

Lightning 50th Anniversary

story by Jim Crane

Reprinted with permission from **Sailing World Magazine**

Jim Crane is the Executive Vice-President of North Sails. He grew up in Darien, Conn., where he started sailing Lightnings 28 years ago at age 13. Over the years he has sailed in 25 North American Championships, winning the title twice, and has won the three-regatta Lightning Southern Circuit three times. Jim's wife Brenda won the Lightning Women's North American Championship last year, no doubt putting to work her Lightning family heritage — her father Tom Allen has built Lightnings for many years, and her mother Anne is the class President.

On Saturday the 2nd of July an extraordinary event occurred. Two hundred and twenty-seven Lightnings converged on the Skaneateles Country Club, perched on the northwest edge of Lake Skaneateles, a pristine glacial finger lake in central New York. It isn't all that unusual for a group of one-design sailboats to get together for a regatta, but when over 200 boats gather for a two-day event on a lake only a mile wide, you have to ask: What is going on?

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Lightning. Olin Stephens' venerable design. In recognition of a half-century of one-design success, the Class decided to hold an anniversary celebration on Lake Skaneateles, the home of the first Lightning. This celebration was planned as a two-day regatta, and the organizers anticipated that 100 or so boats would show up. Were they in for a surprise! As pre-race entries hit 150 boats, people started to scratch their heads. As the list raced past 180, the organizing committees began to worry. Entries continued to stream in, finally stopping at a whopping 227. The Skaneateles Country Club, which is primarily a golf club, found itself in the unenviable (or enviable — depending on your point of view) position of hosting the largest fleet of Lightnings ever assembled.

To those unfamiliar with the joys of one-design sailing, and the Lightning Class in particular, it must be difficult to comprehend why so many boats and crews would converge at a regatta of relatively minor significance. To those of us who have been active in the Class for any length of time (I've been competing since my 12th or 13th birthday) it really isn't all that surprising. The Lightning and the International Lightning Class epitomize the qualities that make one-design sailing such a special experience. These qualities include high-level competition in a tightly controlled one-design, an emphasis on tactical ability rather than boatspeed, impeccable organization both on a local and national level, the opportunity for travel and the making of friends from around the world and all walks of life, the involvement of the entire family, and lastly, the opportunity, put pure and simple, to have some fun.

What you find is that the special joys that come from sailing and competing in the Lightning become a part of your lifestyle. In fact, it can become a tradition. In my mind the overwhelming turnout for the 50th Anniversary Regatta was nothing other than a celebration of this tradition. It was also a great opportunity for a party of monumental proportions.

Boats and competitors showed up from as far away as California and Florida. Eight former Presidents of the Class were present including 86 year-old Karl Smither who watched the current president, his daughter Anne Allen, oversee the proceedings. There were kids of every shape and size, campers, tents and vans. It looked like, and was, one giant picnic.

Frequently, when more people show up for an event than anticipated, everyone's worst fears are realized. If there was ever an opportunity for disaster, this event appeared to have all the makings. However, the Skaneateles Country Club and its members pulled off a minor miracle. Through excellent organization (and a bit of luck) the regatta was run with a Disney World-like efficiency. It was so extraordinary, it deserves a bit of discussion.

Upon arrival you were given a number to place on your trailer that corresponded to your boat-parking location for the weekend. This was in a large grassy field that had the texture and appearance of a golf fairway. After unpacking, all cars were banished to a deserted airstrip on the club property. A school bus ferried competitors back and forth. A hotdog, hamburger, and beer tent was prominently placed next to the clubhouse to satisfy any hunger pangs. And as a last overwhelming gesture, the club was closed to its normal membership for the weekend.

Boat launching appeared, at first sight, to be a particular problem. My crew (my seven-month pregnant wife and 68-year old father) and I had visions of having to arrive before sun-up each morning to get the boat launched in time for the first race. But, like everything else at the regatta, the locals had this one figured out as well. Two or three tractors and as many pickup trucks with hitches were requisitioned from nearby farms for the purpose of getting us afloat on schedule. A team of two or three people and a tractor trailed you and your boat either to a ramp or one of two hoists for launching. They would then return your trailer to its spot. Upon coming out of the water you would call out your parking number, a tractor would disappear to fetch your trailer, and before you knew it you were back parked on the fairway. This process went on for two hours, twice a day. The lack of confusion and the spirit in which this occurred was an unexpected pleasure, especially to those of us hardened by urban congestion.

This uncanny organization had the added advantage of existing in a setting of great natural beauty. Skaneateles is a summer resort town built in the 1920s and nestled close on the north shore of one of the cleanest lakes you are ever likely to see. The homes that ring the lake adjacent to the town are classic examples of Victorian architecture, and all appear to have been recently refurbished to their original splendor. Every lawn and hedge is tweezed. Outside of town, rolling hills dotted with farms appearing like patchwork quilts extend down to the water's edge. To improve upon this already idyllic setting, a Canadian cold front brought a twinkle and clarity to the air that was breathtaking.

You will notice that to this point I have failed to present a

blow-by-blow description of the racing itself. This is because the essence of the regatta had absolutely nothing to do with who won or lost on the water. It was a renewal of friendships, and a celebration of past experiences and the success of an extraordinary boat and class organization.

However, you can't have a gathering of boats without a race, so race we did. The fleet was divided into three groups. There was a "Vintage" fleet comprised of boats built shortly after Olin Stephens designed the boat in 1938. These relics are for the most part double-planked, soft glued, canvas decked, and heavy. What strikes you as you see these boats is the tremendous change that has come to our sport. While the lines and tolerances of the original boat are identical to those of today, virtually every other facet of the boat has been technologically transformed.

The second fleet was comprised of club racers. This was a self-governing group comprised of sailors who lacked either the experience or confidence to race the hot-shots. The last, or Gold fleet, consisted of your normal serious racing crowd.

The racing was confused. When was the last time you sailed in a 200-plus boat fleet on a lake one mile wide in a shifty northwest wind? For most of us this was a first-time experience, and we measured our success by whether we avoided a serious collision or not.

The starts were particularly perilous, especially when running the line on port tack. The best starting tactic seemed to be to position yourself well above the line and then stall, waiting for the fleet to envelope you before the start. Invariably a good portion of the boats were over the line early, allowing you to be hidden from the committee boat. To attempt to approach the line from well to leeward often left you watching 50 or 60 boats disappear up the weather leg as you struggled to find clear air.

The fleet quickly became very spread out, at times extending over two legs of the course. However, it was fun racing because the shifty northwest breeze allowed you to make extraordinary gains if you hit a few shifts correctly. Probably the most memorable moment for my crew and me was the first run of the last race. We had a terrible start and struggled up the weather leg in a dying, erratic breeze. We rounded the weather mark in 60th or 70th position — so far back, positions were irrelevant. It was bad! However, for some inexplicable reason the whole fleet played follow-the-leader down what appeared to be the wrong side of the run. With no option but the obvious, we headed for the opposite side of the course. Sailing in clear air, we watched the rest of the fleet compress and stop. At the leeward mark, we came in hot and fast with the pole well forward, passing 60 or so boats in the process. To say the least, we were very smug.

All the races were punctuated by bigger-than-life place changes, obstacles, and frustrations. Because of the immensity of each encounter, everyone took the attitude of "this isn't real." You found yourself laughing at situations you normally took very seriously.

When all was said and done, Brad Read was the winner of the Gold fleet, Peter Roulin the champ of the Vintage boats, and Don Barter took the silver among the club racers.

The 50th Anniversary Regatta will be remembered by everyone who took part as an overwhelming success, and certainly sets the tone for the Lightning class to prosper. We can all look back on this event as a celebration of the special joys of one-design sailing, and it should be an inspiration to

other one-design classes as an example of what can be accomplished. To me the spontaneity of this event is the true measure of what the class has done. When you have all the ingredients right, look what happens.

50th Anniversary Regatta

Skaneateles, New York — July 2-3, 1988

Gold Fleet Registrants & Final Standings

Pos.	Sail #	Skipper	1	Races 2	3	Tot. Pts.
1	14198	Read, Brad	1	6	3	10
2	14045	Fisher, Matt	3	1	10	14
3	14182	Huntsman, Jack	4	2	9	15
4	11138	Crane, Robert	9	7	8	24
5	14130	Dodge, Jed	2	8	22	32
6	14189	Sertl, Mark C.	10	12	12	34
7	14211	Allen, Thomas G. III	39	4	2	45
8	14190	Lotz, Philip	5	29	16	50
9	10860	Fisher, George	15	22	21	58
10	14255	Hallagan, Dick	17	13	32	62
11	11894	Ruiter, David S.	23	21	25	69
12	14176	Proctor, Ched	6	27	37	70
13	14288	Nickels, David	14	32	27	73
14	13610	Stewart, Duncan	26	31	17	74
15	12140	Schneider, Mark	44	15	15	74
16	9845	Bone, Peter	53	18	6	77
17	10120	Matteson, Dave	28	40	11	79
18	14205	Wardwell, Bob	25	39	17	81
19	11537	Hallagan, Jean	12	51	26	89
20	14222	Goldsmith, Bruce	50	26	14	90
21	14204	Huffman, Mike	47	19	28	94
22	13913	Gocker, Jim	49	14	31	94
23	14224	Messersmith, Ralph E.	31	41	33	105
24	13675	Schwartz, John	19	16	78	113
25	11739	Lutz, Jody	8	106	1	115
26	14043	Mertes, Frederick	20	42	53	115
27	14238	Heitman, Kjell	36	34	46	116
28	14066	Hayden, Fisk	48	69		117
29	12687	Tirrell, Arthur	24	33	61	118
30	11663	Bryant, Mark	106	11	4	121
31	13677	McIntosh, John M.	43	36	44	123
32	14194	Swanson, Jody	18	106		124
33	13671	Rogers, Susan	64	20	40	124
34	11661	Swartz, Peter H.	56	45	23	124
35	6983	Neal, Bill	22	3	106	131
36	14217	Allen, James	40	49	45	134
37	13515	Bailey, Ross	11	47	79	137
38	14207	Delorme, Dr. Donald P.	31	80	29	140
39	14134	MacDonald, Larry	27	9	106	142
40	13608	Frymier, Matt	59	37	49	145
41	11117	Anderson, Stu	29	69	47	145
42	14139	Elfman, Jack	41	106	5	152
43	13976	Willse, Ed	55	63	34	152
44	11379	Murphy, Clay	29	50	77	156
45	9119	Humphrey, Peter	46	105	7	158
46	13945	Roseberry, Ned, III	35	17	106	158
47	14289	Cuccio, Nina	70	38	50	158
48	14287	Gaspord, Geary	34	64	62	160
49	14246	Finkboner, Scott	66	30	65	161
50	13855	Nickels, Louie	38	70	55	163
51	13172	Reynolds, Kirk	56	5	106	167
52	8379	Schneider, Franz K., Jr.	72	55	41	168
53	12405	Ruiter, Alan	7	106	59	172
54	13832	Cook, Bill	63	72	42	177
55	14129	Hudgens, Tom	69	57	52	178
56	14214	Huntsman, Sandy	21	105	54	180
57	13815	McReynolds, Alan	82	74	24	180
58	11510	Ingram, Tom	42	58	81	181
59	14277	Sereno, George	80	35	66	181
60	12081	Grother, Philip	65	10	106	181
61	13906	Gallagher, Frank	58	106	20	184
62	7126	Werley, John	13	68	105	186
63	12754	Peters, David	106	48	35	189
64	14275	Hughes, John	60	46	84	190
65	14038	Vickers, Tom	57	77	56	190
66	13873	Held, Rob	61	23	106	190
67	10767	Buchanan, Ron	32	54	106	192
68	13886	Peter, Georges	105	28	64	197
69	14031	Shaw, Bob	88	53	58	199
70	14200	McBride, Tony	16	78	105	199

71	13727	Collins, Bill	87	65	48	200	45	11456	Johnson, Don	31	49	68	148
72	13862	Larson, Eric R.	52	44	106	202	46	14266	Finn, James	64	27	59	150
73	14185	Atkinson, Landy	68	61	73	202	47	11308	Taverni, Edward	78	59	18	155
74	14174	Sprague, David	45	56	105	206	48	13939	Cummiskey, Joseph J.	57	69	29	155
75	13640	Decker, David	67	106	36	209	49	11278	Lekson, Lud	52	43	63	158
76	11134	McCloskey, Joseph J.	71	105	38	214	50	13710	Hoffman, Robert	61	40	60	161
77	13747	Ryan, Peter	74	60	85	219	51	13714	Leonardo, Dick	36	60	66	162
78	13369	Bull, David	81	59	80	220	52	11768	Borland, J. Jeffrey	26	34	104	164
79	11289	MacDonald, Keith	73	105	43	221	53	13890	Buckley, Greg	4	104	56	164
80	13078	Grohne, Roger L.	78	106	39	223	54	14094	Stone, Irwin	69	48	49	166
81	8182	Hurban, Gary	79	62	83	224	55	13792	Hagan, Thomas	43	50	76	169
82	14033	Rumph, Tim	54	66	105	225	56	12690	Kuhns, Christopher	63	58	50	171
83	14263	Allen, Thomas, Jr.	105	105	18	228	57	13856	Pelosi, John	73	104	—	177
84	13306	Coxe, Simcon	75	105	51	231	58	13782	Morrow, Robert T.	48	53	77	178
85	11219	Hendry, Malcolm	84	79	71	234	59	13933	Sinn, Chip	44	30	104	178
86	13979	Varley, Tom, Jr.	105	105	27	237	60	13621	Buziak, Lt. John	83	46	53	182
87	14244	Doran, J. Thomas	105	105	30	240	61	12031	Hueber, Jigger	75	47	61	183
88	14420	Seaman, Bill	37	105	105	247	62	13652	Finn, Bob	72	71	44	187
89	13251	Klug, Ric	77	67	105	249	63	14104	Tibbs, Jack	34	51	104	189
90	11133	Jungjohann, P. Thomas	71	73	105	249	64	13738	Wilkins, Robert M.	76	66	57	199
91	13169	White, David	105	71	76	252	65	10705	Rudd, John B.	89	67	45	201
92	14270	Currie, Crit	76	76	105	257	66	12400	Smith, Andy	85	53	64	202
93	14195	Beisel, Amy	93	81	86	260	67	11517	Vernooy, Stewart	90	104	15	209
94	14018	Laitinen, Pentti	105	79	77	261	68	10096	Atkins, Chad	41	104	65	210
95	14001	Swanson, John	51	106	106	263	69	13934	Miller, Jesse W.	51	56	104	211
96	14240	Mathers, Bob	105	106	60	271	70	12800	Barnes, John	80	68	67	215
97	13697	Koretz, Daniel	90	75	106	271	71	13881	Palmer, Frank	76	77	63	216
98	13080	McIntosh, John	105	105	63	273	72	14020	Jestel, Herb	62	104	51	217
99	14001	Fien, Daniel	62	106	106	274	73	12480	Batty, H. Andrew	70	104	46	220
100	13081	Doherty, Richard	105	105	72	282	74	14291	Walker, Judith	68	52	104	224
101	9382	Connell, Paul	91	106	105	302	75	12354	Roualet, Bill	88	57	79	224
102	14063	Grueber, Perry	94	105	105	304	76	12895	Howald, Paul	47	104	73	224
103	14285	Ruhlman, Rob	105	105	105	315	77	13900	Murphy, Larry	67	55	104	226
104	10024	Werley, David	105	105	105	315	78	12832	Hall, Thomas J.	84	73	74	231
105	13859	Brush, Don	105	105	105	315	79	13236	Hart, Terry	86	70	81	237

Special Awards —

Jean Hallagan — Best Finish Woman Skipper

John McIntosh of Rochester, New York, Oldest Skipper — 86 Years

Red Fleet Registrants & Final Standings

Pos.	Sail #	Skipper	Races			Tot. Pts.
			1	2	3	
1	12004	Barter, Donald	6	5	12	23
2	13719	Young, Bill	7	16	3	26
3	14048	Kelly, Frank L. Jr.	2	2	27	31
4	14233	Disette, Joe	8	7	19	34
5	13940	Dickerson, Heidi	10	1	23	34
6	11177	Sulman, P.E.	18	8	8	34
7	13709	Lamb, Bob	3	9	26	38
8	11174	Aitchison, John	1	14	24	39
9	12938	Vitullo, Robert	30	13	10	53
10	13944	Schmiege, Cal	27	6	21	54
11	14101	McCoy, James	9	12	36	57
12	13948	Dadd, Mark	12	15	32	59
13	12727	Crew, Allen	35	3	22	60
14	13139	Morton, Alfred	46	17	—	63
15	10679	Tuttle, Leslie	14	17	35	66
16	10356	Fretz, David	28	35	4	67
17	13082	Jamison, Tammi	29	19	20	68
18	13957	Cotton, Robert	16	18	34	68
19	13876	Faus, John	11	24	33	68
20	13489	Lassaux, Joseph	24	44	5	73
21	13609	Wood, Dave	14	22	39	75
22	12271	Scher, Bob	32	39	5	76
23	14187	Wagnon, Brad	49	4	28	81
24	13267	Evans, William	33	52	—	85
25	12509	Pringle, Russ	18	63	7	88
26	12802	Ward, Tom	40	37	11	88
27	11694	Marty, Frederick	25	21	43	89
28	14125	Suter, Karl E.	22	42	37	101
29	13605	Compson, Gordy	66	31	6	103
30	10643	Elam, Tim	38	29	40	107
31	13386	Corr, Patrick	59	45	9	113
32	13730	Korn, Salo	42	32	42	116
33	11674	Lee, Vaughan	21	41	55	117
34	13628	Grinder, Mark	104	11	2	117
35	13353	Bezner, Jerry	19	36	69	124
36	11164	Hafford, Robert K.	81	20	25	126
37	14042	Williams, Michael	52	28	47	127
38	12365	Ogle, John M.	56	26	48	130
39	12355	Lent, Peter	39	23	75	137
40	11393	Stagg, David	13	65	62	140
41	11125	Irish, Lloyd	23	104	14	141
42	12731	Schofield, Jim	53	54	38	145
43	13330	Carnes, John	54	55	38	147
44	9778	Wing, Geoff	46	72	30	148

Special Award to Heidi Dickerson — Best Finish Woman Skipper

Green Fleet Registrants & Final Standings

Pos.	Sail #	Skipper	Races			Tot. Pts.
			1	2	3	
1	11951	Paullin, Peter	2	3	1	6
2	736	Thayer, Craig	3	1	3	7
3	7949	DeGolyer, Scott	1	2	5	8
4	4189	Thompson, Kenneth	6	5	2	13
5	13977	Gilbert, James B.	4	4	6	14
6	8033	Lansky, David	7	6	7	20
7	9102	Morley, Peter B., Jr.	5	9	9	23
8	11154	Haas, Frank	11	7	8	26
9	8783	Newman, Frank	8	22	4	34
10	359	Chisholm, Peter	13	8	14	35
11	5197	Hale, Clay	15	10	12	37
12	392	Gorski, Dan	18	11	13	42
13	13156	White, Stanford	10	22	11	43
14	6804	Yates, Michael	14	22	10	46
15	658	Bundy, Donald	16	22	15	53
16	12313	Eckler, David	9	22	22	53
17	12363	Priebe, Paul Jr.	12	22	22	56
18	13679	FitzGibbons, John	17	22	22	61
19	9386	Morton, Russell	22	22	22	66
20	1	Ryan, John	22	22	22	66
21	13372	Horner, Stuart, J., Jr.	22	22	22	66

Special Award —

Craig Thayer, Syracuse, New York Highest Finish for a Skaneateles Built Boat.



WORKING UP THE FIRST BEAT



GETTING THAT SPINNAKER READY — UP TO WEATHER!

Photos: J. H. Peterson



APPROACHING THE WEATHER MARK



HOIST WHEN READY

Photos: J. H. Peterson



CLOSE QUARTERS GETTING THROUGH THE GYBE



THE FLEET STARTS TO SPREAD OUT

Photos: J. H. Peterson

A CANADIAN 50TH ANNIVERSARY REGATTA

by Timothy Harris
Pointe Claire Yacht Club

The lure of sailing at Skaneateles amid a huge fleet of Lightnings caused quite a stir at Fleet 499 Headquarters in Pointe Claire, Quebec. Our current Fleet Champion and President, Tony McBride squeezed crew, wife, box of tricks in to the station wagon and with Lightning 14200 in tow went off to Skaneateles on Friday, 1 July for a 4½ hour drive down there.

On that same Friday evening back in Pointe Claire, a few of us in 13519 were knocking back a few refreshing ales when the concept was aired that "Wouldn't it be fun to go too". Of course, we still had to derig, load-up and go, plus we had to pay an entry fee, find accommodations and excuse ourselves from wife, family and loved ones and race into the horizon.

Like good sailors everywhere, we jettisoned all the extras (including the Lightning), took only the bare essentials and made plans for an early morning get-a-way to boot. The next morning we arrived in Skaneateles as three bright-eyed Lightning sailors without boat, without entry forms and without accommodations, but with a full case of beer and a manic desire to get on the water and "Be in it."

Our first view of the lake at 8:30 AM was from the town dock. Already 20 or so boats were sailing and we were ready to blaze into the country club and go. The big sign saying, "Welcome to the Lightning 50th" just spurred us on and we went only to be stopped by a rather big man in a blue suit with a gun in a holster who stood at a gate and said, "You can't drive in there". "Why not", we asked? "Well, you're not registered", he said. "So where do we park", we said. "Over there a mile away", he answered. "OK", we said, "We'll go", and we did. We walked in the traffic until another man in a blue uniform with a gun in a holster said, "Hey, you can't go there. You haven't got an orange spot on your windshield". "Orange spot, what's that", we asked? "You automatically get an orange spot when you register", he said.

Gloom set in. No registration, no orange spot, no spot, no park, no sail, Awhoo! Brainstorm! How about we take the ferry and watch the races". Consensus OK. We drive like buggery to catch the ferry. We park on a meter and plug it with Canadian quarters. A spring to the dock but too late. All gone. Now it is 9:30 and we're out of luck.

Time for a quick intense thought. We review what we know. Gun in holster won't let us park or let us into the country club. But who is to say we can't smile and ask for "late registration" consideration? We whip back to the C.C. This time gun in holster says "Late registration? Gee, I don't know, but maybe you better try the C.C. Go on in". "Thanks", we chorus and like a terrier down a fox-hole, we're four wheel drifting around the putting greens and fairways up the road to the C.C.

"Uh, we're late registrants", we insist. "We want to sign up and sail". "No problem", says a bloke in a red jacket. "Park in the lot and go in the office, sign-up and pay-up, get your kit and then park the car over in the lot a mile away. But, you



had better hurry, it's getting late". "Thanks mate", we say and do just that.

An angel called Daddie Kelly listened to our pitch, got the drift of the story and immediately got us squared away with free orange spots, T-shirts, posters and an information package. The foredeck crew parked the car while the middleman and skipper walked through the rapidly emptying car lot and sought a ride. No luck!

We watched as Lightning 1 went in the water and sailed south. We feared that would be it for sailing. We were just out of luck.

Brainwave! We rush up to Mrs. Kelly and ask if there's any other late arrivals who might be short of crew. "No", she says, "but I heard Tom Allen Sr. is looking for a crew. We arrive back at the docks just in time to see Tom away with a full crew. No luck there. Back up to the office we ran, polling every sailor we say, "Hey, you need a crew", we bleated. "No, No, and more No's".

Now here come the foredeck crew back from the parking lot, complete with zinc nose, life jacket, gloves, gear and a big grin. "Hey, who are we sailing with", he asks? "Well mate", we apologize, "there is no sailing for us, but we can watch for free from here". No sailing on a perfect upstate New York day with wind sunshine and a freshly zinced nose", he grimaced. "Gee, what a waste of time". ...grumble ...moan...etc.

"Hey look, a car with a Lightning in tow is coming up the drive. Let's go". And go we did. "You need a crew", we asked? "Too right I do", said skipper Georges Peter from Barrington, RI. "Give me a hand and we'll rig quick fast and I'll take one of you". Now, as everyone who knows the Lightning well knows, six people take three times as long to rig a Lightning than two people who know where everything is and where it goes, but we got it rigged right away.

Emissaries were sent to the chief tractor driver who got us in the water in record time. Straws were drawn and one of us luckily got on the water and sailed two races on Saturday. Results don't matter. It was great to look back on the reaches and see two hundred-odd boats skipping down Skaneateles Lake even though the skipper had to yell "trim" often. It was a magnificent day.

Somebody won the races, but everybody had fun. It was a treat just to be there; to be part of a historic event and to visit

the birthplace of the Lightning. It would have been even more magnificent had we sailed our own boat and all of us got to sail, but as it turned out, one of us had a truly remarkable day and two of us got to be in the sun and drink ale and watch probably the biggest one-design fleet racing in North America this year.

The "on the water" activities were well managed including the lunch distribution and race management. The blokes with guns in holsters were a bit much for us timid Canadians, but the warm reception we got inside the country club outweighed all that happened outside.

If you missed it, you missed something very special and unique. There may be other regattas that stand out in our minds for one reason or another, but right now, the 50th Anniversary Regatta at Skaneateles was the best. Don't miss the 75th and oh yes, don't forget the boat.

12,000 PLUS MILES FOR A 50th ANNIVERSARY CIRCUIT

by: Scott Finkboner
Mission Bay Yacht Club

1988! What a wonderful and fantastic year this was! It was a year of traveling across country not once but twice to attend the major Lightning Class Regattas. Was it for the love of the Class or the competition? Could it be the chance to meet Class people? To pick up a couple of new boats? To experience the 50th Anniversary Regatta? To promote the North Americans in San Diego? A rematch at billiards with Dick Hallagan? Or just plain fun? This was a year to experience all of this and more.

It all started with the Southern Circuit. This would be my first. I had heard so many great things about it I could hardly wait. Just imagine, three regattas on one trip! There were a few minor problems in that I had sold my Lightning in October and obviously needed a new boat. Dave Nickels came to the rescue to deliver a new boat to Savannah. I also needed a crew and Judy Walker arranged that.

After a 47 hour trip along the southern route including rainstorms in the southeast, I arrived Friday at the beautiful Savannah Yacht Club and spent the morning watching Bill Shore and his Olympic Gold Medal crew practicing. The boat arrived later that afternoon on schedule. Several of the experienced sailors advised me not to get too disappointed if I couldn't find my way through the tullies and I didn't. Anyway, the regatta was a lot of fun.

It was off to the next leg at St. Petersburg, FL and the Midwinter Championships. The drive there was broken up by the great hospitality and barbecue at Fisk Hayden's home outside Orlando. We didn't have any trouble finding his house as there were 15 cars with Lightnings parked on the street.

The 47 boat fleet at St. Pete's was highly competitive. The

beautiful St. Petersburg Yacht Club was once again, a proud traditional host. The winds blew and the winds didn't blow. The entire regatta experience was bone-chilling. No where else could you top the unbelievable cruise ship style awards banquet dinner.

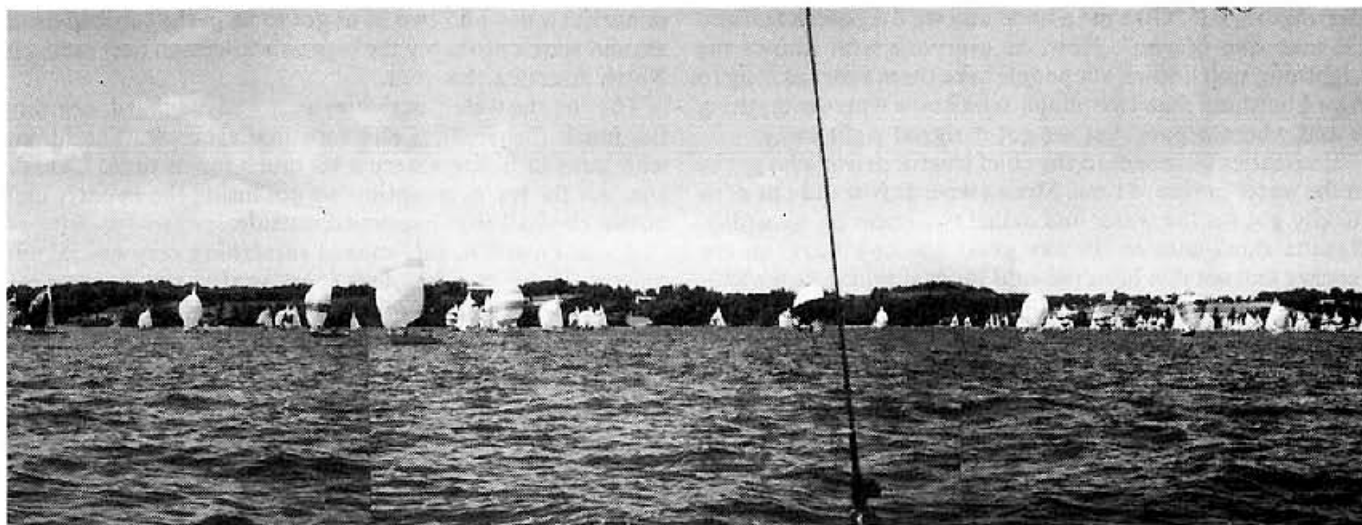
The Miami Championship was equally competitive. The parties, get-togethers and hosts were all fantastic. All the Lightning sailors crashed the SORC Party with plenty of food and music to start off the regatta. We sent those sailors off to Nassau in great style.

The whole Southern Circuit was exciting, fabulous and sensational fun. I would advise all Lightning sailors to experience this at least once if not every year.

I returned to Mission Bay Yacht Club Sunday morning in time to recuperate and begin to tune-up for the California Circuit in San Diego. The Circuit consisted of a five race series on South Bay, San Diego and out of the Coronado Yacht Club. There was a 18 mile race from Coronado Y.C. out to the ocean and back into Mission Bay Yacht Club, followed by a five race Ocean Series off Mission Beach, the site of the North Americans. The California Circuit lived up to its reputation again by sailing in a great variety of wind and wave conditions as well as an incomparable social calendar.

There was one more chance to promote the North American's in San Diego and that was at the 50th Anniversary Regatta at Skaneateles, New York. The excitement of this Regatta had been growing all year. I was in a high after winning the California Districts in June and expecting delivery of my second new boat from Nickels. After stopping at

50th ANNIVERSARY REGATTA



Before the start: Fleets are spread out across Skaneateles Lake -----



The Start: An appreciation of the largest One-Design Fleet Regatta.

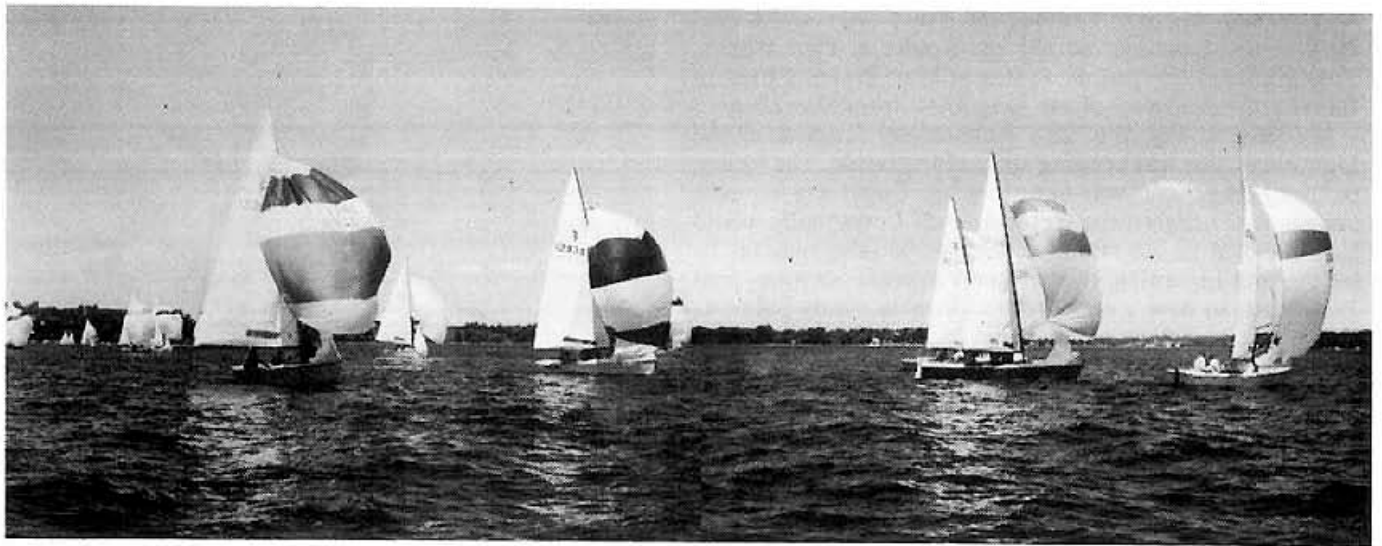


Photo Credit: Scott Finkboner



Photo Credit: Jim Staunton

Nickels Boat works in Fenton, MI, I met Colin and Karen Park at the Canadian border checkpoint at Port Huron. They graciously invited me to stay at Matt Bryant's home in Buffalo after learning of my long drive from San Diego.

Needless to say, the 50th Anniversary Regatta of the Lightning Class was exciting and unforgettable. The feeling of "just being there" was spine tingling. Could anyone have imagined 227 Lightnings would attend? I personally would have traveled 10,000 miles for this one two-day regatta. To see the first Lightning, the designers Stevens, so many past Presidents, to have a crew from Colombia, Rudy Salmang and his son, and so many truly dedicated fellow sailors sailing a boat which is truly the best of both worlds was in the least an overwhelming experience.

The culmination of the 50th Year of the Lightning was the North American Championships hosted by my own fleet at Mission Bay Yacht Club in San Diego. At least I didn't have to drive far for this one, but I suppose if it had been in the east I would have been off again. The weather was fantastic, the competition close and the social events enjoyed by all making the entire event one of the best.

The entire year's experience was truly unforgettable. So many great events and so many great people all dedicated to Corinthian sailing in the finest tradition in the greatest Class and One-Design boat in the World.

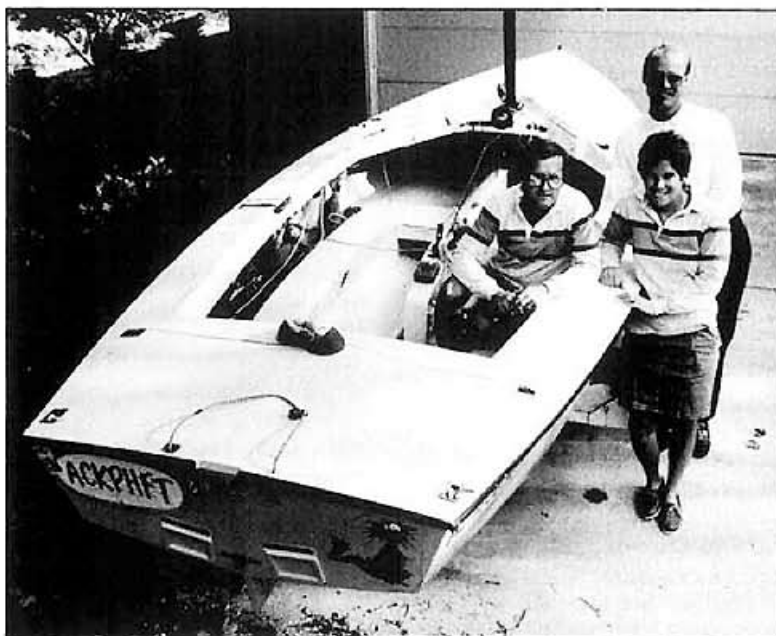


Scott in native attire at the 50th Anniversary Regatta.



Clouds come in over the Gold Fleet at the 50th Anniversary Regatta.

Congratulations to the New Champions:



Colin Park, Karen Park, Glenn Hallett and "Bill The Boat"

Winning sailboat races takes effort from every crew member. The team of Matt and Mark Bryant helped the team on "Bill The Boat" win this year's North American Championship. Bryant Machine Company equipment helped three of the top five finishers.

When Colin Park and his crew wanted an edge, they turned to Bryant Machine Company for the most innovative spars available.

Your equipment does make a difference!

Call Matt or Mark at (716) 894-8282 and see what they have up their sleeves for you.

Specify:

Bryant Machine Company, Inc.

63 Stanley Street
Buffalo, New York 14206
(716) 894-8282

Visa and MasterCard Accepted.