

Classic Lightning

Craig Thayer — thayer@a-znet.com

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wooden_lightning

Bob Astrove — astrove@hotmail.com



2007 Wooden Lightning Get Together

July 28–29, 2007

Bob Astrove

The fifth annual Wooden Lightning Get Together was held this past July 28–29 at the Onondaga Yacht Club near Syracuse New York. Reaching our fifth anniversary is a big milestone, as it establishes the event as a true annual gathering by those of us who love our old wooden Lightnings.



Certainly these are not the fastest Lightnings around, and some are showing their years. Others are just drop dead spectacular-looking boats that truly reflect the evolution of the Class. At this year's event we had a first, with three boats sporting three digit sail numbers on the water: David Helman, Montclair, New Jersey (465), Doug Dixon, Gloucester Point, Virginia (584), and Jim Herz, Binghamton, New York (754).

Also joining us for the first time this year was Lou Maruiello, Chichester, New York (7310). Another noteworthy event was the official relaunching of 7310 and 465 after several years of work. It was a thrill to see both of these boats survive two days on the water with no problems beyond a few loose fasteners and the normal wooden boat problems that were managed via pump and sponge.

This year we shared the lake with an ESPN Bass Fishing Tournament, the winner receiving \$250,000. While our prize money was substantially less, like under 25 cents, it was quite a sight to see the ESPN trucks, helicopters, boats, and, of course, the \$50,000 bass boats with matching pickup trucks. Special thanks to Craig Thayer for coordinating with the fishing tournament organizers. There was some concern for how our presence on the lake might impact this televised sporting event. As it turns out, there was no impact. We coordinated the times we left the dock and returned, we raced in the deep water, and they fished along the banks.

As part of our evening activities we pulled out our growing collection of ILCA yearbooks dating back to 1948. Looking over the history of our boats was fun.



Little



Maurello



O'Brien

But I think most exciting was reading the old ads for boat builders and sailmakers. Reading some of the old go-fast articles is interesting as well. As an aside, next winter we plan to complete the project of scanning all the old yearbooks to CD's, making this Class history available to anyone interested.

And of course, I need to thank our hosts, the Onondaga Yacht Club, who every year welcome our rag-tag fleet with open arms. Craig Thayer, our host, organizes a terrific event, and his wife puts out lunches and dinner for us. I can't thank these people enough for their support of this unique event.

The racing this year was fantastic. Four races, and our boat, #7603, prevailed for the fourth consecutive year. Only this year was different. My teenage crew banished me to the front of the boat, and I crewed for Matt Klise (age 17), who along with my son Billy used this race as practice for the Junior NAs in a few weeks. Matt did a great job handling the boat and learning how to distinguish my non-stop "boat-babble" from the important stuff. Much more important than the competitive aspects of the sport, both Matt and Billy have gained an appreciation for the boats themselves and the responsibility of maintain-

ing these antiques. My goal has been to create two lifelong Lightning sailors as well as racers, and they appear to be making good progress.

Second place, for the fourth year in a row, was Bryne O'Brien and his wife Karen, from Ithaca New York. As in the past, the racing was close, including yet another photo finish in what is becoming an annual pattern. Third place again this year was David Little from Burlington, Vermont, along with his son Matt.

Joining the event for the second time this year was Ken Lambert and his wife Diane of Crystal Beach, Ontario. Ken finished fourth, benefiting from handing the tiller over to lifelong Lightning sailor Craig Thayer. David Teller, Bud Lake, New Jersey, along with his wife Judy and daughter Mellisa, joined us again this year, moving up to a fifth place finish. I have to note that the Tellers were the only boat not manning sponges and pumps all day. Their secret, they leave the boat in the water at a mooring all summer and the boat swells tight and dry. Doug Dixon also came back this year with his 'as original' restoration of 584. Unbelievable job of restoration, but as Doug (an old racing sailor) says, "Slow..."



Teller—Dixon—Little

Perfect for classic boat racing, on Saturday we had an 8–10 mph breeze from the northwest, perfectly aligned with the length of the lake. The race committee ran a series of relatively short courses. A couple of windward-lewards and a couple of triangular courses. Much like in the early days of Lightning racing, about half the fleet flew spinnakers and about half didn't. While this certainly spreads out the fleet, you have to keep in mind that the Woody Regatta is a different kind of event. Sure we have races, but it is very much a different kind of racing where finishing order is not necessarily as important as the thrill of finishing after taking a fifty or sixty year old boat around a course successfully.

As in prior years, Sunday we had some wind problems, light and shifty. We cancelled the races but got in a few hours of excellent casual sailing before we had to come in and pack up.

As in years past, we were joined this year by several boat owners whose boats were not quite ready for the event. Most notably, Fisk Hayden came by on Saturday. Fisk was looking over some details and taking some measurements for his restoration of Hull # 2. He thinks it will be ready for the 70th and should be quite a sight on the starting line. Buddy Wilkins, from Mt. Sidney, Virginia, along with his son Trey, are still working on 7293 and came to the Woody event for the second time. First timers Larry and Connie Bryon are mid restoration on boat number 6298 and drove up from the Philadelphia area. I think they got some information to help in their restoration and got out for two days of sailing. Brian Colvin joined the fun crewing for, I believe, his fourth time in the Woody event. Brian's assures us his restoration of # 8677 will be completed by next summer.

This year we awarded a new perpetual trophy to the highest placing first-timer attendee. David Helman took home the prize, a remarkably ugly lamp carved by prisoners at the Florida State Penitentiary.

Next year we will be moving our event to be part of the 70th anniversary celebration at Skaneateles. We are planning on twenty or so Woody's making the trip and are looking forward to allowing the rest of you to get a close up, hands on look at the evolution of the boats. Also coming for us old boat folks will be the "Classic" division at the Borderline regatta in October, and Doug Dixon and I are planning on using our old boats at the "Masters" Championship in August.

Boat #	Skipper & Crew	1	2	3	4	Ttl
7603	Matt Klise, Billy Astrove, Bob Astrove	1	2	2	2	7
10113	Byrne O'Brien, Karen O'Brien	7	1	1	1	10
13156	David Little, Matt Little, Trey Wilkins	2	3	3	3	11
7286	Ken Lambert, Craig Thayer, Trey Wilkins	4	4	4	5	17
5836	David Teller, Judy Teller, Melissa Teller	3	5	5	4	17
584	Doug Dixon, Gina Dixon	5	6	6	6	23
465	Dave Helman, Buddy Wilkins, Brian Colvin	6	8	8	7	29
7310	Lou Mauriello, Carol Maurello, Larry Byron	8	7	7	8	30
754	Jim Herz, Carol Herz	9	9	9	9	36

Owners present, boat remains work in progress:

- 2 Fisk Hayden
- 736 Craig Thayer
- 6298 Larry & Connie Byron
- 7293 Buddy Wilkins
- 8677 Brian Colvin



Matt Klise, Bob & Billy Astrove



Bob & Billy Astrove and Matt Klise



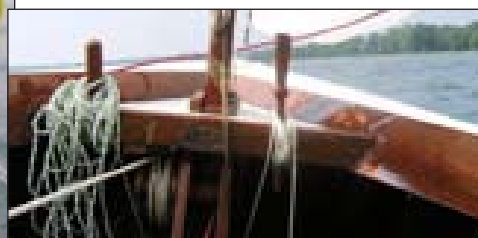
Lou & Carol Maruello and Larry Byron



Judy & Melissa Teller



David Helman & Brian Colvin



Helman boat