



## FAMILIES NOT ONLY SAIL, BUT RACE, AND COMPETE IN CHAMPIONSHIP REGATTAS IN LIGHTNINGS

By: Caroline Hoedemaker

With this year's North American Championships having so many families participating, it seemed an opportunity to get some information on how some of the best function via a survey. This survey was sent out to the NA participants with the option to forward it on to any others they thought would be interested in participating. Here are some of the results...

### Who do people think about as "Lightning Families"?

Allens/Smither/Crane, Fisher, Nickels, Rhuelman, MacDonald, Peck, Starck, Hayden, Healy, Huntsman, Brickell, Brush, "Carson", Fastigi, Hurban, Schneider, Barrett, Becks, Boucher, Bryant, Callahan, Cuccio, Diaz, Elman, Gardener, Hallagan, Hayes, Longarela, Lutz, Ruter, Schon, Singstacken, Swanson, Terhune, Taboada, Varis, Warren.

### How many family members sail a Lightning?

Of those families who reported more than 1 active lightning sailor, 70% had 2-3 members sailing Lightnings, 17% had 4-5 members, and 13% had over 5 members!!!!

### Who do you sail with the most in your family?

23% sailed with a "partner" (husband, wife, fiancée, girlfriend)  
18% sailed with "parent" (mom, dad, uncle)  
21% sailed with sibling  
28% sailed with "child" (son, daughter, niece, nephew)

### How many generations of your family sail Lightnings?

36% said only one generation, 41% said 2 generations, 23% said over 3 generations.

### What is the age of....

The ages of active lightning sailors ranged from 7 to 78 years of age. 50% of the youngest active sailors were reported from this small set of sailors as being younger than 14 years of age.

### Who is primarily responsible for....

The skipper still is the predominant figure in the boat (surprise) so in addition to deciding where to sail the boat, and being the most responsible for tactics, they yell the loudest, name the boat and bring food.

Everyone was equally important in port/starboard crossings and sail trim. The middle crew was responsible for boat speed comparisons, and both crew responsible for knowing where the marks are.

### Then there were many wonderful antidotal stories about how their family enjoyed sailing. Here are some....

- My daughter (age 16) skippering her first race in a lightning in the local memorial day regatta with junior sailors as crew beating me (and a number of other regular fleet members) 4 out of 5 races and leading the fleet to the windward mark more than once
- Watching my son-in-law fall overboard after I tied a granny knot in the hiking strap!
- Double handing an entire day with my mom who barely knows how to sail...it was quite the test of patience.
- I love the lightning class. I have sailed almost 20 years with the same skipper. He started out as a family friend and must be quite a guy with a

great family because we are still all friends. The class is all about family and good friends.

• 2003 Nyack Last Blast - Finally, after sailing together for about 3+ months, everything came together, we did really well, had a really good time and didn't do anything different from the other times we had sailed together.

• Least funny - when my son, sailing another boat, protested me and had me thrown out of a race. Favorite - crewing with one son while another skippered in Savannah.

Not very funny - When we had 3 skippers in the boat -- me and my 2 sons, after each had won the district junior championship and so knew a lot more than old Dad.

• Fleet 226's annual sandbar party. The whole family comes and has a fun day. Other fleets join us and the local Opti programs come too.

• Sailing with our 11-year old daughter, this summer at the N.A.s

• Sailing the 2003 World's in Miami with two boats from our family.

• We're going to top that at the Orange Bowl this year with three boats: one for my son, one for my daughter and my own.

• Spending the summer crewing for my daughter.

• Singing and acting out camp songs on the boat while waiting for the wind to come up before a start.

• During the summer of 2002 sailing with our family on Cass Lake (PYC fleet 54). Our youngest was 7 months old at the time. He was fussing while we were getting the boat ready. Once under sail, he slept like a rock in his car seat under the deck (life jacket on too of course).

• Winning our local regatta with my son and daughter after we had not sailed with each other for several years!

• One of the most meaningful events was racing for the first time with both my Mom and Sister at this year's NAs. Given that my Mom is over 60 and that we live in different parts of the U.S., opportunities to race small boats together as a family was a special time that we'll be able to look back at.

• Winning a local race with my 10 year old in front, and my 7 year old in the middle. I had never raced with just those two before.

• Kids sailing a Lightning home thru a lightning storm, hitting dock, jumping off, and then leaving the boat untied.

• My first time at a North American Championship was sailing the masters when I was 10 with my grandfather and my mother. This was my grandfather's last regatta; it was the end of one generation's Lightning experience and the beginning of another generation's experience.

• Year my son won the Jr. North American Championship and finished 4th in Sear National Championship. The fun, the traveling and meeting some great people.

• Junior events have always been fun. You see old friends who have sons or daughters racing.

• My family is not involved in the Lightning class but when I have kids I hope to create a second generation of sailors.





## A DIFFERENT KIND OF FAMILY: A JUNIOR PROGRAM'S MENTOR: JIM CARSON

By: Jody Lutz

Editors note:

*Jim Carson has dedicated much of his efforts to growing junior sailing, particularly in the CAD districts at Metedeconk Yacht Club. It could be said his extended family consists of many families whose children have been fortunate to participate in the junior sailing there. Many of these children grow to be well known sailors to all of us (Lutz, Taboada, Schon, Finatt, Ruiter, Buczkowski, Golenits, Allison,...). They are the group that initiated the dedication of the Junior North American Championship in his name.*

The idea was hatched while sailing the 2002 Southern Circuit: the three of us all grew up sailing at Metedeconk under Jim's tutelage Jay and Jody Lutz, and Wade Schon. Let's figure some way to recognize Jim Carson for all he has done for the ILCA and specifically in the area of junior sailing within the Class. We thought that an appropriate tribute would be to rename the Junior North American Championship in honor of Jim. Although, quite frankly the idea almost died right there at the finish of the last race of St. Pete that year when Jim beat us, but Jay convinced me to let it go and move on!!!

It can be argued that no one has done more for the Lightning Class than Jim Carson. All of us at Metedeconk River Yacht Club have seen it first hand. Since as far back as anyone can remember, Jim has continued to train and mentor Lightning sailors. Jim spends tireless hours donating his time, boats and energy to foster youth sailing within our Club with the Lightning Class being the beneficiary.

*It is well documented about the different Lightning sailors who have sailed with Jim and have gone on to be successful, even championship sailors in their own right. But to most of the Lightning Class outside of New Jersey, the story of how Jim has kept the area burning with well trained crews is not well known. For enough years to make even Jim blush, Jim, along with Dave Ruiter, has spent his Thursday evenings teaching the fine points of Lightning sailing to groups of junior sailors. These juniors now make the front and middle of many top Lightning teams.*

*On top of the countless regattas in which Jim has lent his Lightning, Jim's dedication to our class is nothing short of exemplary. As we look down the starting line, many, many of these sailors have been helped by Jim along the way. I for one am extremely grateful for Jim's tutelage, passion for our sport, and just plain friendship. Thanks Jim, and no, you don't get a free pass on port next weekend. Keith Taboada.*

Last year, I approached our Fleet (#34) with the idea of donating a new trophy in honor of Jim for the winner of the Jr. NAs. It came as no shock to me the overwhelming response that the project received. Each and every fleet or Yacht Club member agreed to the idea and pledged any support necessary to make it happen. Once the trophy was picked out the decision was made to include all the past winners names on the new trophy and present the trophy to the new winner this past year at the NAs in Connecticut. All the while the project remained a secret to Jim with



the hopes of surprising him at the trophy dedication and presentation.

*Being fortunate enough to be "chosen" by Jim to crew onboard his Lightning has opened up doors for me that would never have happened otherwise. By traveling with Jim to other US states and other countries to race has rounded out my rough NE edges and made me a much better person because of it. Of course Jim's sailing ability also rubbed off which allowed me to continue on my winning ways. Jay Lutz.*

The ironic and fitting ending came at this year Jr. NAs when one of our own fleet 34 members and one of Jim Carson's "chosen", Wade Schon, won the regatta. At the trophy banquet for the North Americans, we were able to dedicate the trophy to Jim, and ask him to present it to the first year winner! It was quite a memorable night for all of the Yacht Club members present for the presentation.

The final class move, by a class organization, was the retiring of the current Jr. NA Trophy by the International Lightning Class. The ILCA retired the trophy to the Metedeconk River Yacht Club on behalf of Jim Carson for his "dedication and support of junior sailing".

*Jim's contributions to the Class have been well documented and the dedication of the Junior North American Championship in his honor will leave his marks on the Class for years to come. For those of us who grew under Jim's tutelage, his grass roots efforts to make us better sailors will be the lasting memories. Whether its a 14 year old kid learning to jibe a pole or the national sailor trading notes as a peer (who was once that 14 year old kid he trained), Jim's time and dedication has been instrumental in creating better sailors, club and class members. Jim's sort of like the "Obiwan Kenobi" of the Metedeconk generation (not that he leaves a boat long enough to have a clue who Obiwan is). My overriding vision of Jim is sailing in race (whether there be 50, 15 and 2 boats) trying to extend his sailing ability as well as helping the other 49, 14 or 1 set of sailors do the same. It is a vision which has been around these parts for some 50 years, and will be repeated in 2004 and years after.*

**Richard Thomas Jr.,**

Thanks Jim, from you past, present and future Lightning sailors. We appreciate all you have done for us, the Yacht Club and the Lightning Class!





## THE "HUNTSMANS" SWEEP THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICTS!



The highlight of Mary Huntsman's year in 2003 was her family's sailing in the Metropolitan District Regatta (Mets).

Her son was first: Jack Huntsman  
Her husband second: Sandy Huntsman  
Her grandson third: Rob Ruffus

The Huntsmans are truly an example of a sailing family. Sandy and Mary started sailing Lightnings together in 1959 first with Reed Dickison, and then Mary urged them to purchase their first boat in 1961. Both of their children, Jack and Karen, raced Lightnings as they grew up. Karen chose to crew for the most part, sailing with Bob Seidelman consistently, and Jack was one of the lucky ones and got a lightning at 14. Jack and Karen are both still very involved: Jack can be seen out on the racing circuit and Karen still sails intermittently, and both Jack and Karen's children are very active at the home club.

This brings us back to the event at hand. The Navasink River was the site of the Mets in 2003. Any body of water can be tricky, but rivers and this one in particular are tricky. The weekend conditions were 6-14 variable wind (give and take a bit of current), and from past sailing experience I can vouch that sometimes it's from the bridge, sometimes the hospital towers, and sometimes, who knows.

Jack sailed like the master he can be. Sweeping the whole regatta, and apparently clearly out ahead in most of the races. He must know something about that river, or has paid his due to

the river.

Dad gave the perception of being the perfect dad and host; pushing his son periodically (two 2s), but never beating him, and letting other boats in there to make the game more interesting, but still ended up on top, number 2 with 19 points.

But Rob was the real challenger in the regatta. He started out with his two worst races (7, 9) and continued to improve as the weekend continued and ended up with a 3 in the last race. He started out the second day tied for 7th out of 16 boats (very nice performance, but closer to the middle than the top). So at the end of the day, adding up the scores provided a great surprise to find he had a score of 31 points, just beating out 3 other boats and in 3rd place just behind granddad.

There were many that took credit for his great regatta.  
-was it Bill Clausen's borrowed boat and racing Lightnings that summer.  
-was it his mom's sailing with him earlier in the summer ("wow-she can sail").  
-was it his being a sailing instructor that summer.  
-did dad pay extra homage to the powers of the Navasink river?  
-or.... was it just..... great genes?

I'm sure Mary credited his own skills to his success, just as she always encourages individuals everywhere.



## SAILING WITH WAGNER....

By: his dad (Torsten Bohlesen)

Competitive sailing has always been strong in our family. It was my father's sport and hobby when he was a student in Copenhagen, Denmark. He then brought this to Brazil where he, my Mom and my two elder brothers settled as immigrants after WW2.

All four brothers (two above, myself, and another younger brother) all sailed as children. Our first boat was an old Penguin (3868 with cotton sail). They did not have Optimists in 1959. The Penguin experience was very important for us. It introduced us to regattas and taught us the very important aspect of racing: "you just can't win them all!" We would have even just liked it better if we had placed other than last that first year. We learned the basics of sailing, and the strategies of racing rules attempting to finish a series other than last.



After the Penguin, we moved on to other classes like Finns, Snipes, Lasers, and Lightnings. Our first lightning, 8570 was a woody in which we twice became the São Paulo state champions (in 65 and 66). Currently we sail in our, much improved, beloved Lightning 14845.

It is always a pleasure to sail with a knowledgeable crew member, who can tell you where the wind is coming from, but for me it is most enjoyable when that member is my son Wagner (28). We enjoy sailing anytime, but at time she forgets 3 very simple sailing principles:

1. The skipper is always right;
2. Skipper might, in rare occasions be confused due to misleading information from the crew;
3. If (2) shows to be true, then provision (1) will

immediately apply.

When we do have different opinions, we don't let them continue on land. It is important that whatever happens in the boat, it is forgotten as we later on talk about the race in the bar, lying.... like everyone else. All hard feelings are left on the water, not taken home, and next day we're ready to get back on the race course.

This friendship/team building was not automatic, and was carefully constructed over the years. The single most important factor for us was being together sharing the joy of doing something we both loved, without the barrier of the father/son relationship. Even when I'm driving the boat, I ask him to help me with trimming the mainsail, the tactics and his opinion on how to improve the boat speed, etc.

There is of course that one unanswered question which is always in the air; who of us is the better skipper. I personally think this is ridiculous to argue about... because everybody knows that I can beat him 9 out of 10! After all I taught him, for heavens sake!! I am sure that there a lot of dads around the world that would agree with me on that.

Building such a relationship is about respect for each others ideas and opinions and most of all understanding that these are very special moments in our lives. The time we spend doing our sport is a very small percentage of the time we live, so if we cannot have the quantity of hours, then we must do our best to preserve the quality. It is interesting to realize that the good days, the friends we made, the parties are things we remember much more frequently than the bad days (were there really any?), the storms, the broken masts...

I have always told my friends that sailing is more than a sport; it is a simulation of the difficult situations we face in our real lives but in a controlled environment. All the elements are there; competition, respect for others, respect for safety and the need for dedication, concentration, and compliance with standards and rules.

As we prepare ourselves for our future, I am sure that Wagner, just as much as myself, will benefit from the wonderful magic moments we spent sailing together.







## THE SOLA FAMILY

By: The third Paco



*Dad, my brother Ricardo and I.  
(A long time ago).*

I don't really know how the Lightning was introduced to my family, but the first one in ours was a woody, 8513, the "Farouk". It belonged to the first Paco, my granddad, and it was mostly sailed in the Guayas River, on Guayaquil's riverfront. It was well kept by a loving owner and even though I never saw him actually sail it, he used to tell me stories of many races. After he passed away it was given to a good friend who restored it and even let me sail it a few times.

I knew quite a few boats owned by the second Paco, my dad. The Samuel, an Allen series 11365 that still sails in Salinas, is one of the fastest he says he's ever had. Mom says he wanted to name me Samuel and she wouldn't let him, so he named the boat Samuel. I also remember well 12703, the one he bought right before the 1975 Worlds. It was also named Samuel. He sold it in 1977 in Chile after a short but successful career. Then came 12693, a sister boat to Samuel, but in red. This is the first boat I remember having sailed with dad. He keeps saying that it was a slow boat, but it was the first Lightning I fell in love with. I put so many blocks, line, cleats and wholes in it that I wonder if that wasn't the reason why it was so slow! I remember fondly how my brother Ricardo and I took turns at crewing for him. We did the deck, but actually it was Johnny Meira who did most of the work; we could barely hoist the spinnaker. Later on, the three of us started sailing together. We did well in light air, always my dad's specialty too, as he loved the conditions and he was both patient and fast. But the one regatta fixed in my head from that period was when we won the District Championships in maybe 1983, in what I remember as a very windy last race, in which we stood little chance except because all those who were ahead of us over stood the finish line by a mile!.

12693 "Zorro Loco" - Crazy Fox was the first boat I got. Dad gave it to me after we sailed a very poor series in the "Juegos Bolivarianos" in 1985. And that was really the start of my love affair with the Lightning Class. I started skippering in it, with the help of Johnny Meira. He sailed with me for a few years and he taught me all the basics and some tricks too. My dad had by then fixed another boat that was kind of heavy but still he managed to win many races, especially in light winds. He keeps telling me that I get too distracted while steering and maybe that is because when I started sailing I always kept watching him sail in admiration.

Now that I have kids I understand that it is not that easy to teach them, and that emotions always get in the way, especially when you die for them to learn and love your sport. Maybe dad made a wise call after all stepping off the boat and letting me steer and learn on my own, while enjoying watching me sail from a safe distance. Knowing our characters, that decision might very well be the reason why I ended up loving the sport so much, something I will thank him forever.

My four years in college kept me pretty much out of touch with the class, even though Cazenovia fleet was 30 minutes away from the Syracuse University campus. But really, I wasn't in the mood for sailing. I did sail some in 420s, and that was really fun, until I capsized in the Hudson River in a 20-knot breeze and they had to haul me out and melt me down in front of a fireplace. That was the end of frostbiting for me.

During those years my dad and my brother kept sailing and, together with Johnny Meira they won the 1987 South Americans in Salinas in dad's brand new 14150, "Plastic Fantastic". It was one of the new Nickels boats that revolutionized the class. It was dad's second South American championship, the first being in Peru in 1979, which he won in a chartered boat that had soldered shrouds!.

*Sailing "El Presidente", Sandy & Mary's boat at the Miami: Worlds, 2003.*





*My first championship, with Andres Mariscal (+) and Mauricio Marin.*

When I came back from school, I "met" 14150, and somehow convinced my dad, that she should be mine. We sold 12693, and bought dad another new boat, 14541, later also known as "Zorro Loco". The boats were identical down to the color. We enjoyed sailing against each other for a few years. Boy was he fast in 14541, in fact he almost won the 1990 South Americans sailing the most spectacular comeback I believe I have ever seen in a race. It was my first South Americans skippering but I watched the action from a bit further back.

After that regatta dad slowly started to retire, sailing less and less each year. For one, he got tired of showing up for regattas when very few others did though in my heart I will always believe he actually got bored of winning races.

Around that time he gave me 14541, the newest of the "twins" arguing that it just wasn't fast enough for him and he'd rather keep 14150. I have to agree with him that I never truly found consistent speed in that boat, but I also have to concede that I am not half as fast or as good as he's ever been. Will I ever be? I'm too nervous and I got too preoccupied with little things inside the boat that I often lose the big picture. I also am not as good with strategy and light winds actually give me headaches. I haven't won that many races, let alone regattas, but I keep trying and will keep trying until I pass the torch to the next generation, the fourth Paco and the first Eduardo, my two boys.

I now sail 15080 "For Sale". Dave Nickels built it for me with all the bells and whistles and it is so beautiful it aches. I had the rare pleasure of having it delivered in Savannah for the 2001 Southern Circuit and sailed it later that year in Vermont, at the North Americans. My sails read 15150 though. Call it a lucky

charm or just a romantic idea of having a boat that is 1,000 older than dad's boat. I intend to sell "For Sale" and build 15150 soon. In the meantime, at the 2003 South Americans I had one of my best performances when I tied Miguel Plaza Jr. for third. He beat me in the tiebreak. The irony is that he was sailing 14541, my supposedly-slow Zorro Loco"!!...

They say that some skills skip a generation. I would love to have a chance to win a South Americans with my dad and brother. But if I'm the one generation that was skipped, my wish is to be on board with my two kids when we win the South Americans...

Better make that the Worlds, And why not the next Worlds in Salinas!



*15150 sailing at the 2001 NAs in Vermont, with no tiller extension!*





## MY DAD'S FASTER THAN YOUR DAD

By: Geg Fisher

When my brother Matt was forced to pull out of the 2003 Lightning Worlds in Miami due to work commitments, the final American spot went to my 76-year-old father George. I'd already planned on sailing the regatta with my brother, so I had the time and it was easy to convince my brother's ace foredeck crew, Rick Bernstein, to come along.

My dad, however, was another story. He wasn't looking forward to another long drive from Ohio to Florida—he'd already committed to the Lightning Midwinters—and he had a busy schedule with his law practice. The clincher came from his co-workers, who said he wouldn't be allowed into the office that week even if he didn't race.

My dad proved long ago he could put a boat through the water with the best, and a third at the Midwinters confirmed he hadn't lost his touch. We were confident in our heavy-air capabilities because my dad's in better shape than either Rick or me.

After two days and three top 10 finishes, we were second and our confidence was growing. Everyone struggled on Day 3 in fluky conditions, and we were no exception, finishing 18th in the second of two races. So we were surprised to find ourselves at the top of the standings. We knew our lead wouldn't hold when the throwout came into play, but it was quite a high to be on top.

A sea breeze was predicted for Day 4, so we thought the right would be favored. In the first race, after another fine start, we quickly went right. I felt we should risk one more step out to the hard right, but once we did, the breeze went left 20 degrees. We limped to a discouraging 17th and followed up with

an OCS. True to my dad's style, he never said a word about my call to hit the corner.

We finished fifth in the final race and sixth overall. Normally we would've been disappointed with our drop in the standings, but it was such a special regatta it was hard to be too upset. During the course of the event people often noted how cool it was we were racing, "since you never know how many more regattas you'll be able to sail together." We just nodded and smiled; we've already planned the next one.

—Greg Fisher.



*George Fisher in top shape.*





## LA CLASE LIGHTNING, MI COMPLEMENTO DE VIDA

By: Juan Santos Garcés



Cuando me pidieron que escribiera un artículo sobre lo que significaba la Clase Lightning en mi vida, me pareció algo sencillo de hacer, pero una vez que me senté frente al computador en realidad no sabía por donde empezar, por que la clase lightning forma parte de mi vida desde hace más de 30 años; en los que, como todo en la vida ha ido pasando por diferentes etapas, todas con un gran denominador común, la familia y los amigos.

Desde muy chico, siempre mantuve una muy estrecha relación con mi padre, a los dos nos gustaba hacer actividades juntos al aire libre, un buen día me comentó que había comprado un velero Sunfish de una importación que había hecho el Salinas Yacht Club y que lo acompañara para armarlo y que tratara de aprender. Mi contemporáneo y buen amigo Arturo Iruaralde (14 años) me enseñó las primeras lecciones, ya que había aprendido siendo tripulante de Lightning, velero que en mi país por aquellas épocas, navegaban los grandes gurús del velerismo nacional.

Mi padre aunque no sabía navegar, siempre estuvo muy cerca de mí y de la gran cantidad de nuevos amigos que como yo, se iniciaron en el mundo de la vela competitiva. Aún no cumplía 16 años y ni 2 años de haber empezado a hacer pininos en el mundo de la vela y moría de ganas de capitanear un Lightning, convencí a papá de que si compraba uno podríamos navegar juntos y yo le enseñaría. No pasaron 2 semanas y ya tenía Lightning; así que, embarqué a mi padre y a mi amigo de fechorías por aquella época Jimmy Pazmiño conocido ahora en el mundo de la vela como "El Abogadito".

Esta fue una etapa muy especial, llena de entusiasmo y retos, había que superarse mucho, ya estábamos compitiendo en las grandes ligas aunque aun estábamos en los últimos lugares. Por la tenacidad de mi padre y apoyado con el entusiasmo de Jimmy, nunca faltábamos a las regatas y hasta entrenábamos solos, logrando en poco tiempo ser una tripulación competitiva. Lo interesante de esta época es la relación de "amigos" que desarrollé con papá; y no solo yo, sino también Jimmy y mis demás amigos que lo apodaban "Don Logorio" o "El Decano". En tan solo un año de haber navegado juntos y a solo tres desde las clases de Arturo, logramos clasificar como el tercer barco que representaría al Ecuador en el Sudamericano y Mundial de Lightning que se realizó en Salinas el año 1975; en ese Sudamericano empatamos en el 5to. lugar con Don Rafael Obregón, gran caballero y navegante, figura legendaria de la clase Lightning que tenía a su haber una trayectoria llena de triunfos y reconocimientos.

La magia del equipo no duró mucho tiempo, ya que con el temperamento de un muchacho de 17 años y habiendo desarrollado una relación de "amigos" con mi querido viejo, un día él decidió que ya mi abuelita había recibido demasiados insultos por sus insignificantes errores de maniobra y se me desembarcó, marcando el fin de una primera etapa.

Luego del año 75, lo más importante era viajar a la aventura de navegar, acompañado de amigos, conociendo lugares nuevos, amigos y "amigas" nuevas, sintiéndonos libres e

independientes, dueños del mundo. Fueron años dorados donde había una cita internacional anual por lo menos, donde nos encontrábamos con nuestros amigos, para competir y conversar sobre las regatas y la vida, saboreando una cerveza e invocando a alguna musa divina.

Desgraciadamente sobre esta época no se puede escribir todo, por que seguramente no publicarían el artículo y es mejor no precisar años ni nombres de mis tripulantes por que puede ser muy comprometedor; por lo que, voy a pasar de los 19 años que tenía en esa época a los 36 en que comencé a navegar con mis hijos.

Actualmente tengo 4 hijos: Juan Rafael (21) es capitán de su propio Lightning desde que cumplió 15 años, es igual o más temperamental que su padre (ni bobo, le compré uno para salvaguardar la honra de mi madre) y lo hace bastante bien; Juan Andrés (16) es mi tripulante de proa con el que vengo compitiendo desde sus 11 años en todos los eventos Internacionales y Nacionales a los que he asistido en los últimos 5 años; Alejandro (10) y Leonardo (9) por ahora navegan Optimist y éste año espero competir en un campeonato con ellos como tripulantes. Ahora, para mí no hay recompensa mayor que el ver navegar a todos mis hijos y darles la oportunidad que tuve yo de conocer lugares y gente increíble.

En mi vida deportiva gané en Lightning 3 Campeonatos Sudamericanos, y algunos Vicecampeonatos, gané regatas de Campeonatos Mundiales y Norteamericanos, he tenido el honor de representar al Ecuador en muchos campeonatos oficiales como Juegos Panamericanos, Sudamericanos y Bolivarianos, donde he podido ganar medallas, entregando una modesta cuota a mi país con mis logros deportivos.

En resumen, la clase Lightning, me permitió mantener una hermosa y estrecha relación con mi padre en mi adolescencia, intensas e inolvidables vivencias con mis amigos en mi juventud y madurez, las que afianzaron nuestra amistad a través de los años, y hoy una vida llena de satisfacciones al poder hacer lo que me gusta en compañía de mi esposa, mis hijos y mis amigos.







## THE LIGHTNING CLASS, MY LIFE COMPLEMENT

By: Juan Santos Garcés



When they asked me to write this article about what the Lightning class has meant to me in my life it seemed as something easy to do, but once I sat down in front of the screen I didn't know where to start, because the Lightning has been part of my life for more than 30 years during which, like everything in life, I have gone through different stages, all having one common denominator: family and friends.

Since I was very young I always held a very tight relationship with my dad, both of us enjoyed doing outdoors activities. One day he told me he had bought a Sunfish from one of the first imports that the Salinas Yacht Club did. He said to come to help him rig it and maybe learn how to use it. My good friend Arturo Iturralde (14 years old) taught me the first lessons, since he had learned from crewing in a Lightning, a sailboat that was sailed by the great gurus of the sport around that time.

My dad, even though he didn't know how to sail, was always very close to me and all my new friends who, like me, were being started in the world of competitive sailing. I wasn't even 16, I had barely two years in the sport and I was dying to sail in a Lightning, so I convinced dad to buy us one so we could sail together and I would teach him. Not two weeks had gone by and we were already the proud owners of a Lightning, so we started sailing with my dad and Jimmy Pazmiño, better known now in the sailing world as the "Little Lawyer".

This was a special time, full of enthusiasm and challenges, we had to improve a lot and we were already competing in the big leagues, but finishing in the last places. Driven by my dad's tenacity and Jimmy's enthusiasm we would never miss a race and we'd even train by ourselves, making us a competitive crew in short time. The most interesting thing from that period was the friendship that we developed with my dad, and it wasn't only me, Jimmy and all our other friends were also very tight with him and even called him different names, like "The Dean". After only one year of having sailed together and only three since Arturo's first lessons, we managed to qualify in third for the South Americans and Worlds to be held in Salinas in 1975; in that South Americans we tied for 5th with Mr. Rafael Obregon, a gentleman and sportsman and a legend in the Lightning Class with a long resume of victories.

The magic of the team didn't last too long. Because of my attitude of a 17 year old and the friendship that we had developed with my dad, he decided that my grandmother had taken enough insults already and stepped off the boat, marking the end of that period.

After 1975 the most important for us was travelling to the adventure of sailing new places, always in the company of good

friends and girlfriends, feeling free, just as we owned the world. Those were golden years when there was at least one international regatta each year, when we'd find our friends, sail against them and share our experiences in sailing and life, enjoying a cold beer and invoking some divine muse.

Unfortunately I cannot not write everything from that period, mostly because they would not publish the article, also is better not to be too precise about dates or names so as not to put anybody at risk. So I am going to jump from then, when I was 19, to when I was 36 when I started sailing with my kids.

I have four boys: Juan Rafael (21) sails his own Lightning and has been a skipper since he was 15. He has my attitude or maybe worse than mine, and that is the reason I bought him his own Lightning, so I would preserve my mother's good name! He's a fine sailor. Juan Andres (16) is my bowman, I have sailed with him since he was 11 in all national and international events in the past 5 years.. Alejandro (10) and Leonardo (9) are starting to sail Optimists and I hope that I can sail a regatta with them this year. For now there is no better reward for me than to see all my kids sail and to give them the opportunity that I had of meeting so many friends and seeing so many places.

I have won three South American championships and I have a few second places. I have won races in Worlds and North American championships, I have had the honor of representing Ecuador in many official games like the PanAms, South Americans and Bolivarianos where I have earned some medals, sharing some of my sailing accomplishments with my country.

Summing up, the Lightning class has allowed me to have a very tight and special relationship with my dad in my teens, intense and unforgettable experiences with my friends in my youth and adulthood, which made our friendships even stronger, and now a life full of satisfaction being able to share the sport that I love with the ones that I love.

