailors, our local Hernando-Desoto Regatta was slated for the first weekend in May. They were able to expend a great deal of pent-up energy making plans for that event. Most of their decisions were in limbo because of the water level; and eventually the races had to be cancelled—the first time in my memory other than the year Martin Luther King was killed. But, nevertheless, the speculations and final verdict required many phone calls and weekend conferences held on the hill overlooking the receding waters of Arkabutla—with the comforting companionship of Coors.

Meanwhile, the telephone lines were also humming around the Mississippi Valley, as Bill made plans for the Districts in June. He conferred with Jack and Betty Caldwell, who are kind enough to serve as an excellent Race Committee for us each year, Stu Bernstein, our Measurer, and the mysterious Lee White, whom we've never seen, but who conjures up committee boats and stake boats upon request. Perhaps our District is unique in that every other year our regatta is held at a lake in rural Kentucky where there is no active Lightning fleet. The Ken Lake State Park offers a yacht club, but it is isolated and somewhat neglected, because no boats are kept there on a regular basis. All our plans are made and coordinated by long distance. In the past we have relied heavily upon the Ken Lake Hotel for important amenities like the banquet and box lunches during the races. Of course, for the first time since we have been members of the District, the hotel declined to host the banquet or to provide the lunches; so many of Bill's calls were devoted to finding a caterer in the wilds of Kentucky who could feed between eighty and one-hundred people. Numerous calls produced a choice of two: Dakota Feed and Grain Co. or Owen's Meat Market of Murray, Kentucky. The latter sounded more filling for famished sailors, so we signed up Mr. Owen and proceeded to check on the facilities for serving the banquet at the yacht club. Further telephone calls revealed that most of the kitchen equipment was inoperable and that there were very few tables and chairs.

Another call to Mr. Owen, who said not to worry, he could provide all the food, cooked and hot, as well as borrow tables and chairs—from the local funeral home.

We also discovered that the hoist at the club had been vandalized and consequently we could not use it either to launch boats or to weigh them prior to the races. Having just received an intimidating booklet from Helen Limbaugh on the necessity of insuring the legality of all participants, Bill was somewhat distressed. Nevertheless, undaunted and confident that we could work out all the remaining problems because we were going up early, we typed up a schedule of events, stuffed, licked, stamped and sent it out. Three days later, a frantic phone call from Stu Bernstein... "My God, your schedule mentions last minute measurement on Saturday morning! Are you crazy? Everybody will wait till the last minute, and I'll never get it all done. You better mail out a correction to that." Type, stuff, lick, stamp.

Monday morning, June 8th, we began to amass our gear for the trip to Kentucky that afternoon. We had reserved cabins for the week, so we had six grocery sacks of food, eight grocery sacks of clothes (each of our children had invited a friend, and Bill forced everyone to pack in paper bags so he could store clothes in the bow of the boat—no sharp corners allowed), two coolers, two sets of sails, life jackets, cushions, rudder, games for the children, nine cases of beer, one case of whiskey, the trophies which arrived just prior to an overdose of valium, and, of course, the three gray steel file boxes. At ten o'clock, we called in a support vehicle to carry the beer, liquor and two kids. At twelve thirty, the Sharpes with their Lightning, the Baxters with their Lightning and Bob Shedd (support vehicle) with a motor boat hit the highway for Kentucky.

Monday through Thursday were relaxing and calm. We settled into the cabins, the girls found the pool, the boys found the tennis courts and the electronic games, and Bill and I took the boat out to tune it and to case the lake. We did have a little trouble getting organized, leaving things like the spinnaker and the life jackets back at the cabin and breaking the tiller the first time out. We should have considered those things portentous, but we were too dull. Our inspection of the club proved the hoist to be truly broken, the grass shoulder high, and sailing school in residence at the clubhouse until Friday, the day the other skippers were to arrive. On Wednesday, a thunderstorm ripped across the lake, sinking the only access to the docks beside the one-car ramp we all had to use. I asked Bill if we ought to try to sail in the races this year with all there was to be done. He assured me that everything would be under his total control by Friday morning: a hoist and scales were being brought from Memphis and Nashville; our boys were going to raise the dock section; the grass was to be cut that afternoon; the sailing school had promised to evacuate early Friday morning; and he had met the owner of the meat market and was favorably impressed.

He was right for the most part. The equipment arrived, the grass was cut, and the clubhouse vacant...but dirty. I made a hasty run into town for Ajax, Clorox, and sponges. As I rushed back down the narrow, twisting road to the lake, I nearly careened into a pick-up truck and a station wagon full of tables and chairs parked crosswise in the road, the drivers despairing of ever finding the yacht club. Grateful for coincidences, I led the small convoy back to the clubhouse, and Nancy Breazeale pitched in to help give the kitchen and baths a thorough cleaning while the men set up

the furniture. We ignored the fact that the shower drains were so clogged that the kitchen floor stayed an inch deep in water and was home for a number of frogs. No one was able to raise the dock section, but some inventive soul laid a 2" x 12" across the break. We did discover a large cooling bin in the clubhouse which actually worked; I don't know how else we would have cooled down nine cases of beer. The rest of the day Bill spent greeting the incoming skippers and measuring and weighing boats while my daughter, her friend, and I manned the registration table and popped twelve bowls of popcorn for the cocktail party that night.

Saturday, we were up at sunrise to get donuts and coffee in Murray, twenty miles away, to finish registering boats and to rig our own boat. Then, three races back to back with some of the best wind we've had at Ken Lake in years. Terribly out of shape from the lack of racing at home, we stumbled off the boat in mid-afternoon only to meet Carolyn Sharpe on the ramp with the news that both our families were being evicted from our cabins at the State Park. While I checked to be sure that Mr. Owen had arrived with the lunches, Bill rushed back to the hotel with Brody Sharpe. A mix-up in reservations, the old case of "to" versus "through", but the staff was intractable. Half our possessions had been dumped indiscriminately into plastic garbage bags, and nothing would do but for us to finish the job and find a new haven for the night. Consequently, we missed the afternoon race. When we finally returned to the clubhouse, we found the remnants of lunch waiting on the tables. Why did I think "catering" included cleaning up? Knowing the banquet was only three hours away, we sacked, scraped, and mopped, then whipped back to the motel to feed the kids, change clothes and return to the festivities.

Bless Mr. Owen for providing an excellent meal in limited facilities. Curse him for not cleaning up again! Bill was so tired, I believe he nearly forgot to hold the annual business meeting that would relieve him of his commodoreship. I recall Roger Grohne commenting that Bill made the most concise speech in the history of the District. Meanwhile, I heard the disquieting news that Owen's Meat Market had refused to fix Sunday lunch, because so few had been sold. Standing in the clubhouse kitchen at 9:30 p.m., I wondered how we could sail the two races Sunday and still engineer lunch for the people who were expecting it. Most of my groceries were still under the dirty socks in the plastic garbage bags. Fortunately, Carolyn Sharpe volunteered to amass most of the necessary items before noon the next day. We returned to our one room which was to house six people for the night. Horrified, we farmed the two boys out, tallied the day's receipts and fell into bed.

Sunday brought two more races with the winds gusting to thirty-five and four screaming planes with a straining spinnaker. Off the lake, with all the bruises and sprains from Saturday doubly injured, I went to help serve lunch while Bill set up the trophy presentation and composed an impromptu closing speech. Then we sank in quiet thankfulness that due to challenging winds, a competent Race Committee, and lots of needed support from other District members we had put on one good regatta. The boat dismantled, the car repacked, and the clubhouse straightened up for the last time—only then, as we sat slapping the meanest flies in Kentucky, surrounded by the garbage bags oozing French dressing and stale tea, did we think again about the album of Commodores in white slacks and wives in long dresses. Kodak, you're a damn liar!

# HORIZON WINS 1981 N.A.'S

Over a wide range of conditions during the week-long series, HORIZON SAILS proved to be fast, durable, and easy to trim. Plus, our friendly, expert assistance was on the scene and is always available from the HORIZON team. In the toughest competition of 1981, boats using our sails made an impressive showing.

- 3 in the top 10
- President's Cup 2nd, 4th
- Governor's Cup 2nd
- Thermis Trophy 1st

Our combination of innovative design, quality production, and personalized service results in better performance for you.

To reach for new HORIZONS, just contact  
Dave Curtis or Hale Walcoff at



## HORIZON SAILS Cressy & Curtis, Inc.

16 Anderson Street  
Marblehead, MA 01945  
(617) 631-4735



# JIB LUFF SAG ON THE LIGHTNING

by  
Greg Fisher

Many Lightning sailors spend a great deal of time tuning their mast to bend properly and precisely. We'll go to great lengths to be sure our mast is centered exactly in the boat, we'll have the ideal block behind the mast to induce the correct bend...But there is another tuning factor that can be just as crucial to speed as mast bend: Jib luff sag. Jib luff sag is simply an artificial method of controlling the fullness of the entry and body of a jib. Luff sag is to a jib, as mast bend is to a main.

Picture a perfectly flat jib hanging on a perfectly straight forestay. Now push the forestay (jib luff) towards the center of the sail. We are, in effect, shoving extra cloth into the jib. This extra cloth moves into the jib as fullness. Now on the boat, if we take a jib that is an excellent performer in medium, heavy weather (a fairly flat entry, flat exit sail) and allow, or induce the jib luff to sag towards the center of the sail in lighter winds or choppy seas where power is needed, we have essentially built ourselves another, fuller jib.

It is interesting to note that many of the adjustments to our jib luff sag come through adjustments made to design and trim of the mainsail. We have often heard of the critical mainsail/jib combination. It is important to match the jib luff sag relative to mast bend. When a mainsail and jib are perfectly matched, "changing gears" can be really as simple as adjusting the back stay.

When sailing upwind in a light 3-5 mph breeze, we are looking for as much power as possible. Add a little chop and we are forced to drive and not pinch. Pointing the boat as close to the wind as possible is no longer our main concern. We'll also ease our back stay until it is actually slack and the mast is straight, making the main extremely powerful. As we ease the backstay, put the tension back on the rig (i.e.: pressure on the forestay/jib luff) is lessened and we induce our powerful jib luff sag.

Obviously, we need a mainsail that can perform on a straight mast in light winds without developing a tight leech, as well as in heavier winds when the mast is bent.

The jib must be designed flat enough so that the sag ("extra cloth") doesn't make the entry too round and the jib too full. Luff sag will make the entry rounder, but remember these are the conditions where we are not concentrating on sticking the boat as close to the wind as possible instead we're in "low gear" looking for power and acceleration.

As the wind builds, we will, of course, tighten our cunningham, outhaul and mainsheet. Until the wind is up high enough where all 3 people are on the deck and 2 just beginning to hike, we will leave the backstay loose and trim the main until the upper batten is parallel to the boom (sighted from under the boom). The mainsheet tension alone will control our luff sag in the jib. Just the pull back by the sheet and then the leech of the sail, will pull the rig back, putting tension on the forestay/jib luff.

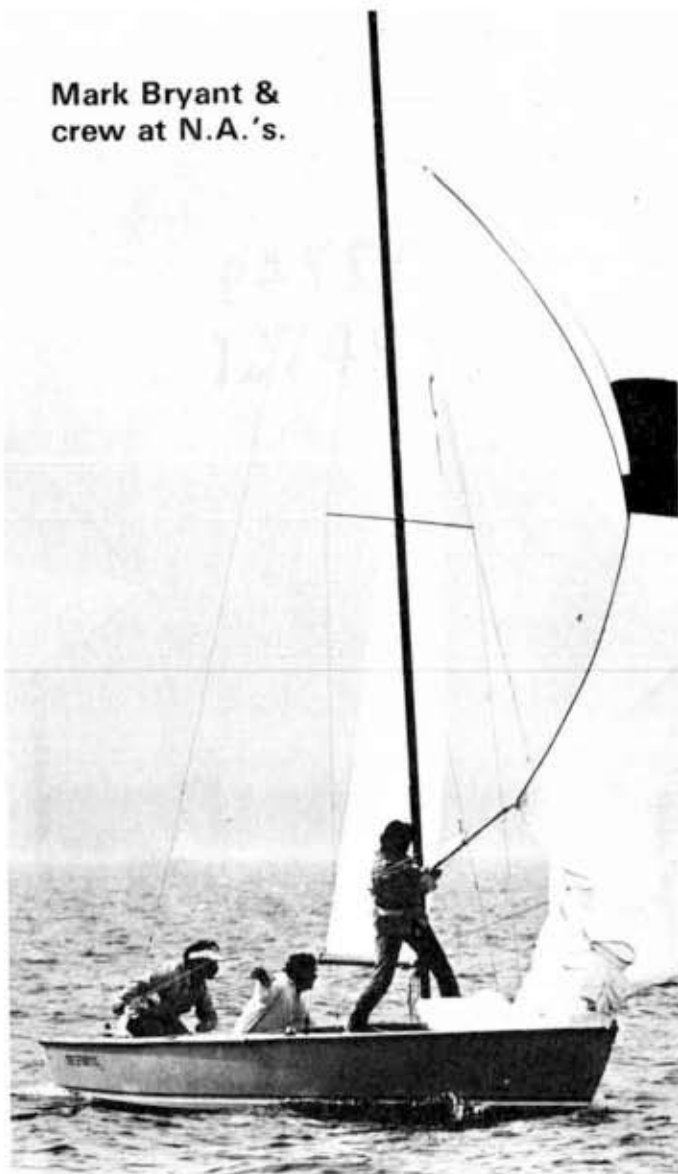
In a 20-25 mph blow, maximum backstay will be applied, developing maximum mastbend, and because of the maximum tension on the forestay, there will be a minimum amount of jib luff sag. Both sails will be flatter, less powerful

and have higher pointing capabilities.

If the wind is puffy, as on an inland lake, ideally the backstay should be played in the puffs. One can easily see that if the boat is set up for 8 mph wind and a 20 mph puff hits, the mainsheet must be eased which would release much of the pressure back on the rig. Without normal mainsheet or backstay tension the jib luff would be free to sag more, making the jib fuller in the puff-exactly what we are trying to avoid. The fuller jib will overpower the boat and drag the bow off-ruining the excellent pointing capability the boat should develop through feathering in the puff.

In practice, the efficient tune is a compromise setting for the backstay for an "average wind". This might mean we'd be sailing at 75% power in the 8 mph lulls (jib slightly too flat, main slightly too flat) and probably 25% overpowered

**Mark Bryant &  
crew at N.A.'s.**



in the 20 mph puffs. We'd control the boat by keeping it sailing balanced through hiking and mainsheet adjustment. My wife, Patti, and myself sailed for Bill Shore on an inland lake in these exact conditions and were extremely impressed with how Bill kept the boat balanced ("tracking") through constant mainsheet trim. The backstay was rarely adjusted in this wild, up and down condition.

## PREBEND AND LUFF SAG

Recently, the idea of "prebending" the mast, in light to medium winds has become popular in the Lightning Class. Other Classes, such as the Snipe and Star, have had success with prebend by making the boats not only faster in those conditions, but also easier to trim. In the Lightning, prebend is achieved through use of added mast blocks behind the mast pushing the mast forward at the deck. At rest, on the trailer or dock, with no backstay applied, we will see as much as 3/4" positive bend in the mast up to the spreaders.

What does prebending the mast have to do with jib luff sag? Actually, one of the largest benefits of prebend is the added control, or range of jib luff sag, that can be produced. We are now able to adjust the jib shape (through luff sag) and mainsail shape (through mast bend) independently.

It has been found that prebend is effective in opening up the slot (area between the exit of the jib and entry of the main) because of the flatter lower sections of the main. This flatter lower section, and more open slot allows the boom to be carried closer to centerline (higher pointing capabilities). The flatter lower sections tend to open the lower leech and in turn the upper leech. This more open upper leech makes the

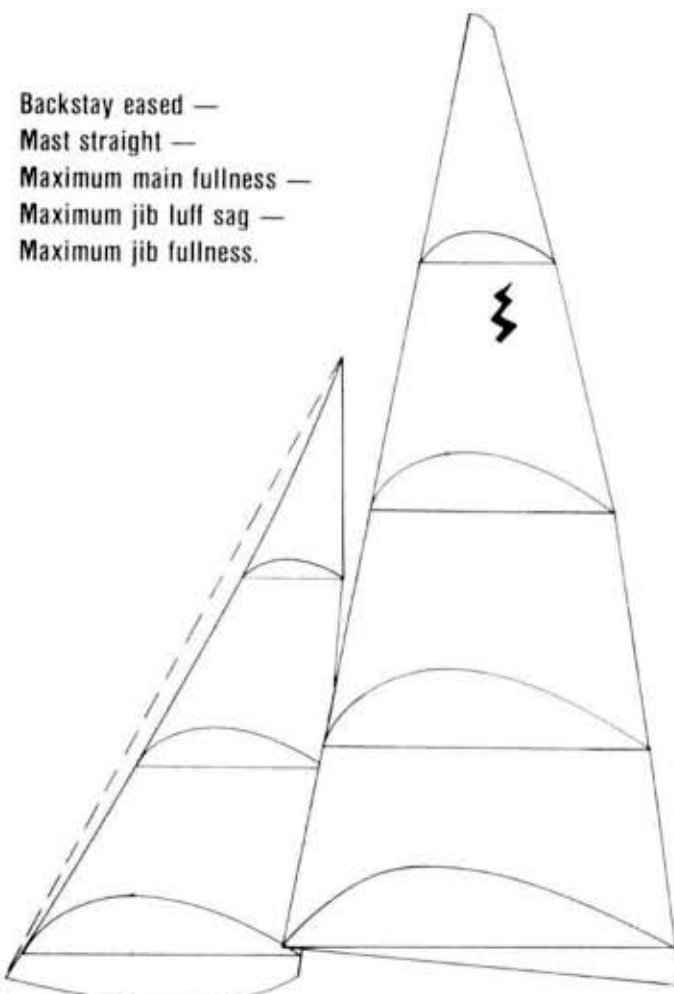
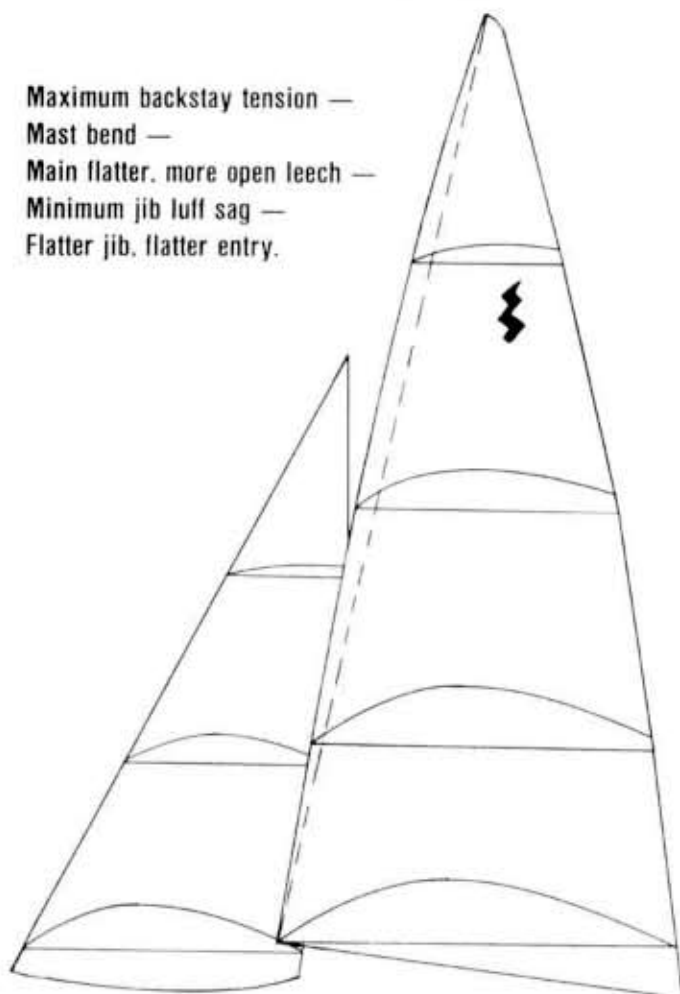
sail less critical and easier to trim to the upper batten parallel to the boom position, discussed earlier.

Since the mast is pushed forward with the deck blocks, the jib stay (jib luff) becomes slightly looser and it becomes easier to develop more luff sag. Now we have the capabilities to sail with a fuller jib and open slot between main and jib without using barber haulers, and an open leech on the mainsail. The boat is easier to trim and easier to steer...both which equal more speed.

If we were sailing in more breeze (15 mph +) with prebend, we would develop a potential problem with too much jib luff sag. We would have to pull very hard on the back stay to develop enough pressure on the headstay (jib luff) to reduce jib luff sag to the normal heavy wind minimum. However, with this great amount of backstay tension, we would overflatten the main and probably find the boat underpowered and again, unbalanced.

Instead, in heavy winds we must remove the mast blocks from behind the mast and replace the blocks in front. With this set up, maximum backstay tension will be translated into normal heavy wind mast bend and at least as important, increased pressure on the headstay, i.e.: minimum luff sag. Less backstay tension will be required to reach our heavy wind normal tune; a flatter jib and flat main.

I urge you to experiment with your rig and sails. Set your boat up on the trailer so you can walk around it and observe the effect of your trimming changes. Watch the mast bend, the mainsail become flatter...and watch your jib shape change through your new tool-luff sag.



# SAILING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FLEET

## OR 15 YEARS BEHIND THE MASTS OR ALL YOU LOSERS, TAKE HEART

By Joe Mark (Paupack, Pa. Fleet 16)

Sailing in the middle of the fleet, behind all the other masts, has been largely my lot in racing Lightnings. I've never won any Regatta, major or minor; never been fleet champion, or even runner-up. Don't cry. I don't mind it, and I'll tell you why.

Well, in the first place my kind of sailor is clearly in the majority! Only one person can win a race. Only two or three in the average club are consistent winners. In a fleet of 10 or 12 boats, that leaves about 8 or 9 who finish in the pack. So, this account is about the majority of Lightning sailors — most of us.

What keeps these blokes (like me) going out there on every weekend and getting beaten? There is, of course, the hope of winning — and it happens from time to time — but after 15 years of sailing in the middle of the fleet the grim reality takes precedence. You know that you're not going to become a star of the class or of the fleet — ever.

That realization didn't happen overnight. There was all this propaganda about 'being aggressive on the starting line,' 'following a plan,' 'tacking to headers,' 'anticipating wind shifts,' 'know the rules thoroughly,' and so on. It took a long time to realize that I'm not aggressive on the starting line (don't like getting yelled at); either I don't have a plan or it's a stinky plan (To the crew; "do you think we should stay on the right side" — that's not a plan); tacking to headers is difficult when you don't know one, and your crew cannot read a compass; and as far as the rules go, I'm easily intimidated by any captain who yells anything at me — especially things that sound like, "Starboard Beam Overlap Leeward Boat!". The realization finally came when I acknowledged that these winners worked harder at racing than I do, and, very important, they have a talent for this sort of stuff.

But like blondes who have more fun, it's possible that in spite of the above mentioned shortcomings, we have more fun! The main motivation, in my experience, is that there's always your personal competitor out there. I've got "my Stanley." For, ever since I can remember racing Lightnings, I've been racing "Stanley." Sometimes he beats me; sometimes I beat him. When I get home after a hard day of rounding the marks, the wife pops the usual question, "How did you make out today?"; and my response frequently is, "not so good — but I beat Stanley!".

It is my contention that every 'middle of the fleet' sailor has his "Stanley" — the special opponent that he loves to beat. The depression and misery that overtakes a mediocre finisher is dissolved, if it is accompanied by a victory over his "Stanley." If it's not — well, there's always next week. And beating your "Stanley" is a real possibility, not like the dream of overtaking the fleet champion.

There are other motivations for this middling sailor. He frequently guards his middle of the fleet position like a tiger, and if one of the champions makes some dreadful mistake and falls behind into his territory, he eats 'em up. So, every so often he can chalk up a victory, even though he came out 5th or 6th again, over the fleet champion who happened —

probably due to some fluke of nature — to come out 7th that day.

Another advantage for this less talented but persistent soul is that he probably enjoys sailing more than the champions. He's less compulsive about his boat, the rig and tuning. The nervous tension on his boat is less. The crew may not like losing, but there is less harassment all around. He gets less aggravated, and there is a lighter atmosphere that pervades.

And when it comes to fleet business, he is consulted and respected at fleet meetings. His opinion counts. After all, he's the backbone of the fleet and part of the majority. If all the middle of the fleet sailors would quit, there would be only the few in front and the few in the rear — a funny fleet.

To show you that this is not a new idea, about ten years ago, an old sailor at the Lavallette Yacht Club on the New Jersey shore, Fred Slovak, knew all this stuff, so he donated a perpetual trophy to be awarded at the Marine Regatta at Quantico, Va. every year — "It's to the sailor who finishes right in the middle of the fleet! Old Fred knew.

So from now on let's have some more mention in these writings on regattas on the unsung tried and true hero who came out in the middle. O.K., the winners deserve the up-front attention they get, but if you want to break the monotony let's have some new names introduced — ". . . and Harvey Weimaraner finished 22.5 out of 45 boats which makes him the winner of the 'middle of the fleet' trophy." You can laugh at that 22.5 finish, but from where I watch races that's not bad. Not bad at all.

The winners have their competition cut out for them every week. They know who they have to beat, and it's not you. If you sail in the middle, you probably have your "Stanley". If you don't — for heaven's sake, don't tarry...



### I.L.C.A. Official Pocket Patch

Red Lightning Flash on white circle embossed on navy wool background. I.L.C.A. and laurel leaves hand embroidered in bullion. Size approximately 4" x 4 1/4". Cost \$11.00. Send check with order to I.L.C.A. office, 808 High Street, Worthington, Ohio 43085.



# STORM ON THE LAKE

## (The View of a Junior Crew)

by Ed Lekson

Our car halted as we came to the locked gate. As usual, I was the one to get out of the car and open it. We proceeded to our campsite, and unloaded the basic necessities from the car. When we had finished setting up the trailer for the long weekend, I decided to take a walk up to the clubhouse.

Pymatuning Yacht Club isn't a huge glamorous club, but it is a friendly place. Actually, it isn't a yacht club, but a boat club. As I walked up the main road to the clubhouse, I saw the many trailers and mobile homes I had always seen. But to the left, in the area which was supposed to be reserved for parking their vans. Like last year, they would probably be kicked out before the first night. As I crossed the dry dock area, I saw the boat on which I would be crewing. My mother and I would be donating our time to a man named Skipper, whom I was looking for now.

When I strolled onto the clubhouse patio, I spotted Skipper at his usual station, the beer keg. We greeted in our usual fashion, and then sat down to discuss the Independence Day Regatta. The first and second races would be tomorrow starting at 1:00 p.m. The third and final race would be Sunday at 12:00 noon. Now we had to take care of our boat registration. After a long wait in line, we finally reached the table. We recorded our boats number and were then informed of a cocktail party that night. We headed to the men's locker room, for Skipper wished to check the riggings for the boat. We found all the sails and other equipment in order and decided to return to the trailer.

At the trailer, Skipper's old friend Bob Harrison was waiting for us. They sat down at the picnic table and I listened as they talked over old times. All the years they had spent at Northeast Yacht Club in Cleveland, racing on Wednesday night and getting drunk on Saturday night. After I had my fill of their talk, I went inside to catch a few winks.

Skipper woke me up and told me it was time for the cocktail party. When we reached the clubhouse, we found that the so-called cocktail party was in reality a hot dog roast and get-acquainted party. Skipper talked to other sailors he hadn't seen since last year, and I observed the annual out-of-towners who usually came and won the regatta. Although the visiting sailors were always tough, Pymatuning had its own share of good sailors. I stayed at the party until eleven, and then decided to turn in back at the trailer.

When I awoke the next morning, I realized it was the big day. Today we would sail the first two races. I grabbed a quick breakfast and then headed toward the dry dock area to start rigging the boat. As I expected, Skipper, was already working on it. One of the mahogany rub rails on the side of the boat had split, and he was repairing it. As he worked, I began the job of putting on the main sail and jib and preparing the lines for racing conditions. My mother had now arrived and we began to make our way to the hoist, which would lift our boat into the water. The line at the hoist was

lengthy and we had to wait almost ten minutes before it was our turn. We put the boat in and then headed out of the harbor.

As we approached the starting mark, the cluster of boats around the buoy became a mob of screaming captains shouting orders. Finally, the gun on the committee boat went off, and the race had begun. The first leg of the race was the windward leg. This involved much tacking as directed by the skipper. Skipper chose to go near shore, which may have been a bad choice, for there was a bad draft coming off the trees on shore. When we finally got around the first mark, we were a little more than half way back from the leaders. At the same time we rounded the buoy, we also had to raise the spinnaker and drop the jib. This was one of the downwind legs. A straight shot to the next mark, but a very slow pace. If we were to gain any ground on the leaders, this would be the leg we would do it on. We had always had greater success on the spinnaker run.

As we neared the last mark before the finishing buoy, I prepared myself for the jibe of the spinnaker. To perform this task, I had to stand on the bow of the boat and switch the spinnaker from port to starboard while Skipper guided the boat around the mark. This was probably the hardest part of the race, and all three crew members had to do the right thing at the right time. Skipper began to turn the boat while I switched the pole and my mother pulled the spinnaker sheet. It was a successful jibe and we were on our way to the finish.

It was about twenty minutes later when we crossed the finish line and headed back to the harbor. All the sailors were now sitting under the pine trees by the clubhouse and that's where my mother and Skipper were now headed. They would sit, drink beer, talk over the events of the race just completed, and about the second race, which would start in about two hours. I decided to go to the clubhouse for some of the lunch they were serving on the patio. After I got my lunch, I saw that they had posted the results of the first race. I looked them over and found we had placed sixteenth out of twenty-six boats, this was not the placing we had hoped for, but there were still two races left.

As we headed toward the committee boat for the start of the second race, we realized how much stronger the wind had become. Thistles, the class of boats that had started before us, were much lighter than our boat. There would probably be a few of them that capsized before the day was over. The starting line was even more hectic for us this race and we were lucky to get out into open water without being hit. We headed toward the middle of the lake this race because Skipper had learned his lesson in the last race. The strategy paid off, and we were soon riding a lift toward the first buoy. We raised the spinnaker while rounding the mark and found ourselves in fifth place in the field of twenty-six. But to our dismay, the wind was blowing even harder now.

This was brought to our attention by the two Thistles which had already capsized and were waiting for the State Park Patrol boat which sped towards them.

We were heading for the next mark when Skipper told us we could not jibe the spinnaker and would have to lower it. I protested, but he said the weight of our crew was not enough to maintain the spinnaker in such heavy winds. We rounded the mark, and I dropped the spinnaker, then hauled up the jib. We did our best to maintain our position, but the boats behind us with heavier crews and flying spinnakers soon began to creep up on us. By the time we had crossed the finish line, we had lost three boats and had to settle for eighth place.

By the time we had gotten back to the hoist, the rain had begun to fall and we hurried to get the boat out of the water and covered. After that we went back to the trailer to get dried off and get into a fresh change of clothes. We then went into town to have dinner. We decided to call it an early night and went to sleep, because our efforts on the race course had tired us out.

After I awoke, I looked out the window and saw the grayness of the day. This wasn't the type of day I had hoped for to finish the regatta. The wind was blowing harder than yesterday, and the temperature had dropped overnight. I picked up my rain gear and headed up the road toward our boat. The cold wind made the walk unpleasant, and I hoped they would postpone the race. However, when I got to the boat, Skipper told me the half hour preliminary gun had already gone off. So he decided we would leave early, because the race was starting on the other side of the lake due to the wind shift. We were the first boat out of the

harbor and the strong wind quickly took us farther out into-the lake. Even the committee boat was behind us. As we headed for B mark on the opposite side of the lake, the siren at the dam began to bellow. The dam was at the southern end of the lake and its siren signaled a small craft warning.

When Skipper obeyed the siren and started turning the boat to return, violent bolts of lightning began to flash and the thunder was deafening. Rain accompanied the flashes and booms; soon it was hard to see shore. We were all fully dressed with rain clothes, but the chill still could be felt. I struggled to let the jib out, because we were heeling too much. The sheet flew out of my hand and I fought to regain control of it. My mother hiked over the side as well as she could, and Skipper controlled the main sail, and tiller at the same time. Skipper warned us of the hostile puffs of wind that came with storms, and as he said this, one hit. I thought we were going over, but Skipper ordered me to let out the jib while he let out the main and fell off from the wind. That was the strongest puff that hit us and we had no more trouble until we bottomed out on a sandbar near shore. But to correct this, I quickly raised the centerboard and we were once again free.

At the dock people from the club were waiting for us and helped us get the boat out of the water. The only damage to our boat was a broken hiking strap and some very wet sails and crew members. We were escorted to the clubhouse and found some other very wet sailors relaxing and drinking coffee. My mother and I had Skipper to thank for our safety. He had been in many storms on Lake Erie, and this was another one to add to his list. It was his experience which brought us back to shore.

## **NICKELS BOAT WORKS, INC.**

**SPEED**

**QUALITY**

**DURABILITY**

*INNOVATION PROVIDES THE SOLUTION*

**SAIL A NBW "PERFORMER" IN 1982**

**CUSTOM FIBERGLASS LIGHTNINGS — HULLS — SAILS  
— SPARS — HARDWARE — TRAILERS**

**6455 LAHRING RD. — HOLLY, MI 48442  
Telephone (313) 634-4019**



# CRUISING ON THE RIVER PLATA

by Angel Vila

The River Plate is a big river, too large and too wide. On its shore is our Argentina District and on the opposite east shore is located the Uruguay District. Between Olivos, Argentina and Punta del Este, Uruguay the distance is 170 miles and the width of the rest of the river is oscillating between 20 to 120 miles.

On this beautiful river with light brown waters, Josquin Cloos and his boat #5759 named "*Viento*" sailed last spring, his fourth cruising season with his family. During our warm months, January and February he sailed 650 miles in his Lightning.

He started in early December working on the auxiliary engine, an outboard Evinrude 20; working on the waterproof cover for rainy days; checking the inflatable beds and their location, because in #5759 the wooden floorboards may be raised to the seat level, and over this was to be placed the inflatable sleeping beds. Also purchasing foods is very important, for sailing a long time in a "dinghy". It is necessary to have the right staples and to have storage aboard for the potatoes, tomatoes, rice, coffee, tea, etc. Cooking out and fishing are a part of the cruising, but they need to carry also milk, oranges, kerosene, etc., because on the Uruguayan shore there are many beautiful arroyos and little rivers with only one and half or two feet of depth. For this reason no boats visit these paradisaic waters and there are no cities on these shores.

Cloos is a very old sailor on the River Plate and in Lightnings. He knows the larger leg of the cruise is the crossing from Buenos Aires to Colonia, Uruguay (near 20 miles) and he needs to be very sure before leaving the dock about the weather. He waited for a beautiful day with winds from N.E. 10 to 12 miles and bright sun, in January, to cross the river to Colonia. His son Alejandro crewed on this trip

and both are impatient to arrive in Punta del Este and its beautiful beaches over on the Atlantic Ocean, but the trip in the Lightning consists of sailing short legs every day (about 10 to 15 miles). For this reason Cloos needs to know the exact boat speed in all winds and wave conditions.

He needs to know the shore line, because it is imperative to find a harbour or arroyo if "Pampero" comes. In some cases they need to hoist the spinnaker and hike, sailing fast to the harbour before "Pampero." "Pampero" is a strong wind from the southwest, maybe blows 50 or 60 miles; if you have some doubt about it, ask the Lightning sailors who raced in the 1969 worlds at Olivos.

On the trip they were in all the little rivers between Colonia and Punta del Este; Riachela, Sauce, Arroyo del Rosario, Barra de Santa Lucia, Puerto Solis, Montevideo, the biggest city and Port of Uruguay, Piriapolis and finally, after 170 miles, Punta del Este, with its blue waters, golden beaches, and over all Gorriti Island, three miles in front of Punta del Este Marina where between a forest of green trees, is the remainder of a Spanish fort.

When he returned to Olivos, Cloos found no work on his desk, and so started on a new cruise to Rio Negro, in this case in smooth waters and for crew his daughter Patricia. They found another Lightning cruising, this boat owned by Freddy Ziegler.

Really, Cloos knows our river very well, he anchored in some places that nobody ever saw before; he slept in the Lightning; he cooked in the Lightning; he fished from the Lightning. Under the sunshine or under the moon; in light winds or in stormy weather, he lives and loves the Lightning, and when at our Annual District Meeting, we asked, "Cloos, what about races?" He said, "what races?"



Patricia Cloos relaxes during cruise to Rio Negro.

Freddy Ziegler stands beside his Lightning.