

# ILCA LOCAL LEGENDS

We solicited the District Commodores and Fleet Captains for their nominations, asking for them to identify a Local Legend.

*“It’s someone who has done the Class proud, but maybe this person doesn’t take the show on the road. Maybe it’s the Fleet grandfather who lends his boat out every week, or the couple who kept the Fleet active when everyone else was busy having kids. The support crew who cooks barbecue after every Fleet race, or the folks doing Race Committee even when it’s snowing out.”*

The response was fantastic. These people are the heart and soul of the Lightning Class. They are the role models we want to emulate. They are generous, quiet, givers that attract others to our sport and make us proud to participate in it.



## **Chris Graf**

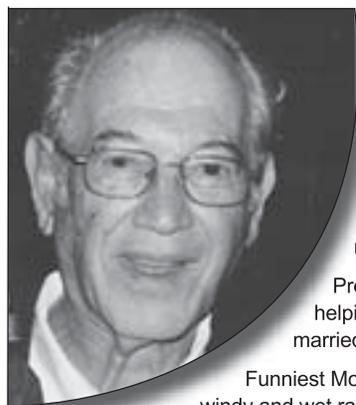
Chris Graf bought his first Lightning in 1963. It was a Newport, and she was the first fiberglass Lightning in Sheboygan. Chris was a novice racer but was quick to jump into the fray. Ric Larson (age 16 at the time) recalls one of Chris’ first races. “We were on a spinnaker reach heading south towards the bottles when I tried to pass Chris to windward. Chris’ crew told him to luff us, he headed up, and we proceeded to capsize.”

Chris is a retired urologist and current art dealer specializing in large outdoor sculptures. He chose the Lightning because it was a boat he could sail with his family. For many years he sailed with his late wife Janet and their four children. He says, “I never yelled too much because I figured my marriage was more important than winning any race.” Together the family participated in six NAs and several other big events.

His claim to fame doesn’t involve sailing. He recalls, “I did prostate surgery on a man who served with General Custer.” His proudest moment was in the mid 60s when he sold his Newport because it was too slow, bought a new Allen, and won the Sheboygan Yacht Club season championship. His current ambition is to stick around long enough to get a free season’s pass to ski at Alta.

Over the years he has been an important part of the local fleet. He organized the paving of the dry sail lot at Sheboygan Yacht Club and hosted many of the famous Saturday night parties at the Brotz regatta. More recently the fleet participation has decreased, and there is no regular race committee. Chris stepped up, ran races every Tuesday night during the summer months and was responsible for training our current race committee. The average turnout of five boats rose to a high of sixteen in just two seasons. Thanks to Chris the Sheboygan Lightning fleet is on the rise. Building on that momentum, Chris’ son Hans organized the 2005 NAs which was hosted by Sheboygan Yacht Club.

In the picture Chris is standing next to a sculpture titled All in one Boat. This is appropriate since Chris thinks that the class’ greatest strength is its members. What could be better than sailing with your friends and family?



## **Dr. Sylvan Newman**

Sylvan started sailing Lightnings on White Rock Lake in Dallas in the late 50s. After learning to sail on a Star in San Diego during WWII, he returned to Dallas to find a Lightning Fleet with great people. A past District Champion and Corinthian Sailing Club Commodore, the Summer Series trophy is named in his honor, and he was also honored by the CYC last year with the “Old Salts Award.” Now in his eighties, he still sails weekend races.

Claim to Fame—Sylvan was the Fleet and District engine for over fifty years. Starting Fleet 435 at Rush Creek Yacht Club, he was a mover and shaker in the growth of Lightning sailing in Texas during the 70s and 80s.

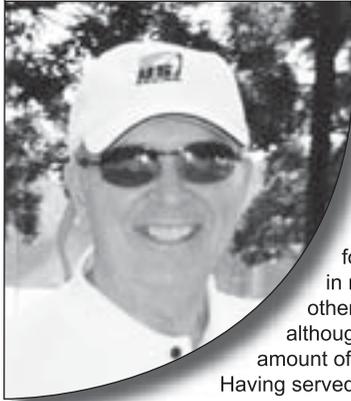
Proudest Moment—Winning the 1983 Masters NAs as a crew for Stu Anderson and helping to host the 1979 Worlds and the 1983 NAs at Rush Creek Yacht Club...also, being married for almost 50 years!

Funniest Moment—“Once, one of our Fleet members installed a new bailer in his boat. During a windy and wet race, he opened the bailer on a fast reach, only to discover that he had installed it backwards. Well, you should have seen the rooster tail of water shooting over the transom!”

The Fans Say—After finishing last in the 2006 Leukemia Cup Regatta, Doc pulled me aside to teach me a very important lesson. “Stick with the fleet,” he said. “Sailing off on your own rarely pays off,” says John Womble, a new sailor. “Dr. Newman was right, and my finishes have improved ever since.”

Vern Goldberg, also an active octogenarian in the Fleet who has known Sylvan for way too long laughingly said, “He is a stickler for detail in everything he does, except he usually shows up late.”





## **Dean S. Cady, Sr.**

Dean hails from Milwaukee Yacht Club, Fleet 69, though he began his sailing on Higgins Lake, Michigan, in the mid 1940s. Although he crewed on offshore boats, including several Chicago-Mackinac races, since his first sailing days his heart has always been with the Lightning. This love affair started in the summer of 1952 and continues to this day.

Martha Pfarr Cushman asked Dean his thoughts on the Corinthian Spirit. Dean responded, "The Corinthian spirit is the concept of playing by the rules. In other words, it is not how you win but how you sail the race. This spirit applies to both the Corinthian sailor (amateur) as well as the professional sailor. Having been involved with various sports before competitive sailing played an active role in my life, the principles of fair play and abiding by the rules was instilled in me. Of course, sailboat racing is unique in that it is a self-policing sport except when the sailing instructions provide otherwise. As a competitive racing sailor for over fifty years, I have always tried my best to abide by these principles, although I'm sure there were times when I could have done a better job. During my most active racing years, I did a minimal amount of judging, although it was excellent training in the fundamentals of the rules and their application in various situations.

Having served as a US SAILING certified judge and a International Sailing Federation international judge for many years, I have become even more acutely aware of the importance of practicing the Corinthian spirit."

**Claim to Fame**—Dean is a Past Vice President of the United States Yacht Racing Union and a current US SAILING International Judge. He has served the Lightning family in various capacities at the Fleet, Midwest District and national levels. As the Class Vice President of Rules and Regulations, his expertise is called upon continuously for the review of Sailing Instructions for sanctioned events and interpretations of Class Rules.

**His fans say**—From Martha Pfarr Cushman, "Dean Cady is an incredible asset to any sailor. No matter where I'm sailing, he takes the time to listen to my rules question and give a reasoned opinion. He'll explain his interpretation of the rule and give valuable information on the reason the rule exists. He still gets on a Lightning pretty regularly so he can identify with what the sailor is going through, and that's invaluable. You've heard of the term 'player's manager'? Well, Dean is a 'sailor's judge'. Over the years, I can't think of anyone who has been more supportive of my sailing", says ILCA Past President Bill Faude.

**Memorable moments**—Being able to sail with my family all these years has to be at the top of the list. After that, it would have to be being involved, both as a sailor and judge, although not at the same time, in various Lightning North American Championships, and as a judge at a couple of Lightning World Championships.



## **William S. Clarke**

Bill Clarke calls his home port Barnegat Light Yacht Club on Barnegat Bay, New Jersey. He has been the Fleet 335 Secretary for many decades, as well as Commodore of both Barnegat Light Yacht Club and Long Beach Island Yacht Racing Association. He first started sailing "long, long ago" at BLYC in the Sunday Sunfish Champagne Series.

**Claim to Fame**—As the chief cheerleader of Fleet 335, he has been instrumental in building Fleet 335 to the level it is today. He has done this by involving all of the juniors in the late 70s and 80s as crew for him at one time or another. Most of those juniors remain active in the Fleet today, with a number being boat owners themselves.

**Proudest Moment**—Bill's proudest moment was probably becoming a grandfather, but that has nothing to do with this. Bill was awarded US SAILING's W. Van Alan Clark, Jr. National Sportsmanship Award. In 2005, Barnegat Light Yacht Club awarded Bill with a Lifetime Membership for his leadership and involvement in the Club's sailing program, Board and general Club activities over thirty-five years.

**His Fans Say**—"Only Legends get songs written for them."

### **OLD MAN RIVER**

Ol' Man Clarke, dat ol' man Clarke	He don't follow markers	You and me, we heave and ho	We gets weary, and sick of tryin'
He don't know starboard	He don't give right of way	Keep the crews on the old tip-toe	To figure out his excuses
And he don't know port	And them that does so	Watch that boom! Lift that jib	To see if he's lyin'
He just keeps sailing along	Never wins anyway	Get behind Clarke and you'll have	But ol' man Clarke
He keeps sailing along	But ol' man Clarke	to ad-lib	He just keeps sailing along.
	He just keeps sailing along		

**On how to improve the Class**—Bill suggests, "Why don't the individual Districts locate Yacht Clubs within their District that have a history of Lightning sailing and a couple of little-used Lightnings and suggest to the Yacht Club that the District schedule, staff, equip, pay for and conduct an invitational regatta at the Club. It only needs to be a simple one day thing, not a District Championship or anything like that. This would get Lightnings right in the face of persons who may be likely participants. It may be fun to participate in those regattas and may stimulate that Club—ie., light the match, etc. The District should also invite any other club that is looking for a class of sailboats to sail. If that could be done once a year or every other year at a different shadow fleet, it might be helpful. If the Yacht Club would host a party in the evening, that would be great.

I see the fleet growth issue as a matter that needs to be stimulated at the District level with the encouragement and support from the National level. I see it as a long-term process and one that needs particular (but not exclusive) focus on young sailors."

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## **Santiago Romero**

Santiago wasn't raised by a sailing family. Instead, he married one! His wife Maria has always loved the sport. She inherited this from her father Eduardo, a retired Lightning sailor who devoted his life to the organization of regattas and to the promotion of the sport of sailing in general. Santiago got the love of the sport—from his Father in Law!

He's the kind of guy who will buy a new boat just because he can sell his old one and have one more team on the starting line. I can count five boats, four active in the Salinas Yacht Club boat yard today that have arrived through this process. Problem is, it's getting difficult to sell them because he's fond of unorthodox colors! His most recent sailing machine is a purple and pink mixture. It's fast! Well, one gets used to it.

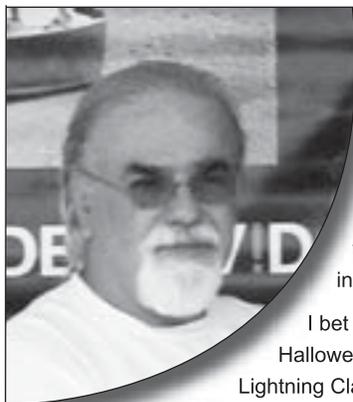
I bet the best-attended regatta in our calendar must be the Copa Santiago Romero, which he celebrates on his birthday—Halloween day! It is undoubtedly a very special date in which he throws unbelievable parties that demonstrate so well why the Lightning Class is so special. You may ask around about last year's costumes (see South American Championships photos). With

Santiago's birthday there is always something special to remember. And then there's the t-shirts! Each year he plans to design a special

t-shirt for his regatta. Last year's edition featured a caricature of each of the sailors printed in the front and personalized, and a group caricature in the back. That is how much care and love he puts into his extended family, the Lightning Class.

And there's the support. He's donated two motor boats to the Salinas Yacht Club to be used for regatta organizing. His own powerboat is always ready and available if it is needed for RC chores or taking people out to watch the races. He himself has devoted almost twenty years to the Salinas Yacht Club, his home club, in which he served in many chairs until becoming the Commodore, from where he gave a tremendous support to the sport of sailing in general, and to the Lightning Class in particular.

That's Santiago, a friend, supporter, promoter, enthusiastic member of the Lightning Class Family!



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## **Bob Stoller**

Bob helped to charter Fleet 488 in the early 80s and has been involved with Lightnings and sailing in the Rocky Mountain area ever since. Bob has been the Lightning Fleet Captain many times and has served as Commodore of Denver Sailing Association. He has been helping other sailors to get into Lightnings by locating boats to purchase, bringing Lightnings to Colorado and assisting in repair and rigging.

How he started—I grew up in Hampton, Virginia, a few houses from Hampton Roads. I learned to sail on a Snipe and would help caulk the boat every spring, launch the boat, and let it swell so that it would be watertight. When I graduated from high school in 1959, my parents moved to Bethesda, Maryland, and as I walked around the block, I saw a woman wetsanding the bottom of a sailboat. She said it was a Lightning and asked if I would like to crew that summer. Bob and Marjorie Ware owned the boat and raced it out of the Washington Sailing Marina on the Potomac. I crewed for them and learned to sail on the Lightning and also attended the Districts at Annapolis that summer. When I moved to Colorado in 1970, I thought I had given up sailing. However, I discovered a racing program on Boulder Reservoir and rented boats for a while. Then, I found a Lightning for sale in Denver (#4865) and bought it. The boat was originally purchased by George Fisher and had been his first Lightning.

Our Home Fleet—Fleet 488 started without a permanent base and met regularly to race at open regattas around Colorado and Nebraska. I am the only Fleet 488 founding member who still owns and races a Lightning. An early highlight was the Kingston, Ontario, NAs in 1986, where I chartered a boat from Jim Carson. After that the Fleet declined until it started to sail regularly at Cherry Creek. The Marina agreed to allow on-site storage of boats with their masts up, and the Fleet began to grow again. Now, with the parking area and the crane, the Fleet has an active weekly racing program from April to October. Marty Mulhern is an unsung hero for his devotion to the Class and his work on securing a Lightning for the Community Sailing program and getting it race ready.

Proudest Moments—The overnight repair of a fellow Lightning owner's rudder so that he could race the next day; repair of my own mast after I broke the upper section while driving through a ditch near Reudi Reservoir (Aspen, Colorado). I discovered the problem on Saturday morning and scrounged up an old mast and repaired it in the rain and was sailing on Sunday; correcting my mast tune at the Sheboygan NAs and getting a fourth in a qualifying race!

Other Moments—The funniest moment was pleasure sailing the woody (#4865) on Boulder Reservoir with Irene, my wife, and Bear, our Old English sheepdog. Bear was standing on the rear deck of the boat and did not understand that we were moving over water. The dog jumped down to discover that it was not a solid surface and she was swimming! The expression on her face was priceless! The scariest moment was at the California Circuit while sailing the Marathon from Coronado to Mission Bay. We were flying the spinnaker, the swells were rolling in from the west and the tide was ebbing. The swells in the mouth of the channel were fifteen feet high, and I thought that we might bury the bow.

The Fans Say—From Steve Davis, ILCA President, "Bob was the first Lightning sailor to take me out on a Lightning. Bob sailed with me the first time I went to an out-of-state Lightning regatta. Bob is always ready to repair anything on a sailboat and is super fast in light air!" From Jan Davis, ILCA Secretary, "Bob is one of those rare sailors that is verbal; he can kindly and calmly explain to his crew exactly what he needs done in comprehensible English. (We all know of skippers, who shall remain nameless, that have no skill in this area)."

Here is Bill Cabrall's input about Bob Stoller: "I first met Bob in the early 80s when I was racing Stars. At regattas I kept encountering this beautiful wooden Lightning on the ramp or in the parking lot. I remember vividly walking taking a real good look at Bob's boat at Carter Lake one year and thinking, 'Wow, this is a beautiful boat, I've got to get one of these!' But the Star fleet saw what was going on, rallied for a quick intervention, and it was another ten years before I saw the light and gave up on running backstays."

From Mary Anne Byrne: "Bob Stoller gave me a chance to crew before I knew a sheet from a guy. Consequently, he put me on the jib. At the time my greatest skill was enthusiasm and my second best was reliability. With the patience of an paternalistic college professor, he taught me how to trim a Lightning jib, set the pole, and generally rig and ready the boat. I crewed for Bob in back-to-back North Americans, an experience I never thought possible for me.

Bob knows where every Lightning and every lightning part is within a thousand miles of Denver, a quality that has stood me in very good stead. At the Aspen Open (yes, Aspen has a Yacht Club!) in 2000, Bob arrived with a bent mast, courtesy of a traffic situation on the drive up. For most people, deep in the Colorado Rockies at 8000 feet in elevation, a bent mast would be a show stopper, but not Bob. He unhitched the boat, told us he'd be back, and took off into the high country. Two hours later he was back with a second mast (also broke, but in a different place) that he happened to know had been lying in a field in Basalt.

Sailing Stars had taught me how to splice masts (and the Lightning's long untapered section makes this process fairly simple), so I pitched in and before the day was done we had a new, spliced mast up and running on his boat. Even better, when we stopped for dinner, the only available seat on the Yacht Club deck was across from the prettiest blue eyes and the brightest smile I've ever met. Seven years later I still see them every day. You can too when Raeyane Farrell and I travel east to a regatta near your home club. Thanks Bob!!

Corinthian Sailing—I think it took a while for me to learn to sail for the pure joy of racing Lightnings and the teamwork that it involves. The interaction with my crew, rather than winning at all costs, made it enjoyable. It has become very important to me to help my fellow Lightning sailors be more successful in their own sailing so that the quality of the racing improves. I would like to be known as a Lightning sailor who will always help when help is needed and who has been committed to Lightning sailing.



# ILCA LOCAL LEGENDS



## ***Jim Dillard***

Jim has been a member of Fleet 50 since 1959, and over the years he has made huge contributions to the Fleet and to the Lightning Class. Jim was a Virginia State Delegate for thirty-two years. During his tenure, he served on the Appropriations Committee for sixteen years and was Chairman of the Conservation and Natural Resources subcommittee of that Committee. In that capacity he was instrumental in the creation of Leesylvania State Park in 1992, the site of the annual Doc Gilbert Memorial Potomac Cup Regatta and this year the site of the Women's, Juniors,' and Masters' North American Championship. When the park was created, he made sure it was sailboat friendly, with two hoists in addition to the ramps used by bass boaters.

Jim is a Virginian to the core. He loves its history and its water. He was born and raised in Williamsburg, capital of the state in the colonial era. He has worked tirelessly on this year's celebration of the 400th year since the establishment of the Jamestown colony. He was even an extra in the movie, *New World*, the movie about Jamestown and Pocahontas.

**Claim To Fame**—On every Labor Day weekend since 1963, with one or two exceptions, Jim has led a flotilla of two to four Lightnings in the exploration of one of the Bay's waterways. Before heading out, the boats are outfitted with a small outboard motor and VHF Radio and are loaded up with coolers, tents, and sleeping bags. Last year, the group sailed up the North River off of Mobjack Bay.

Jim's skill as a politician comes to the forefront at about 4:00 or 5:00 o'clock on each day of the expedition. He looks for a house on the river with a pier and ideally a sailboat nearby and even more ideally with a gazebo or screened in porch. He then goes ashore and knocks on the door and asks the landowner for permission for the explorers to lay out their sleeping bags on the pier or to pitch their tents on grass. The landowner has always agreed, but before the evening is done, the landowner has usually invited the hearty bunch inside the screened porch or to another more protected area. Jim is always able to talk to the landowners about a local matter that is important to them and that involves the state government.

**More Claim To Fame**—While Jim buys brand new Lightnings from time to time, he also subscribes to the value of keeping old Lightnings alive— value he and others in the fleet probably inherited from Doc Gilbert, another Fleet legend. What happened on one of his Labor Day cruises illustrates this. It started with one of the expedition's Lightnings suffering a broken rudder. What were they to do? First, one of the explorers on that trip, Chuck, who is a veterinarian, became very popular with the local landowner when he befriended her dog and gave it a once over. Second, they fortuitously found an abandoned woodshop on the property that had a functioning band saw. Third, they scrounged up some plywood, roofing nails, strap iron, and 1/4" bolts. They cut the plywood to the shape of a Lightning rudder and used the strap iron and bolts to create pintles. A 2" X 4" was trimmed down to create the tiller. Jim still has this very functional rudder.

**Even More Claim to Fame**—Jim is famous for his fundamental belief in free beer at sailboat regattas. Each year, since its inception twenty-three years ago, the Potomac Cup Regatta has had a beer sponsor. Those sponsors not only provided several kegs of beer and several cases of soda, but also often subsidized the regatta T-shirt.

**Proudest Moments**—There is an easy way to recognize Jim. He is skipper of the dark green Lightnings. His latest boat, 15311, is again dark green. The previous one, 14627, No More Excuses, was dark green. The previous one, No Excuses, was dark green. I believe he has owned seven dark green Lightnings in all. The first one, 6428, was a wooden Saybrook Lightning built in Connecticut.

In 1966 Jim took a short hiatus from Fleet 50. He was offered a job in Atlanta. However, he told his prospective employer that he would only take the job if he could find a place to race his Lightning. That he did. He found one Lightning, #180, on Lake Lanier. He told the owner that he'd double the size of their fleet. Three years later, when Jim returned to northern Virginia, the fleet at Lake Lanier had grown to eighteen boats! Jim established a dealership for the Newport built Lightning, which was based Gloucester, Virginia. Every time Jim made a trip back north, he would swing by the builder and pick up another Lightning, either new or used, take it back to Georgia, and find a buyer. That's one way to build a fleet!



## ***Ken Irwin***

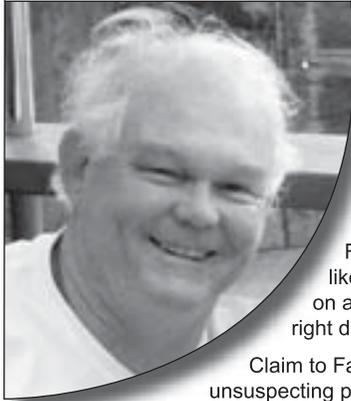
Ken began sailing on a Lightning at Hoover Yacht Club in Columbus, Ohio, around 1960. A member of Fleet 303 at Cowan Lake, he fell in love with the boat after his first crewing experience and in 1970 purchased Jay Limbaugh's trade-in.

**Claim to Fame**—Although no longer does the regatta circuit, hardly ever misses a club race.

**Proudest Moment**—The opportunity to introduce others to the Lightning boat.

**The Fans Say**—From Mike Brock, "There are not enough words to describe what 'Master Mariner' Ken means to the local fleet and club. Ken's dedication and service to Lightning sailing and to the club is the one thing that has remained constant over the past four plus decades. Ken is the only club member to be recognized for his relentless service and was awarded the title Master Mariner in addition to being a recipient of the Marcotte, a yearly Cowan Lake service award. He has served in numerous capacities including Lightning fleet captain for several years, club Commodore (1986), chairperson of several committees, board of governors and is our current webmaster and scorekeeper. Ken remains the "go to" guy when something needs to be fixed at the club or on race boats. He is a source of a wealth of knowledge and history. While Ken no longer travels the regatta circuit, you can always count on him to represent the Lightning fleet for Sunday club racing in Adrenalin, #14216.

We keep asking ourselves what would we ever do without Ken!



## **Frank Gallagher**

Frank has been with Fleet 50 since 1966, and his personality is reflected in the history and character of the Fleet. He started sailing Lightnings with the Sea Scouts, then went off to college but came back and has won the Fleet Championship many, many times. The Washington DC area sees quite a few people coming and going, and so there are quite a few people who have sailed here for a few years before moving on. Their memories of sailing here might be vague, but they generally remember Frank. He is not a vague character. Frank is a Fleet 50 legend who focuses on what is important to keep the sport of racing Lightnings alive and well and whose generosity and friendship are enjoyed by everyone in the fleet.

Frank is a seat-of-the-pants sailor. Rig tuning—he has no idea. However, his boat always has a few special features, like the shock chord on his tiller so that he can hold it in place as he goes forward to gybe the pole as he single-hands on a Wednesday evening. Frank does well not by being very knowledgeable or technical, but by pointing his boat in the right direction and keeping it moving regardless of the many distractions on and off the boat.

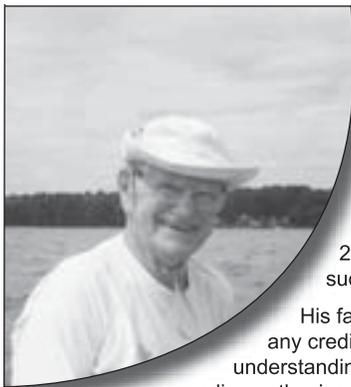
Claim to Fame—Frank is famous for making sure there are as many boats on the line as possible, even if it means dragging an unsuspecting passerby onto the boat. The same applies to staffing the Race Committee. Frank hates to see a boat not sail because the skipper and crew are doing race committee. He'll do everything he can do get non-sailors to volunteer and, if the conditions are light, to release the skipper and crew to race. Frank will do anything he can to help a new sailor learn to sail faster and smarter, but on the racecourse he'll do everything he can to win. Frank himself has an amazing ability to do well with the most green of crew. He is famous for putting his green crew through twenty or more gybes on the way to the starting area.

More Claim to Fame—Frank keeps many an old Lightning sailing and racing. He buys Lightnings that are almost or about to be abandoned, gets them ready to go sailing at minimal expense, and then finds a newcomer who isn't sure they can spend very much to get into the sport. Then he makes sure they don't waste time and money working on their new old Lightning, but instead go sailing. For example, a few years ago, Frank took an old Lightning that was given to him and turned it into a Fleet builder boat. He sold the boat to Paul Maher, a young skipper, for only \$500, under the condition that when Paul sold it, he had to sell it within the fleet and for no more than \$500 plus one-half of what he had invested in it himself.

Even More Claim To Fame—Frank always has something to offer you from his trunk or cooler after you've buttoned up your boat. Recently, it has been Miller Lite—he is watching his weight. But a couple of years ago, it was a miracle punch! I know it involves rum and something.

The Fans Say—"How did I get started with Fleet 50? It was all Frank Gallagher's doing. Having wandered down to WSM on a Sunday morning in 1999 just to see what was there and standing around amazed at all the activity, I was cornered by Frank and asked, "Can you sail today?" Not able to come up with a good reason for saying no, I was invited to hop onto Jim Dillard's boat as crew. The rest is history." *David Thompson, current Fleet Captain*

"It was a very proud moment for me when I first beat Frank."  
*Nabeel Alsalam, current Fleet Champion*



## **Jim McDonnell**

Also known as "Mr. Lightning" around Fleet 19 at Chautauqua Lake Yacht Club, Jim started sailing in 1942 and first sailed a Lightning in 1968. He learned the fundamentals of sailing on a Thistle in Boston. Jim loves the Lightning because it is a family boat, and he sailed with all of his children through the years. Jim proudly shared that his son in college was voted captain of his fleet—like father like son.

Claim to Fame—Jim has not been one to accept accolades for his tireless efforts on behalf of the Lightning Fleet and his Yacht Club. He is always willing to work on any regatta and is never concerned about who shall get the credit. His moment of fame was when Cal Schmiege presented him an award for putting on the Cornball Regatta for 25 years! This was one of Jim's proudest moments. Every year he wrote letters, called people and made the event a success.

His fans say—Jim has been a supporter of all sailing at Chautauqua, always willing to work on any regatta, never wanting any credit. Heinrich Kutschke says, "I crewed for Jim at local weekly races and some regattas. He was ALWAYS patient and understanding and instructed his crew in a positive way. He is indeed the kindest skipper I've sailed with. Because of his never-ending enthusiasm for the sport, I purchased a Lightning and have been active in the Fleet since 1990." Chuck Hodges, Past Commodore and Lightning sailor, says, "Jim is the most dedicated sailor, let alone Lightning sailor. He was always willing to share his knowledge and his boat to teach newcomers in the sport of sailing."

Funniest moments—1) As we were approaching the dock in heavy air, my son was ready to take a picture as a puff came, and the boat knocked the dock section into the water. My son grabbed the forestay, did not fall into the water and took the picture; 2) From crew Heinrich Kutschke, "Jim would put his hearing aid into a waterproof container and put it into his back pocket. So, as we were docking in pretty heavy air, Jim could not hear me so I bent over and shouted to his back pocket. Onlookers were wondering. (Editor's note: SO ARE WE!)

Improve the Class—Better communication within the fleets and information sharing with other fleets about many issues, and ten more boats in the Fleet!

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## **Joe Dissette**

This year is Joe's 55th year enjoying the sport he loves. At the Bay City Yacht Club, Joe has served as Rear Commodore (1960), Vice Commodore (1961) and Commodore (1962). In 1987, BCYC recognized Joe for his dedication and love of sailing, and recently, the Wednesday Night Championship Series for Fleet 216 has been renamed to the Joe Dissette Championship Series. Joe is also in the business of buying and selling Lightnings. His expertise is known worldwide. Joe spent several weeks one summer in Ireland at the request of local Irish sailors he had met when selling one of his boats.

How he began—Joe tells us, "Back in the late thirties and early forties I was spending my summers on Lake Charlevoix with my Dad. Those were high school years, but I managed to get the dealership for a little 13 1/2-foot sloop, selling five, starting a fleet, and racing Sundays at Ironton on Lake Charlevoix—sparking my interest in racing."

In 1938, I saw an article in *Yachting* magazine by Olin Stephens, designer of the Lightning. He extolled the excellent qualities of a new one-design class called "Lightning" and included pictures of Olin test sailing No. 1 on Skaneateles Lake in New York.

I said to my Dad, "Someday I would like to own a Lightning," but I had to wait until 1945 to get my wish—a homebuilt Lightning with no number, followed by numbers 498, 2949, 5577 (1st Carousel). Then, in 1964, I got my first fiberglass Lightning (Carousel 2), and the rest is history—leading to Carousel 35!"

**Greatest Moments**—In 1998 at the ILCA 60th Anniversary Regatta held at the Skaneateles Country Club in Skaneateles, New York, Joe was in the Green Fleet with 87 boats competing—WOW! What a starting lineup, an awesome event! Joe had been having heart trouble, and that morning he and his wife, Ann, made an unscheduled trip to the hospital. The crew rigged the boat and circled off the end of the dock waiting for Joe to return. 223 of the 225 boats had been launched. With Ann driving through two barricades and down the launching ramp, Joe arrived and headed to the starting line. Joe finished 1st in the first race, setting the tone for the regatta. "Because we were ahead in the race, we finished in a mix of boats in the Blue Fleet. John McCree and Joe Schofield, my crew, asked the Racing Committee for a finish signal. We finished at the tail end of the Blue Fleet boats. The following two races were back to back with 5th place finishes—with a total of 11 points—the Green Fleet was ours. What could be better than winning your fleet at the 60th Lightning Anniversary Regatta? That had to be the highlight of my sixty-two years of Lightning racing."

**Good stories**—One of the funniest moments was seeing my middle crew, Glenn Hallett, miss his hiking strap, dragging his bottom through the water, holding on for dear life, as we crossed the finish line just inches from the committee boat, and just ahead of John McCree, for the win.

One of the scariest moments was capsizing just before the finish line at the mouth of the Saginaw River, flying the spinnaker in heavy air in mid-May. After being rescued by Mark Simoni (Coast Guard Auxillary) and practically carried to a hot shower (due to a slight case of hypothermia), I finally felt back to normal an hour later. Since we had to leave my Lightning, with its mast stuck in the mud in the channel at the mouth of the river, I, along with many in our fleet, watched from the club house as a professional crew tried to rescue my boat before a scheduled freighter ran it down. Fortunately, they managed to right it and tow it back to our BCYC just minutes before that freighter came charging down the channel with its searchlight focused on my Lightning in tow. I will never forget the many hands from our fleet that stayed late into the night, watching the rescue operations, and then hosing the mud off my boat and sails before tucking her safely away!

"My lifelong friendship with Joe began in 1976 with the purchase of my first Lightning. My brother, Tom, and I were attempting to put the mast up. We had the uppers and lowers backwards in the chain plates. Joe, always anxious to help out a fellow sailor, advised us on the correct placement and offered a few rigging tips. By the end of the day, I had signed myself and crew up for a series of sailing lessons. One tip that I will always remember from Joe was 'never take your hands off the main sheet'—which fortunately I still do to this day." *Matt Princing*

**Other Memories**—Joe tells us, "When I joined the BCYC, in 1953, I had the only Lightning (Skaneateles 2949). The 110s had a large fleet and wanted me to sell my Lightning and get a 110. Long story short—I kept my Lightning! I found two more Lightnings and activated our Lightning Fleet 216, which grew to twenty in its heyday. I would like to be remembered for resisting the temptation, back in 1953, to sell the only Lightning at the BCYC, buy a 110 and join their active racing fleet.

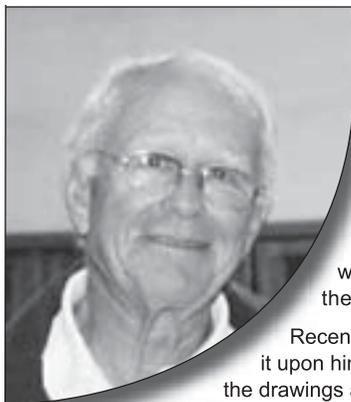
I would also like to be remembered for the many skippers and crews that I encouraged to join in the fun of racing a Lightning. In addition, I would hope that the many people I have given sailing lessons to over the years would remember me gratefully for getting them involved in the wonderful sport of sailing."

Matt Princing says, "Talking with fellow sailors, we have decided that Joe has trained over 150 crew members—many of which went on to purchase their first Lightning."

**Changes in the Class**—"I would not change one thing! The Lightning is still attracting some of the best sailors in the world!"



*Joe sharing his wisdom to a lucky listener.*



## **Nelson Small Schmitt**

Nelson is from Brazil and sails at the Sao Paulo Yacht Club with the Guarapiranga Fleet. He has been sailing Lightnings since the 1960s and is now the owner of Xamego VI, the sixth Lightning he has owned and built.

**Claim To Fame**—It seems that whenever someone needed a mast, Nelson always knew where one was available. It turns out that many, many years ago Nelson and some other Legends, like Tommy Sumner (Grandfather to the current three-time Jr. World Champion) got together and decided to chip in some money to develop the Lightning Class in Brazil. A fund was set up, and its purpose was to aid in obtaining parts in Brazil that could be made here. Nelson's tool shop has always been famous for coming up with those parts that you needed and weren't available in the country—masts, mast head caps, stainless steel spreaders, mast blocks, CB pins and all the measurement tools are just some of the parts he has built.

Recently, we ran out of masts. Nelson took it upon himself to find a supplier, provided all the drawings and qualified the samples, negotiated and bought enough masts to last a decade. The money came once again from the fund he controls.

**More Claim To Fame**—As a Class Measurer, he has participated in all the events held in Brazil. The most important aspect is that he does it all with great pleasure and pride. He will show and teach everything he has learned over the years and is still active in all our local events.

**What the Fans Say**—From James Sumner, "Nelson has been the Lightning Class in Brazil for three generations and is still going strong."

From Hans Ludwig, "Lately Nelson sails only with a female crew, doing so will surely keep him sailing for another sixty years."

From John Bennett, "It is only with people such as Nelson that the Lightning Class can grow. The boats he has built are always changing hands and popping up with new sailors joining the Class. Nelson has become a legend in finding room in his boat to fit an ice box with beer in it. There is always another can available. No matter how bad the conditions are, between races, if you have run out, look for Nelson!"



## **Joan and Gary Hurban**

Joan and Gary call Fleet 75 at Nyack Boat Club in Nyack, New York, their home port. They started sailing in Seattle, Washington, in the 1960s. When asked, "Why Lightnings?" they answered, "What else is there!?" They would like to make it a Class rule that the gun for all regattas be at 7:00 AM, no limit to the number of races, no wind limit and a maximum of a 15-minute lunch break. If there is wind and at least two willing competitors (and there always will be if Joan and Gary are there) there should be as many races as possible!

**Proudest Moment**—  
They spent all their wedding money on a brand new Lightning (#8182) instead of furniture. This Proudest

Moment may be overshadowed by their daughter, granddaughter and son-in-law, De, Jordan and Matt Weimer, purchasing a Lightning. They will be racing this year in Annapolis.

**Claim To Fame**—That they are just as competitive sailing together, with either one skippering, or sailing their own Lightnings, "HIS" and "HERS."

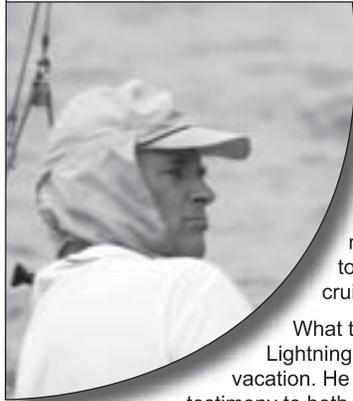
**The Fans Say**—"They are always pushing themselves and the Fleet to improve."

"They are tough to beat!"

"Can't keep up with them on or off the water!"



# ILCA LOCAL LEGENDS



## **Helmut Braun**

He sails out of Fleet 510 at the Lagos Yacht Club in Nigeria. His “trademark” is his funny sailing hat, a golfing cap with a flap covering his neck and ears, which was made by a local tailor after he suffered a heat stroke during sailing some years ago. He started sailing in 1975 in Suakin, Sudan (Red Sea). He bought a 14 catamaran (Starcat) and a beginner’s handbook. Initially, Helmut experienced some trouble when tacking the boat (had to jump off the boat onto a coral reef, push the bow about and jump back on) which made the family a bit nervous until he learned to back the jib during tacking (this technique was described in the advanced section of the handbook only). He was transferred to Lagos, Nigeria, in 1977 and started racing in Ospreys. Leaving Nigeria in 1980, he went back to Germany and onwards to Singapore he and his family started windsurfing in the Straits of Malacca. In 1988, he returned to Lagos, Nigeria, bought a wooden Lightning, eventually “upgraded” to fiberglass Lightnings and has been racing and cruising there ever since.

What the Fans Say—From Ian Edwards, “Helmut’s energy for sailing is phenomenal. He is currently the oldest regular Lightning sailor in Lagos but sails more than anyone. He races every Saturday, missing only those few weeks when he is on vacation. He often wins our quarterly points competition, which covers all races for the quarter, and is always placed, which is a testimony to both the quality and frequency of his sailing. He cruises to various picnic locations around Lagos most Sundays—often two hours each way. His wife Dolly is his dedicated crew, and they are a great team. Helmut is also a great motivator for Lightning sailing in Lagos. He is always ready to take out a newcomer as crew to get them on the water. He encourages other sailors to go “cruising” on Sundays. He made it a point to invite me when I was new and was one of those that made my entry into Lightning sailing in Lagos easy and enjoyable.

As a crew member for Alan Emslie (2007 Nigerian Nationals winner), Alan told me back in 2005, “we just want to get close enough to him on the downwind legs to make him stand-up”—a quirk that I only discovered as I became more competitive with him. As you get close to him, he stands up to access the situation !

In the area of “quirks”—besides the hat that makes him look like he just came off a camel crossing of the Sahara, and the standing up downwind—the other thing is his boat. Everything is marked by numbers—every sheet, cleat, halyard. Even the center board has seven numbered positions marked, so when you sail with Helmut, it is “sailing by the numbers.” He just issues his crew instruction by numbers so they don’t even need to know what the “thing” does. It is strange if you ever sail with him (which I have only done once since I am always in my own boat), but it is great way to get a new crew working, as they do not need to understand the sailing term or work out what does what in the first few minutes in a Lightning. It also avoids problems between different countries/languages for sailing terms for the same item on the boat.”

From Richard Willmott, “I have crewed for Helmut on many occasions; his numbering system is a piece of German precision. Going round the mark, you have board to 2, this rope to 3, etc. etc. Really confusing when all you really want is a beer !”

Why Lightnings—It’s a versatile dinghy for our waters (tidal waters, commercial harbor, shallow inland creeks).The racing is never boring with all the competitive sailors in the Fleet. On the other hand, the Lightning has sufficient space to take a family cruising comfortably and even take along guests. We have been out with four adults, two kids and cold boxes without feeling crowded. My youngest passenger was a six-month old girl (with a very nervous mother).

Proudest moment—When Fleet 510 was eventually registered with ILCA. At that time I was Commodore of Lagos Yacht Club and tried, in vain, to register the Fleet for over a year because everything coming from Nigeria was automatically taken as attempted fraud. The registration eventually happened through the intervention of the British GP 14 Class who were running sailing workshops at Lagos Yacht Club.

Improve the Class—Helmut says, “I can only speak for Lagos; I hope to see more sailing workshops for the Lightning Class being held in Lagos. This could be done during the off season in USA and Europe (October–December and February–April) when we still enjoy sunshine and reasonable winds.”

