

The 37th European Open Championship

by Nancy Bargar

I signed on in March to go to Greece with Tom Jr. For years I'd dreamed of going beyond a North Americans and this was my chance — the first time I was in a work situation that allowed for a summer vacation, and quite honestly, the first time I'd been asked.

We'd sailed together at spring and fall regattas and on the Circuit in the years since my brothers stopped skippering Lightnings. The Lightning class, unfortunately, is still in hiatus here on Chautauqua Lake where its aficionados remain in the childbearing mode.

As the date neared, I had some reservations about my physical and mental readiness for this challenge. After a pretty demanding season of cross country ski racing, I'd slacked off and homeowner chores had kept me from much aerobic activity in the spring.

Home seemed harder and harder to leave. At my age, peonies in bloom are something you don't want to miss in your backyard. We wait all year in western New York for our short summers and here I was taking off for two weeks. Doesn't sound like much, but factor in the preparation and the expense and you've got a mighty commitment. Even in our age of faxing and fetching messages, it's hard to be away for such a stretch.

Jill and I had sailed around each other for years, but I don't believe ever on the same boat. Together for the first time we were second to Tom Sr. at the Cornball Regatta down the street from my house two weeks before departing for Europe. That was helpful though not particularly promising given the competition we would face at the international level.

Tom had arrived in Athens a few days ahead of Jill and she was a day ahead of me. All in one place, we assessed the situation and rather quickly fell into our own particular method of attack.

Jill and I roomed together with Tom's sister, Jane. For several days we felt glued to the beds when we knew it was time to rise. Jet lag, I suppose. Basically, as Peter Hall noted in his article on the 'Worlds', the routine was free mornings, assembly for boat rigging and lunch at the yacht club, launching, and starting mid-afternoon.

Jill and I had our little rituals: filling used water bottles for on board dousing, packing colder ones for refreshment on the offwind legs; hosing ourselves from head to toe before casting off; selecting just the right sun protection factor for the day; switching from flip flops to shoes just after the gun sequence began.

We put the boat away at what you might call our normal stateside dinner hour, showered and made a plan for the evening with dinner around 10 and bed in the wee morning hours. Sundown meant comfort, not "bring a sweater." There was an outdoor cinema around the corner from the hotel where you simply found a lawn chair and enjoyed the movie as if you were in your backyard. Dining outside was the rule. One night the waiter set a table in the street which didn't seem unusual to the locals. We rehashed races on rooftops and balconies, danced dockside, and found an



Photo credit: Jane Allen

outdoor Dylan concert complete with riot control police.

We all have our own ways of prepping and relaxing and in all fairness, we know there is more than one way to win a sailboat race or two or three. Tom went through, I believe, eight fantasy books on this trip, preferring quiet time to much pre- and post-race social life. It seemed a little strange, but it worked for him.

To the victor of each race went the thrill of seeing his country's flag flying from the yardarm of the Yacht Club of Greece high above the harbor. The American flag honored our finishes three times that week.

You may be wondering how the sailing was. Well, I have enlisted the help of Jill and Tom in recounting the most important parts of the week, the tacks, the trims, and the tricks. The following is a synopsis.

Race One: 6/25 — 11th place

We started near the boat end of the line. Our start was less than stellar so we tacked to the left. After clearing our air we came back on to starboard and searched the damage. Urs Wyler had moved out on the fleet, moving a little faster than us, and everybody else also. Moving away from the pack with Urs was Alberto (Tito) Gonzalez, Peter Hall, and Ched Proctor. We moved around in the fleet between eighth and fifteenth, ending up in eleventh place. There was some place trading up front, but other than Matt Burrridge's drive to fourth on the last leg, we did not get to see exactly what happened. After the race we felt that we could get a little more speed by retuning for the conditions; so that night we did.

Race Two: 6/26 — 5th place; winds — 170 degrees, 10-12 mph

On the way out to race two the boat seemed to accelerate through the chop better. We hoped the retuning helped. The boat end was a little favored; so we tried for it. After a good start our speed seemed very good. By being a bit faster and playing the left side shifts we rounded in the top ten. Things stayed close throughout the race. We moved up to around third or fourth but lost Manuel Gonzalez and Marcello Attina to a large left side shift.

Race Three: 6/27 — 1st place; wind — 170 degrees, 10-12 mph

Going out to the third race the wind was in its familiar pattern shifting right on the way out to the race course until reaching 170. Hoping that the pattern of races one and two would hold, we started off the favored pin and went hard left. With good speed we were able to pull away from the pack and rounded the first mark third. Nicholas Dimoy and Christos Bonas from the Greek contingent were ahead. We slipped by Christos on the first reach; and stayed close enough to Nicholas to get him on the run. We covered the fleet up the last leg to secure the win and the rising of the US flag for the first time that week.

Race Four: 6/28 — 1st place; wind — 155-170 degrees, 10-12 mph

Same conditions once again. We had a good start in the middle, a little closer to the boat. Our speed put us out in front on the left and we were able to stay there for the whole race. The wind was much more unpredictable this race than the others. Urs Wyler who rounded second dropped to eighth before finishing sixth. George Andreadis rounded seventh moved to third and finished fourth. The most impressive move was from Tito Gonzalez, tenth to eleventh, then back to finish second!

Race Five: 6/29 — 12th place

On the way out to this race we talked about the points of the other boats. With a drop race; Allen-7, Read-9, Urs Wyler and Tito Gonzales-11. The pin was better. We tried but we were beat for the best start by Hartti Nisonen. After a good start we sailed poorly; concerned more with keeping Brad behind us than getting ahead of the pack. We rounded in the top ten. The rest of the race was sailed backwards to a twelfth place finish. Meanwhile Peter Hall led most of the way to a first.

Race Six: 6/30 — 1st place — 15:21; 17:23; 17:37; wind — 170 degrees; 10-12 mph

The scores going into the last race; Read-16, Allen, Hall and Wyler all with 18, Manuel Gonzalez-19, Proctor-21. All of us very close and all capable of winning. After our bad finish the day before we went back to sailing our own race; and let the others duel with each other. Once again, a good start and speed to get away from the pack. At the first mark we were in second just behind Ched. It was very close but we had just enough speed to slip by Ched on the second beat. After that we just loosely covered on the last two legs to finish first. The shock set in on the sail in. We were happy to see the American flag flying for our European Open Championship victory.

This was the first major championship I had ever had a hand in winning. What a feeling and what a start. Tom has gone on to win the North Americans, Jill, the Adams Cup

and the Rolex International Women's Keelboat Championships this year. I'm not surprised. The Allens and the Swansons are sort of a breed — we're talking generations of Lightning sailors.

The Allen family's association with speed in the sport is legendary. Jill's parents met on a Lightning, too. A Buffalo Canoe Club regatta seems a bit incomplete if the kids aren't all skippering. Jack Swanson wasn't a part of the race committee and Jean isn't supervising the patrol boats.

The wizard may have been with us for the Europeans — at least that must be what Tom hopes for when he names each of his boats *Gandalf* (and that's a lot of times when you're a builder). But if anyone were to ask me what made our effort work at this particular time and place I'd say an experienced skipper whose time had come and an experienced middle woman who has steered, who really knows how to fly the chute, and who can communicate vital information forward and aft.

The three of us were comfortable with our respective boat positions. There was also a closeness between Tom and me and between Jill and Tom that had been cultivated. They're both teasers. Jill's fun and she knows how to skillfully deliver constructive criticism. And Tom can laugh at himself. He doesn't care if he's the only one out there with a long sleeve shirt in 110 degrees... the only one to spend two weeks in Greece without getting a suntan.

Hats were key. I think Tom would sooner have lost a race than the hat he inherited from Grandfather Karl Smither. Some wonder how Tom can feel the wind on his neck with this Lawrence of Arabia style covering — he did OK, thank you. His fiancée, Lora, talked him into a new pair of prescription sunglasses for the occasion — the clip-ons were left behind.

Tom wants you to believe he only owns one pair of short pants and his long blue velours. But it was Jill's sister, Jody, who figured he was carrying the conservative approach just a bit too far so she had Jill hand deliver a "good luck, go fast gift": black and purple plaid flannel shorts. Thanks, Jody!

For those of you who have yet to make a "Europeans" or "Worlds", it's a good goal. As corny as it always sounds, we met super people and got to know our old sailing buddies better.

Tom enjoyed an extra day in Greece aboard the Andreadis' yacht. Jill spent an extra week touring in the islands. Happy and fit, I headed home, laden with pistachios, sponges, and a video. The grass had grown. The weeds had waited. And after more than 10,000 miles of travel I had a new appreciation for an old civilization and an inspired outlook on a favorite sport.

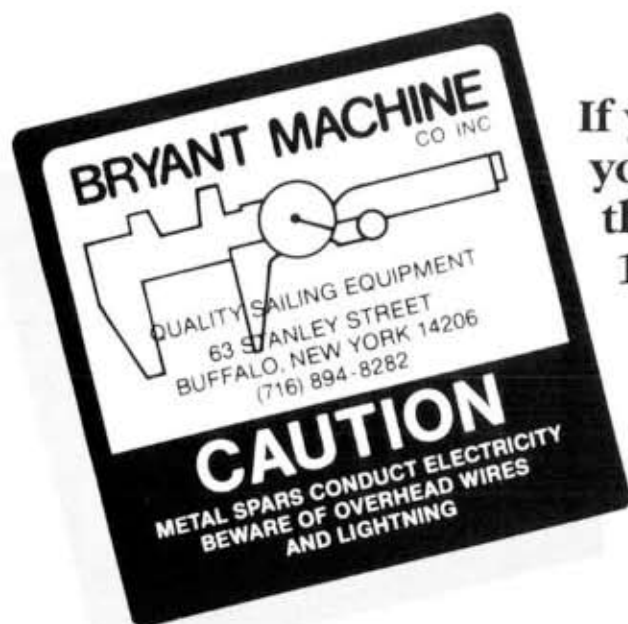


Photo Credit: Audrey Matteson

37th EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP — 1989

Fin. Pos.	Boat #	Country	Skipper & Crew	Races						Pts.
				1	2	3	4	5	6	
1	14377	USA	Thomas Allen, Jr., Jill Swanson, Nancy Bargar	11	5	1	1	(12)	1	19
2	14176	USA	Ched Proctor, Doug Barlow, Kathryn Ritchie	5	6	8	(15)	2	2	23
3	14312	Chile	Manuel Gonzalez Mas., Juan Francisco Novion, German Novion	6	1	(17)	8	4	4	23
4	14296	USA	Brad Read, Will Jeffers, Larry Colantuano	(15)	2	4	3	7	7	23
5	13968	Canada	Peter Hall, Mark Osterman, Alain Boucher	1	(17)	11	5	1	6	24
6	13790	Switzerland	Urs Wyler, Walter Durr, Beat Gasser	2	3	7	6	(17)	15	33
7	11011	Chile	Alberto Gonzalez Mas., German Verdugo S., Valentin Menendez Ig.	3	12	6	2	11	(DNF)	34
8	14361	Italy	Marcello Attina, Dario Nania, Fabio Spano	12	4	(14)	11	8	3	38
9	12812	Brazil	Mario Buckup, Cristina Norris, Michael Norris	8	8	(12)	12	5	5	38
10	13862	USA	Matt Burr ridge, R. G. Burr ridge, Kathy Grohne	4	15	5	14	3	(17)	41
11	13481	Italy	Vito Tripoli, Giuseppe Alagna, Franc. Parrinello	14	7	9	(DSQ)	6	8	44
12	14264	Greece	George Andreadis, Gerontaris Dim., Andreas Kypraios	13	11	(13)	4	9	10	47
13	11459	Greece	Nicholas Dimoy, John Apiranthitis, Gina Dimoy	18	9	2	10	(21)	12	51
14	10996	Greece	Christos Bonas, Panagiotis Bonas, Fotis Ligerakis	9	14	3	(21)	16	9	51
15	14211	USA	Tom Allen, Sr., Jim Allen, Anna Andreadis	10	10	10	(20)	18	11	59
16	14255	USA	Richard Hallagan, David Hallagan, Len Tiedemann	7	16	(22)	19	22	14	78
17	14243	Italy	Gaetano Pellizzaro, Fabio Falcini, Jaures Cappucci	17	18	(20)	13	14	16	78
18	13692	Switzerland	Hans-Peter Schmit, Andreas Hofer, Peter Taeschler	16	13	21	17	(24)	13	80
19	13706	Italy	Giuseppe Alagna, Benedetto Puletto, Giovanni Pulizzi	(DSQ)	24	16	7	10	25	82
20	14274	Finland	Hartti Nisonen, Juha Hamalainen, Asko Hamalainen	20	(22)	15	16	13	19	83
21	13801	Greece	Coutsikos Stelios, George Drougas, Stavros Psarakis	19	19	23	9	26	(DNF)	96
22	14364	Finland	Kari Maenpaa, Erkki Maenpaa, Kimmo Aromaa	(29)	20	19	23	19	21	102
23	12952	Switzerland	Stephen Scharer, Roland Baumgartner, Regula Baumgartner	23	21	(30)	26	15	23	108
24	13981	Greece	Costas Tsantilis, Jacobo Kikanis, Peter Schilizzi	21	(28)	24	22	25	18	110
25	14102	Italy	Roberto Crucitti, Andrea Aloia, Vincenzo Linares	(DSQ)	26	26	18	20	24	114
26	13455	Italy	Sergio Rustichelli, Alberti Giovanni, Sauro Scarpocchi	(26)	23	25	24	23	20	115
27	14239	Italy	Riccardo Giondi, Massimo Giondi, Eugenio Gavelli	22	25	(31)	25	28	22	122
28	13841	Italy	Francesco De Regis, Paolo Pecoradi, Dionisio Marini	24	(32)	18	27	29	26	124
29	12907	Finland	Leo Korhonen, Anne-Marie Korhonen, Rainer Korhonen	25	29	29	29	30	(31)	142
30	14269	Finland	Markku Paloma, Heikki Pajala, Jussi Pajala	30	30	28	(32)	27	30	145
31	14091	Finland	Terho Aromaa, Mika Aromaa, Jari Aromaa	27	31	(32)	28	31	29	146
32	11634	Greece	Paul Schilizzi, Caterina Tsantilis, Christos Damigos	31	33	(34)	30	33	27	154
33	11710	Brazil	Mario Czaschke, Peter Zacher, Oscar Weckerle	28	27	33	31	DNS	(DSQ)	156
34	14179	Finland	Tuomo Kauhanen, Hannu Hanskala, Punttila Antero	32	34	(35)	33	32	32	163
35	13802	Greece	Leonida Pelekanakis, Dimitris Zouganelis, Spiros Zouganelis	DNS	DNF	27	(DSQ)	DNS	DNS	175
36	1380	Greece	George Hamaris	(DNS)	DNS	DNS	DNS	DNS	DNS	185

() Throw Out DNF/DNS = 37 DSQ = 38



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Europeans

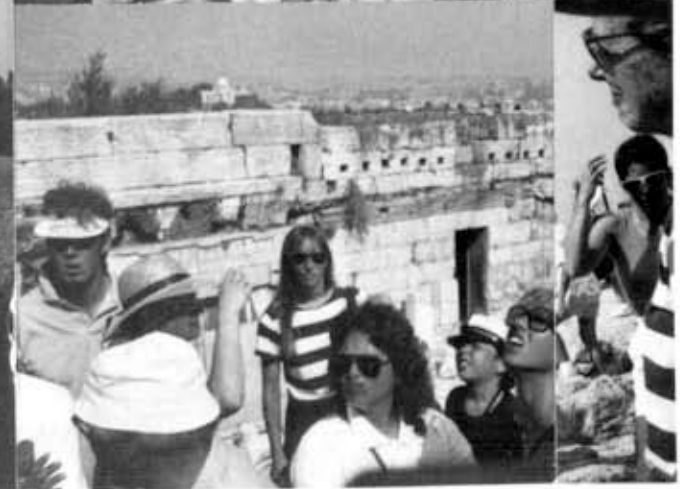


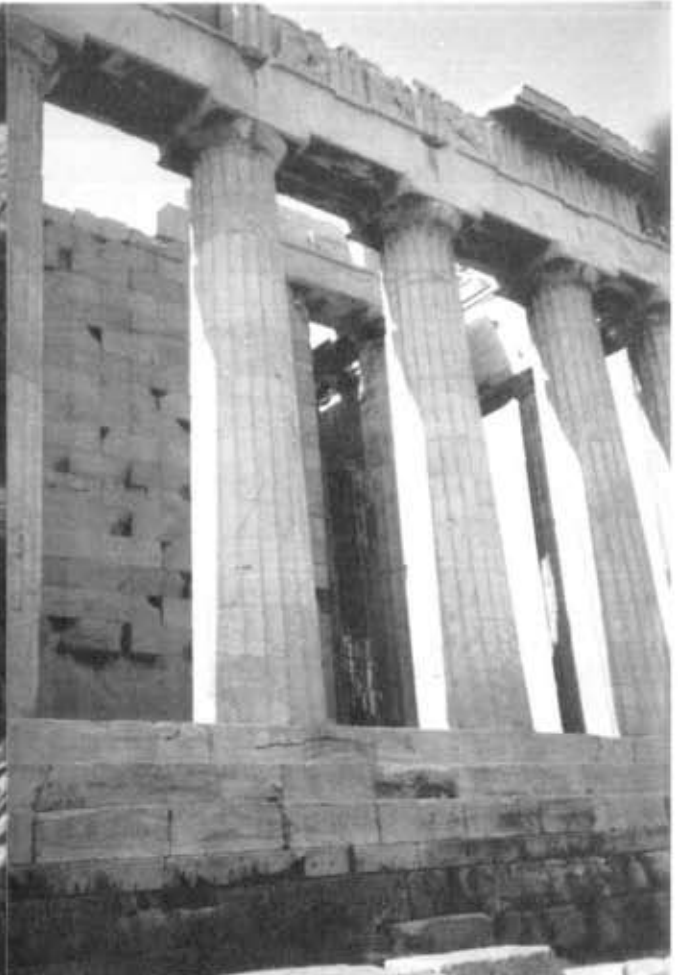
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Sightseeing in Athens



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Europeans



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Greeks of the Yacht Club of Athens



ODE ON A GRECIAN WATER BOTTLE

(With sincere apologies to John Keats)

Thou cool and refreshing elixir
Bounty of a thousand springs
Dotting sun parched hillsides where
One uncap't tilting brings
Relief temporarily.

Thou mysterious plastic urn
With refreshment of Athenian rain
How can one consume in turn
Liter upon liter, o'er and again
And never have to pee?

Simeon Coxe



Photos by Audrey