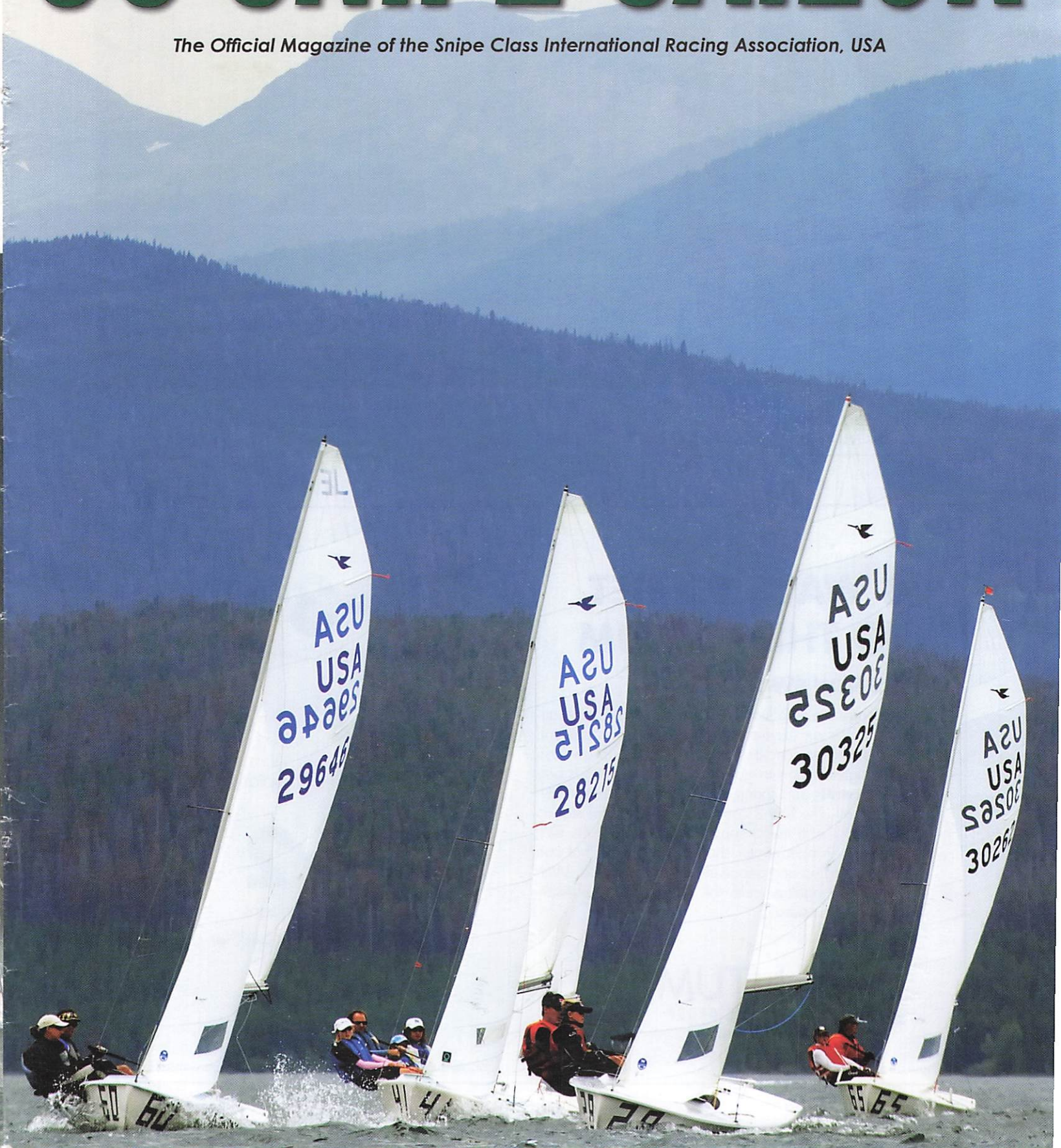


Fall 2007

US SNIPE SAILOR

The Official Magazine of the Snipe Class International Racing Association, USA



2008 SNIPE WINTER CIRCUIT



Fried Elliott photo

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US SNIPE SAILOR™

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On the cover: Action in the Heinzerling Fleet, 2007 US Snipe Nationals, Dillon Colorado

Photo: Fried Elliott
www.friedbits.com/PhotoBits/Sailing/Snipe/index.php

From Our National Secretary

Once again, a lot is cooking at SCIRA USA. In fact, I would suggest we're smoking right along. The

2007 Nationals in Dillon, Colorado have come and gone. Congratulations to our 2007 Champions! Heinzerling Champions: Ernesto Rodriguez and Megan Place (Miami); Wells Champions: Gene Soltero and Mallory McGroarty (Dallas); Junior Champions: Tyler Sinks and Nick Kaschak (San Diego); and Special Junior/Senior Champions: Carolina Palacios and Rogelio Padron (Miami). Thanks to Doug and Karen Swenson and all the volunteers in Dillon (more than 50 of them!) for organizing and hosting a great regatta.

Fleet growth and promotion are the focus of our energies. At the July Board meeting, we allocated almost \$7,000 for fleet building and promotional activities this year. SCIRA USA received its first major contribution of \$15,000 to fund growth initiatives over the next three years, thanks to the incredible generosity of fellow Snipe sailor Gene Soltero and Soltero Resources, Inc. That program will be rolled out beginning in 2008. Beginning with this issue, the *US Snipe Sailor* magazine is now full color. Three of the four member-at-large roles have been filled and have already begun work in their areas.

You're going to see a lot of positive changes over the next 12 months... stay tuned. If you see something you want to be part of, please don't hesitate to contact me.

See you on the water!

Barb Evans
SCIRA USA National Secretary



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Letters To The Editor

Dear US Snipe Sailor,

I just want to say what a fine job your are doing with the US Snipe Sailor. I think it is quite an asset to the Class. I particularly like the four-color cover format.

I have a couple of comments on the Summer, 2007 issue. In the article on the spinnaker jib, The Old Man was right. He and I had many a go-round on the subject before he finally wore me down. Unfortunately, one of the unintended consequences of the short beefed-up forestay was the introduction of mast pre-bending, which I was not in favor of. No one could ever explain to me why a 15½ foot two-person boat with a 21 foot mast needed both mast pre-bending and a mast pusher-puller. One or the other, but not both.

Incidentally, I was Rules Committee Chairman—not International Chief Measurer. That title belonged to Chuck Loomis, a true stalwart of the Class. I never thought that Chuck got the recognition that he deserved. In his will, he left a substantial bequest to the Snipe Perpetual Fund that the Class is still benefiting from today.

Peggy Davis' article was excellent. I sailed against Means and Peggy for many years, usually losing, and she makes some very good points about attending regattas. I know from experience that the Halloween Regatta is THE place to be in late October.

Keep up the good work.

Happy Sailing,
Dan N. Williams

Dan Williams was SCIRA Commodore in 1977 - Ed.

Dear fellow Snipers,

I read Old Man's article on the development and acceptance of the "hankless jib" and wanted to share a couple thoughts. I remember "those days" and I think the persistence in effort to make that rule change possible, plus the concern to be sure everyone was knowledgeable and on board, speaks volumes to why the Snipe Class is still as strong as it is today.

Gonzalo outlined the official channels he worked through and the many different directions he, and others, had to turn to build critical mass to vote the change. One thing I felt was important was the constant and consistent communication with we sailmakers throughout the discussion. I know all of us (Mark, Jeff, Vince and ourselves here in the US in those days) had many a discussion with Dan, Jerry and Gonzalo. It was always impressive to me how important it was that

we all were comfortable and enthused about removing the hanks. This made us all feel a part of the decision making process of the class... or at least like our opinions were appreciated.

Too many times, in other Classes and other rule changes, we might read about a major rule change in the Class's Newsletter without any idea of why the change and what was expected of us, the Class's sailmakers.

You know, it is truly a symbiotic relationship between the one design class and it's suppliers. We all truly need each other to survive and grow.

Throughout the years the Snipe Class has always involved its builders, sailmakers and mast builders in all its thinking and planning whether it was for marketing ideas or rule changes. This is healthy to say the least, and I just wanted to emphasize that we all appreciate this "team approach" and look forward to many more years working alongside the Class!

Thanks,

Greg Fisher, North Sails

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Dear SCIRA USA Members and Friends,

This issue marks the first anniversary of the *US Snipe Sailor*. We think this is a good time to take a look at what we have accomplished, and turn forward toward our future.

In a little over three years, the *US Snipe Sailor* publishing staff has grown from one person producing an eight-page black and white newsletter, to a four-person editorial board turning out a twenty-four page full color magazine every quarter. We've changed our name and have rededicated ourselves to consistent, high-quality content for all our readers.

Even with all of the changes so far, there are even more positive changes coming. With the approval of the US Board, the *US Snipe Sailor* is now full color! Although our printing costs will increase, we feel that there is sufficient visual and promotional benefit to justify this increased cost.

The Editorial Board strives to ensure that the *US Snipe Sailor* meets its objectives of both informing and educating current Snipe sailors, and promoting our Class to all sailors. How can you help? Provide us with your input and feedback! This is your magazine – please tell us what you like and don't like about it, and what you'd like to see in the future. Which articles have you found useful or entertaining; what have you not seen that you'd like to see? What kind of features do you think would appeal to non-Snipe sailors?

If you feel you have something to contribute to the magazine, please contact one of the editorial board members. We know there are many knowledgeable people in the Snipe Class, and we are always looking for contributors. Please consider sharing your expertise and experience with the rest of the membership - you are guaranteed an appreciative audience!

Do you know someone who is not currently on our mailing list that should be? Give us a call, or drop us a line and we will add that person to the mailing list. We welcome yacht clubs, college sailing programs, retail merchants, and other interested parties to become a part of our community.

Please don't hesitate to share your thoughts with us—your input will help make the *US Snipe Sailor* a useful publication, now and into the future.

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Class Growth

...the implementation of the plan!

by Barb Evans

In last quarter's *US Snipe Sailor*, a strategic plan was put forth to focus on growing the Class. Key to the implementation was the creation of four major roles at the Board level: Class Development Officer, Major Regatta Resource Officer, Public Relations, Advertising, and Merchandising Officer, and International Qualifications Officer. The strategic plan calls for the At-Large Board Members to take responsibility for these roles. Within seven days of the board meeting, three of the four roles were filled. These leaders have already rolled up their sleeves and gone to work. They are:

Class Development Officer: David Odell

This role is tasked with oversight of membership recruitment and retention efforts made by local fleets and districts to increase membership in SCIRA USA. In addition, this person will also be responsible for developing creative national programs that will drive growth.

Major Regatta Quality Assurance Officer: Mike Blackwood

This role is tasked with ensuring that major regattas (District Championship on up) are run in a consistent manner, and that the high quality of race management for which the Snipe Class is known is sustained.

International Qualifications Officer: Lee Griffith

This role is tasked with developing and implementing a policy for qualifying regattas and providing oversight of the qualification process for SCIRA International events.

Public Relations/Advertising/Merchandising Officer: TBD

This role is tasked with driving an aggressive public relations program that promotes Serious Sailing, Serious Fun® of the Snipe Class. Additionally, this position will oversee SCIRA USA's advertising and merchandising programs.

The final key role is that of the District Governors. The strategic plan puts responsibility and authority into the hands of the District Governors to drive results and achieve growth in their District. To that end, the Board voted to allocate funds immediately to fleet development activities.

Serving as a catalyst to begin growth activities now, the Board approved \$6,700 to resource growth and promotion. Here's how the money will be spent:

US Snipe Sailor - \$2,200 additional cost per year to go full color. The *US Snipe Sailor* is one of our greatest promotional tools. As you can see in this edition, the full color is very powerful. Of course this publication goes to our members, but we also plan to send it to yacht clubs, college and high school programs, and junior programs. If you have a place or a group of people that you think should receive this magazine, please send the names and addresses to Mary Buckley (direx@inebraska.com).

Fleet Development Activities - \$3,500 consisting of \$500 to each of the seven districts to hold two fleet development activities, and be reimbursed up to \$250 for each activity. The activity will be at the discretion of the District Governor. Funds not spent in 2007 will not carry over to the district in subsequent years. If you have an idea for your fleet, contact your District Governor now!

Tri-fold brochure - \$500 to print 1,000 full-color brochures. These brochures will be used for promotional activities and will also be distributed to District Governors and Fleet Captains. A version of this brochure will be available on the website.

Serious Fun - Nationals Promotion - \$500 each year for a social event to be held at Nationals. The event will be hosted by the fleet holding the subsequent year's Nationals, with the objective being to promote the venue and date. SCIRA USA will match dollar for dollar, capped at \$500, the direct costs incurred by the hosting fleet.

Stay tuned for further developments as we implement our growth strategy.

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US Teams Finish Third and Fourth At Junior Worlds



photos by Enrico Solerio

US Juniors Tyler Sinks and Nick Kaschak (above left) finished third, while Nick Voss and Tom Fink (above right) finished fourth in the 2007 Snipe Junior World Championships in San Remo, Italy.

Read Nick Voss's account of their experiences, and find a link to lots of great photos of the event, at www.snipeus.org.

Snipe Fleet 12, in the San Francisco Bay area, has a tradition of awarding an annual trophy to a very special Fleet member. The trophy is called the "Bird Brain Award", and it goes to the member who's made the biggest mistake, created the largest snafu, or has just generally flubbed up enough for everyone to take notice. Most everyone at one time or other has qualified for nomination, and all Fleet members have learned from others' mistakes. It is in that spirit that we include "Bird Brainers" in the US SNIPE SAILOR. While we may occasionally chuckle at the situations, we will all think, "I'm glad that didn't happen to me." So, here's this issue's Snipe snafu and the lessons learned:

Pack It In, Pack It Out

You may have already heard people rave about the 2007 North Americans held on the Great Sound in Bermuda. Moderate breeze, warm air and cool, clear water made for ideal sailing conditions. The competition was strong and frequent position changes were the order of each race day.

Stevie Dickenson, local Bermudian favorite and all-around great guy, had his beautifully restored boat going really fast. In the second race on the last day, he was once again near the front of the fleet for the first two legs – but wound up finishing fifteenth. When asked what went wrong, he said he had a banana peel on his rudder. Some quaint Bermudian saying for "I went the wrong direction" perhaps?



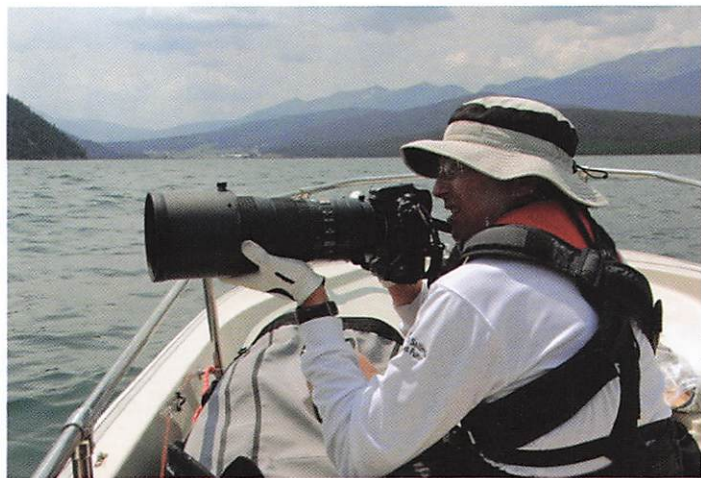
No, he had a banana peel on his rudder. Somewhere on a downwind leg it had attached itself to the leading edge of his rudder like a miniature octopus. He found the culprit quickly enough, but with the depth of the competition in the Snipe fleet it's hard to catch up when 10 boats pass you. Later that day over Dark and Stormies, three Snipe teams admitted to eating bananas between races and, yes, tossing the peels overboard. Granted, a banana peel takes only 2-5 weeks to decompose compared with about 450 years for a plastic water bottle. But when was the last time you saw a fish eat a banana? From the earth it was created and to the earth it should be returned.

Lessons learned: 1) if you bring it on the boat, eat it, drink it or bring it back to the dock; 2) if you feel like your boat is slow, check your centerboard first then your rudder; and 3) eat bananas when racing; the three peel-tossers are all great sailors.

submitted by Susan Odell

An Interview With Fried Elliott

by Susan Odell



Vince Becker photo

Fried Elliott's photographs make Snipe sailing come alive on the printed page. His slide shows bring a rush of adrenaline and many a gasp as boats round marks and cross tacks to a rock and roll beat. Fried (pronounced "Freed") captures the essence of our sport and turns it into art. He calls himself an "amateur photographer" but there is nothing amateurish about his images. He also calls himself a volunteer, and that he truly is. His time and expenses are all donated and we of the Snipe Class are incredibly fortunate to be the beneficiary of such talent and selflessness. While he prefers to be behind the camera rather than in the spotlight, we thought it was time to shine a little light on our Class photographer.

Before you were an experienced sailing photographer, you were an experienced sailor. Tell us a bit about your sailing history.

I started sailing at the age of 14 when my father spent \$125 on an old wooden/fiberglass kit sailboat (which happened to resemble a Snipe in many ways.) My younger brother and I spent a year getting it "lake ready" and two years sailing the boat. We were having such a great time that my parents upgraded to a Catalina 22 and joined the Windycrest Sailing Club on Keystone Lake outside of Tulsa, Oklahoma, where I soon started crewing for Darline Hobock in Thistles and small keelboats. My introduction to the Snipe came at the 1972 Snipe Nationals on Lake Fort Gibson when the Event Chair, Jack Zink, asked me to assist in the measuring tent. While I was busy measuring centerboards and rudders, I met The Old Man (Gonzalo Diaz.) It seemed his crew, Mark Williams (a.k.a. El Rojo due to the color of his hair), wanted to race Junior Nationals and needed a crew of his own. I volunteered and my first sail in a Snipe was in The Old Man's wooden boat, number 10111. He coached us through the Junior Nationals and we got fifth – not bad for a teenage skipper and a pick-up crew. After college and graduate school I eventually found myself

in Dallas. It was 1980 and I was ready to start sailing again. I came across the White Rock Sailing Club, home of Snipe Fleet #1, and soon thereafter started crewing for past International Commodore Pete Fenner. Pete and I sailed Snipes together for many years and attended several Winter Circuits and Nationals events. Eventually I got my own Snipe and sailed it extensively through 1994, adding more Circuits, Nationals events and many District 2 regattas to my sailing resumé. From an organization standpoint, I was the Event Co-chair for the 1990 North Americans and US Masters and the Event Chair for the 1994 Nationals, all at Rush Creek Yacht Club. The first Snipe trophy I won was a fifth place finish in the Dudley Gamblin, Jr. Series in 1972 and the last trophy I won (to date) was the National Secretary's Trophy in 1994.

What about your experience as a photographer?

I have been interested in photography for much of my life but took it up fairly seriously in 1997. Initially my interests centered on scenic and wildlife photography, primarily throughout the southwest and western United States. I discovered *nikonians.org* and through that site connected with a terrific group of amateur and professional photographers that were quite helpful to me in my development as a photographer. Many of the techniques I use in sailing photography I learned from professional landscape, wildlife, or photojournalism shooters. Much like sailing, photography is an acquired skill and there is no substitute for time behind the camera and being coached by those more accomplished than yourself.

What inspired you to move from sailor to photographer?

The real story is that I gave up sailing because to continue racing at the same level meant having a very unhappy marriage. The result: the marriage improved some but my disposition took a dive. I missed being outdoors. Because I had always been fascinated by the combined creative and technical challenge of photography, I suggested outdoor photography as a couple's activity. That, like the marriage, didn't last, but I found that outdoor photography provided the best blend of all the things I was looking for in my life at the time.

Why did you pick the Snipes and Stars to become the objects of your art?

In 2003 one of my *nikonians.org* photography mentors made the comment, "If you want to take your photography to another level, photograph something you know and love." Well, I knew and loved one-design racing and the Snipe so I decided to give it a try by shooting the 2004 US Masters in Dallas. I received a great deal of enthusiastic support for that shoot, even though I was less than pleased with the results. I knew, though, that my mentor was right: if I could get my images to a level where I was satisfied with them, then they would probably be pretty good images. It took about two years, but I'm now reasonably satisfied with the level of my Snipe photography. Here I want to give credit to and thank Don Hackbarth for supporting my early efforts to photograph Snipe regattas. He was instrumental in getting me involved and understanding the

"I never reached the pinnacle of sailing that people like Peter (Commette) have enjoyed for many years, but perhaps I'm slowly getting there with my photography..."

need for a dedicated boat and driver, without which my images would be woefully inadequate. (Thanks also to my fantastic launch drivers over the years!)

In 2006 I wanted to add another one-design class to my curriculum vitae and George Szabo, Mark Reynolds, and Augie Diaz all put in a good word for me with the Star Class. After some delay, a great relationship was established with Bill Allen and the other Star Class officers and it has been a terrific experience ever since. Shooting internationally for the Star Class has been more of an off-the-water learning experience since the press demands are so, well, demanding. On the water I don't feel that I see the Star quite as well as I do the Snipe,

weather mark. I try to recreate the images we carry around as racing sailors because these have a deep emotional connection. Also, if you look carefully at my photographs, you'll see that, compositionally, I'm always trying to capture what it looks like if you are just nose out at the start, just barely leading into a mark, and ultimately just winning the race. If you haven't personally experienced those situations it is much harder to pre-visualize the images and to effectively capture them with the camera.

Which Snipe regatta (so far) has been the most fun to shoot and why?

Every Snipe regatta is fun in its own way, of course, but the Don Q in Miami is always a favorite because of my long-standing relationship with the Diaz family and the many fun memories I've had sailing at that regatta. I always tell people you can't take a bad picture on Biscayne Bay. Erie Nationals was a lot of fun last summer and Nassau this year was truly enjoyable. (Everyone should sail the Nassau circuit at least once in their Snipe life!) Without a doubt, however, the single best day of Snipe photography was October 24, 2006 at the Western Hemisphere & Orient Championships



Carmen and Gonzalo "Old Man" Diaz, at the 2005 US Nationals, San Diego. See Fried's comments about this photo on page 10.

but it's coming along. What an incredible boat to photograph. Long term, I want to try and stay focused on one-design racing and the more traditional classes. Something I hope to work on over the winter is speeding up my onsite post production automation and launch a major overhaul of my website since today, for every hour on the water shooting, I probably spend three hours in post production, site operations, and responding to press and print requests.

Do you think that being a sailor is a prerequisite to being a great sailing photographer?

Yes. The difference between someone who takes pictures and a photographer is the mastery of a very difficult and most essential skill: you must pre-visualize the image you are trying to create. As a racing sailor, those images are already in your brain; you know what it looks like to have an overlap at the

(WH&O) in Miami. I had just come from shooting the Star Worlds and was really on top of my game, and the racing action that day was just fantastic (see www.friedbits.com/PhotoBits/Sailing/Snipe/2006WHO/Oct24/index.html)

Some events are less fun only because I've got some sort of post-production obligation cutting into my "serious fun" time during the event. This year at the Dillon Nationals was a good example; because of the weather, postponements and abandonments early in the week, I was sweating out the slideshow production until literally the last minute standing at the podium.

What makes a great sailing image?

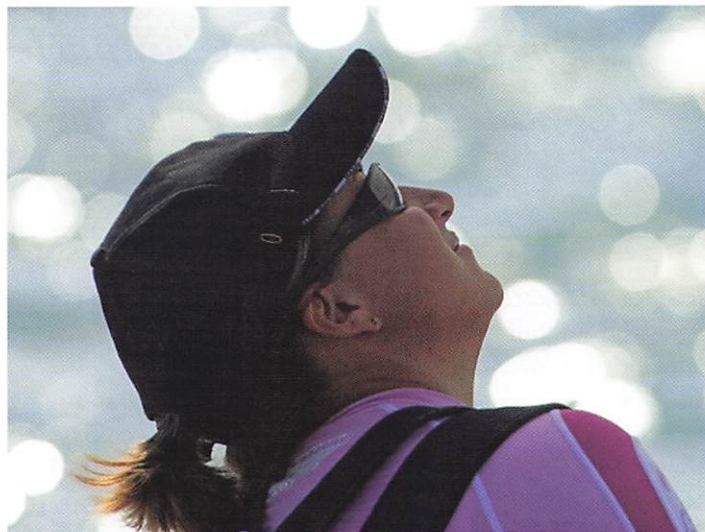
I shoot anywhere from 500-1,200 exposures every day I'm on the water and so I've looked at A LOT of sailing images. In

my albums you see perhaps 15% of the total. A great sailing image to me must first be technically flawless, and then compositionally it gets down to three things: faces, dynamic water, and racing context.

Sailing photography is still first and foremost about people (a lesson taught to me by my pro mentors who shoot event, documentary, and news coverage). This means I have to have at least one clear face in the shot, ideally two. (I have a shot from the Star Worlds of the guys lined up on the starboard tack lay-line approach to the windward mark and there are 14 faces. That's the record so far!) The second is dynamic water since it's the only way to indicate in a photograph how hard the wind is blowing or how fast the boats are sailing, which is essential information to you as a racing sailor. The final element is what I call racing context, which means you have something in the frame that tells the racing story, such as a mark, a flag or a crossing situation. Otherwise it just looks like someone is out day-sailing. A good image can be had with just one or two of these three elements (faces, water, context) but compositionally it needs to be extremely strong.

Many of us have a favorite Fried Snipe image – what's yours?

Everyone sees the images from their own perspective. My perspective tends to focus on achieving a certain compositional,



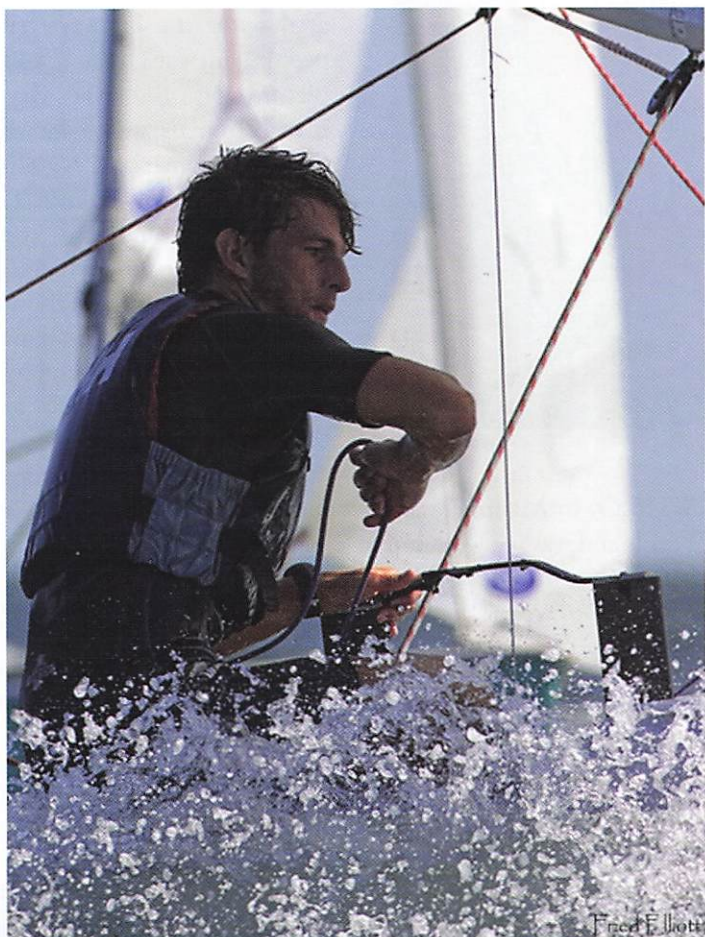
Aimee Graham, at the 2006 WH&O.

subject, or technical goal I had for myself at the time, rather than a, "Wow, what a great shot!" Having said that, here are a few I think I'll always look back on with a degree of satisfaction:

One of my personal subject goals has been to get a good portrait of The Old Man showing his character and depth. Not surprisingly, my best is of him with Carmen onshore in San Diego (page 9). Others have commented it is a favorite of theirs as well, perhaps for different reasons.

The "Flying Snipe" is a big favorite for many because the boat is really launched (page 11). For me it's a favorite because it was the first time I mastered the art of high-speed auto-fire to catch the boat set up perfectly in a wave (a trick suggested to me by a pro basketball shooter). This was the best shot out of a sequence of 13 I fired as Nick Voss and Andy Rahn went into, through and beyond that wave. The framing was high and I didn't get low enough to get Andy's face, but for the boat/water action I was trying to capture, I had finally developed and mastered the necessary technique.

An enduring personal favorite is the one I took of Guilherme Hamelmann at the 2006 WH&O (left). As a long-time crew, I relate strongly to crew shots and with this one I feel like I'm right there, in the flow, just racing as hard as I can. It has a very powerful emotional connection for me and I hope I've created other images that have a similar connection for other sailors. Finally, there is the shot of Aimee Graham at the WH&O (above). I've tried in different ways to capture what it is about our sport that keeps us literally addicted to it, despite the pain, expense, sacrifice, drudgery, and years of non-trophy finishes. I've come to the conclusion that when we're out there, we're immersed in an incredible sea of positive energy, corny as that may sound. In this picture Aimee had just finished a pretty tough day on the water, but she is totally immersed in that sea of energy. I don't think this is something we fully appreciate at the time, but it is always there.



Guilherme Hamelmann (Brazil), crewing for Henrique Haddad at the 2006 WH&O.

Any other comments you'd like to add?

Peter Commette once commented to me that I constantly work on improving my photography much like I was still racing and trying to get to the next level. He's right; I don't know any other way to approach it. Right now in my garage I'm working on a remote-controlled camera rig that I hope to suspend from a kite and fly over a windward mark, shooting straight down on the action. (Can you visualize it?) It would be kind of a Stuart Walker or rule-book drawing of a mark rounding, an image we all have in our minds forever, only this would be the real thing.

A few days into the Star Worlds this year, three photographers led by Kaoru Soehata, an incredibly accomplished photographer from Japan, asked if they could go out on my photo boat. They said they had looked at their Star photographs, looked at mine, and decided to have me teach them how to shoot the Star. So out we went and we shot the Stars together just like we were tuning or working on our boat handling, and just like sailing buddies we had a terrific day on the water. This is very uncommon in the photography game. I never reached the pinnacle of sailing that people like Peter have enjoyed for many years, but perhaps I'm slowly getting there with my photography.

Finally, I would also like to say "thank you" to everyone who has been a part of the journey and to all my photo subjects. I hope everyone sees the "big picture" now. Whatever inconvenience or distraction I may cause for you out there on the water, keep in mind that together we're creating an image of the Snipe that is vibrant, exciting, compelling, and just infectiously fun. Keep it rolling! 🐟



Nick Voss (skipper) and Andy Rahn at the 2005 US Nationals in San Diego. See Fried's comments about this photo on page 10.

Author's note: We would like to hear from you about your favorite Fried image. You can view Fried's photographs on his website, www.friedbits.com. Please send a reference to the exact photo and a brief statement about what makes it special to you to: Susan Odell, seodell@yahoo.com. We hope to publish these favorites as a regular feature.

Do Not Buy ANY Boat Cover Until You Study This Comparison Chart

Sailors' Tailor	Competitors
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The Richmond Yacht Club (not-so-junior) Junior Reunion

By Dick Loomis

Submitted by Susan Odell

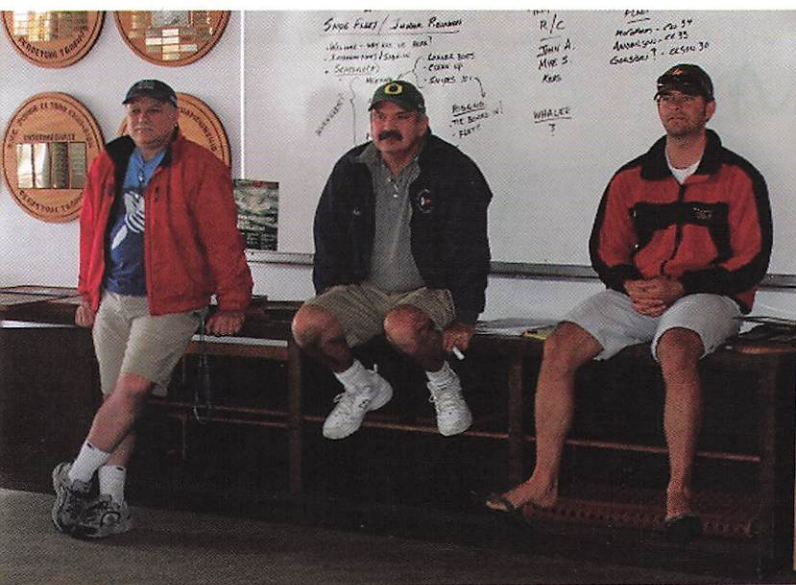
The San Francisco Bay Snipe Fleet has the same concerns as the rest of the Snipe Family: *membership*. We need more sailors! We need the twenty-somethings who are out of college, have a job, are married and starting a family. What better class than the Snipe? It's a family-oriented class that provides the wholesome atmosphere we all desire. Family, friends, and fun. It can't get any better than that!

We came up with a strategy to get some former participants in the Richmond Yacht Club Junior Program into Snipes. The idea was quite simple: have a reunion and let them race Snipes, and then follow it up with some Serious Fun. In a previous lifetime (about 12 years ago), I was the junior program director at RYC. While I had maintained

conned twenty-five ex-juniors to show up. One participant, Krysia Pohl, even flew in from Philadelphia for the day! Many had their boyfriends, girlfriends, husbands, wives, and kids in tow.

Fleet 12 members came through big time. Twelve boats were donated for the day. I was responsible for the recruitment of the boats (as well as their owners). Getting people to loan their boats out to complete strangers was a bit of a challenge, until I explained to the fleet membership that these "kids" were now responsible adults and that they were better sailors than us! Fleet members acted as mentors to help promote the Class and the fleet.

Conditions on the day of the event were very challenging. Winds were southerly at around 16 to 18 knots,



contact with a few of them, most of these "juniors" were off my radar screen. Most are now in their mid to late twenties – some married, some with kids, college graduates, collegiate All-Americans, all working and productive, and all great sailors. But most importantly, all potential Snipe sailors.

With the help of one of them, Skip McCormack, we contacted as many as we could. Skip, a longtime friend and one of my "kids", promoted it as a reunion. I promoted it as a fleet building event. Together we enticed, cajoled, and

with gusts into the 20s. We set up the race course in a channel protected by a breakwater, but even there the waves were large and we had to contend with commercial traffic. I overheard one of the participants say to a friend, "If I owned a Snipe, I don't think I would loan my own boat to *me*, let alone a bunch of strangers!"

We wisely relocated the race course to an area in the lee of some large houses built upon the breakwater. While it was still windy (and very shifty) the water was flat and much more Snipe friendly.

It made for some great racing—and peace of mind!

I had thought beforehand that the racing would be more about fun than competition. Boy was I ever wrong! The race committee, headed by Kersey Clausen and John Amen, announced at the skippers meeting that they would not be keeping scores. That concept was lost on the water when it became apparent that everyone was in full race mode. This likely was because many of the sailors had college sailing experience, so it became a collegiate event: USC, Cal, Stanford, San Diego, the Coast Guard Academy, Santa Cruz, Hawaii, and Santa Barbara were all represented. We even had a spectator fleet!

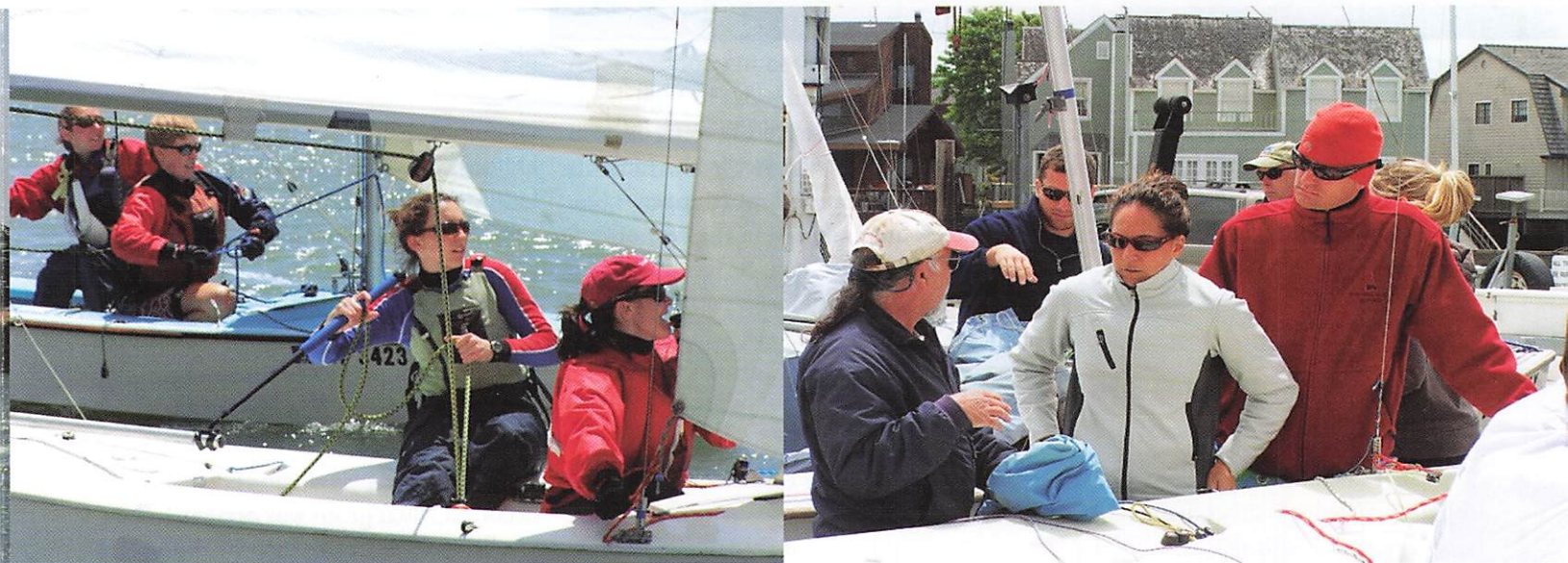
We had 8 races within 2 hours; mostly windward-leeward courses, but

I explained that these “kids” were now responsible adults and that they were better sailors than us!

with a couple of triangles tossed in. Since the courses were so short and most crews were unfamiliar with the pole launching systems and techniques (and most were exhausted after the first few races), most boats just held out

the jib by hand on the downwind legs. USC's David Levy and Katie Clausen “won”, followed by Cal and Stanford's Abby Swann and Ashley Frush, and in third was Hawaii and USC's Mallory McCollum and Kelly Loomis. Two of the top three boats were sailed by women. While the racing was really close and competitive, it was all just an excuse to be on the water with some old friends and everyone had a blast.

The racing was followed by a Serious barbecue and a Fun kegger at Kersey's house. Carey Clausen took lots of photos while Vince Casalaina videotaped the whole thing. It was a classic Snipe event. It was a simple idea that proved to be a great idea and one that can be easily replicated in other fleets. Serious Sailing and Serious Fun! ➡



Facing page, left: (l to r) Larry McCollum, Dick Loomis, and Skip McCormack.

Facing page, right: Close racing to the weather mark.

Above, left: Mallory McCollum (skipper) and Kelly Loomis make their daddys proud.

Above, right: Vincent Casalaina explains Snipe rigging to Kryisia Pohl.

All photos by Carey Clausen.

Dick Loomis has been sailing Snipes since 1966. He was a collegiate sailor at Oregon (go Ducks!) in the early 70s, then toyed with 470s following graduation. He wisely returned to the Snipe fleet in 1980. He has chaired the Snipe Nationals and North Americans, the US Sailing Youth Championship, and was the Richmond Yacht Club Junior Program Director. He is currently the Snipe Fleet 12 Fleet Captain, even though life has interrupted his on-the-water time with more important priorities. Dick is the primary caregiver for his wife of 33 years, Hester, who has early onset Alzheimer's. Somehow he still finds time to make his local fleet stronger and continually reminds us that the Serious Fun side of Snipe sailing is what it's all about.

2007 Wells Champions: Gene Soltero and Mallory McGroarty

Submitted by Susan Odell

Winning any Snipe regatta is a challenge. The depth of the sailing expertise in the Class is such that Collegiate All American sailors, National champions, District champions, and even World champions pop up all over the country. While we applaud Ernesto Rodriquez and Megan Place for being crowned the 2007 US Snipe National Champions, we also give a lot of credit to the winners of the Wells Series, Gene Soltero and Mallory McGroarty. Here Gene tells us about how he prevailed in the Wells fleet on Lake Dillon:

OVER THE YEARS I'VE PARTICIPATED IN SIX OR SEVEN US Nationals, from as far back as 1975 to as recently as 2000. I have also been to the Canadian Nationals three times and the French Nationals four times, placing well in France with my top finish a 3rd. Lake Dillon happens to be one of my all time favorite spots in the world, especially in late July and early August when the mountain morning temperatures are in the 50's while Dallas swelters in the high 90s. So when it was announced that the Nationals would be held in Dillon, I immediately started making plans to go.

Unfortunately, my regular crew Catherine recently changed jobs and couldn't get the vacation time. While considering other crew options, I remembered the little girl across the street. She's lived there all her life and was first introduced to Snipes at the age of eight or nine. She could always be counted on to fill a crew slot on Sunday afternoons, and she was totally fearless in heavy air. As she started growing up she gravitated to other activities (lacrosse, cheerleading, clubs at school, etc.) and she hadn't been Snipe sailing in years. Mallory McGroarty, now 5'10" and 18 (she had a birthday on the second day of the Wells Series), is no longer the little girl across the street. I knew she still had a sense of adventure and a highly competitive spirit, so I approached her about crewing at the Nationals – she was excited about the opportunity.

During the two months before the Nationals we both agreed that some serious training was in order. We did about 6-8 hours of shore school, starting with nomenclature, knots and the basic mechanics of wind action on the sails. From there we went to on-the-water drills and tuned several different afternoons sailing against Ken Culver and his crew in tacking duels and other maneuvers. When Mallory was having trouble getting comfortable with the two-stroke jib sheet tacking, we rigged a series of ropes and pulleys for her to practice with at home. By the time we got to Dillon, she nailed the tacks perfectly. Our combined weight was a little on the heavy side for Dillon, but Mallory's super good humor about everything made it all worthwhile.



Gene Soltero and Mallory McGroarty, on Lake Dillon

Fried Elliott photo

As far as staying ahead of the pack at Dillon, for me the first priority was boat speed. I gave Mallory the responsibility of looking for the puffs, anticipating them as they hit the boat, and then hiking to keep the boat flat through the puffs. If we became overpowered and started to heel, I would feather into the puffs rather than have us both ease sails. I could then concentrate on the competition and clock the shifts. For the most part we would sail upwind before each race and get an idea of the average headings on both tacks in the center and on the sides of the course. We also made every effort to be on the line in clear air and at full speed at the gun. It didn't seem to matter whether we started at the favored end or not, so long as we had clear air and boat speed at the start. During the Crosby, we tried to stay with the bulk of the fleet and concentrate on boat speed, but continued to tack on the sustained headers. During the first day of the Wells, we did pretty much the same thing. After the first two races, we tried to stay near and cover those three or four people closest to us in score. By sailing very conservatively, we kept from having a bad race and stayed consistently in the lead group, but never in front for very long. Finally, we shifted gears a lot as the wind strength went up and down. We were constantly changing the jib blocks fore and aft for sustained wind velocity changes.

It's been 32 years since I failed to qualify for the Heinzerling, so the Wells win is bittersweet. But the competition was tough and any one of six different teams could have won, so I feel pretty good about having our names on one of the National trophies. Besides, there's nothing quite like sailing on Lake Dillon with the mountains all around. The facilities were great and the large tents provided a central place for sailors to get together and socialize, resulting in some serious post-racing fun.

The great thing to me about sailing Snipes is that I've been able to go almost anywhere in the US or Europe and find a boat to charter or borrow (and generally also find an experienced crew.) I've found that Snipe sailing is pretty much the same no matter where you go, and it always involves serious sailing and serious fun. —

Snipe Newbies: Will and Sarah Thomas

Will Thomas has been an avid dinghy sailor since childhood, sailing Sunfish, Lightnings and Fireballs out of Rehoboth Bay Sailing Association in Delaware. His career took him to the University of Virginia where he found the sailing venues to be too far for convenience, so his sailing habit languished for 15-plus years.

Now an established American history professor and father of three, Will decided it was time to introduce his family to sailing. Another career move to the University of Nebraska in Lincoln was the impetus Will needed to find a family-friendly fleet. He looked into the Lightning Class, but alas, there were no Lightnings in Nebraska. He came across the Snipe Class website and before long he found himself at the Lincoln Sailing Club, crewing for the Snipe Fleet Captain, Joe Frey. He then borrowed a boat and went sailing with Sarah, a spunky 9 year-old and his eldest child. She loved it. She said her favorite part of sailing was hiking out and her dad needed every ounce of her

70-ish pound frame for those windy spring days in Lincoln. Will was able to buy a used Jibe Tech from John and Mary Buckley last September and he and Sarah have been racing as much as possible ever since.

Even though a harsh winter and a cold, rainy spring kept them more off the water than on, they decided to make the trek to Dillon, Colorado for Snipe Nationals. Will hoped they would learn more about how to go fast, and Sarah hoped there would be other kids to hang out with. Neither was disappointed. Will met Brian Bissell of

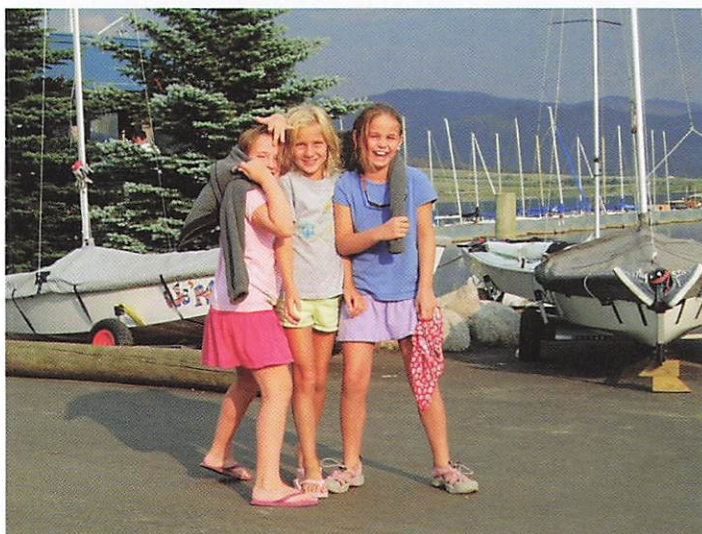
North Sails who proceeded to help Will tune his rig while Sarah was able to teach some valuable hula-hoop skills to her new friends Megan Filter and Emily Gilreath. (In fact, now that Sarah is the official Snipe hula-hoop champ, she could probably teach the whole Class a few tricks.)

The trend at Nationals was to use dry-erase markers to draw a colorful name on the side of each boat. Will and Sarah chose the name, "Movin' and Improvin'" which described their efforts to a T. Now that they have a week's worth of Snipe sailing at the National level behind them, and all the knowledge that goes with that experience, we expect to see them movin' and improvin' at a pretty fast clip.

The US Snipe Sailor will occasionally present a profile of a member who's new to the Class and wants to share how and why they chose to buy a Snipe. If this is you, or if you know of a new member you'd like to recognize, send contact information to Susan Odell at seodell@yahoo.com.



Fried Elliott photo



Megan Filter, Emily Gilreath and Sarah Thomas, chillin' at Dillon

Snipe Sailing 101:

The Boom Vang

The many controls on a Snipe can be a bit confusing and intimidating to the new sailor, especially the boom vang. The vang is sometimes misunderstood, over-used, or under-used. Let's try to shed some light on the basic function and importance of the boom vang.

The boom vang is a system of blocks and lines with one end attached to the boom and the other to the aft side of the mast just above deck level. The vang is properly attached when it is as low as possible on the mast, and an equal distance aft on the boom. While sailing, tensioning the vang pulls the boom down and pushes it toward the mast.

The vang's most basic function is to hold the boom down when the mainsheet is eased. When you change course from close-hauled to a reach (as when rounding the windward

mark on a triangle course) you ease the mainsheet to allow the boom and mainsail to rotate to leeward. Without a vang, however, the boom would also go upward, and the main would lose its shape. By pulling on some vang, the main maintains its shape by keeping some tension in the leech of the sail as it rotates.

The same principle applies while sailing upwind, though it's a bit more complicated. As always, tension in the vang is transferred to the boom, the main, and the mast. However, because the boom is almost directly in line with the jib halyard, tensioning the vang also tensions the jib halyard. This allows you to do two valuable things: first, it allows the main to be eased in a puff without losing rig tension (and therefore sail shape); second, with adequate tension the vang bends the mast, flattens the main, and increases jib halyard tension, thus de-powering the rig in heavy breeze.

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

Below are some reminders from skippers who are consistently in the top of their fleets.

Blaine McCleskey says he must constantly remind himself to play the vang upwind, tightening it when the breeze picks up and releasing it the second the wind lightens. Snipe Onstar would have been nice at Dillon: "puff coming in 1 boat length - hike, tighten vang now". He also wishes Onstar would remind him to release the vang more when sailing downwind.

Mike Blackwood also had some insights from Nationals where he said the wind was shifty and the velocity was constantly changing. "I was constantly adjusting the vang to control mast bend and main leech tension. At times the vang had to be played so often that my crew, Barb Evans, would help me with the adjustments. I think this was instrumental in our ability to shift gears and stay at the front of the pack." It's critical that the crew keep

the skipper apprised of puffs and lulls.

When sailing with light crew weight, effective use of the boom vang is critically important to maintaining speed and control in moderate to heavy air. Without sufficient vang tension, the boat will quickly heel over "on its ear" due to weather helm, and then head up into the wind. Aimee Graham says she has spent much of her Snipe career sailing light, and thus finds her team overpowered in the boat fairly early in the breeze range. She says, "The vang becomes my go-to control for staying competitive when hiking is no longer sufficient to keep the boat flat. As the breeze comes on, I pull on the vang so that when I ease the mainsheet out in the puffs, the mainsail retains its leech shape. The harder my crew and I hike, the more vang I use. As I ease the main through the 'ease, hike, trim' cycle, I can dump pressure out of the sail without losing the lift created by the leech. This

keeps the boat tracking forward, and keeps the jib working efficiently while balancing hiking effort and pressure in the mainsail."

Of course, to use the vang effectively, it must be rigged well. There should be enough throw in your system that, when sailing downwind in light air, the leech of the main can open to the point where the upper batten is past parallel with the boom, thus facilitating sailing by the lee. The vang should also never "bottom out" when sailing upwind – in other words, the blocks in the system should not run into each other as long as you still need to depower, or take more shape out of the main.

Learning how to properly rig the vang and how and when to use it effectively result not only in a major upgrade in performance, but also a major upgrade in confidence in challenging conditions.

—by Merrill Varn

Experienced sailors will adjust the vang frequently when sailing upwind, tightening it in the puffs and easing it in the lulls. Tightening the vang upwind induces additional mast bend and jib halyard tension, which flattens the sails and helps de-power the rig in the puffs. This is called “vang sheeting”, and is an alternative to easing the traveler (in fact, 2006 WH&O champion Pablo Defazio claims to not even have a traveler on his boat).

When sailing on a reach, less of the vang’s tension is transferred to the jib halyard (due to the angle of the boom); when sailing downwind, the vang has no effect on jib halyard tension. Thus, you typically use less vang tension when reaching or running. In this case the vang primarily controls mainsail shape.

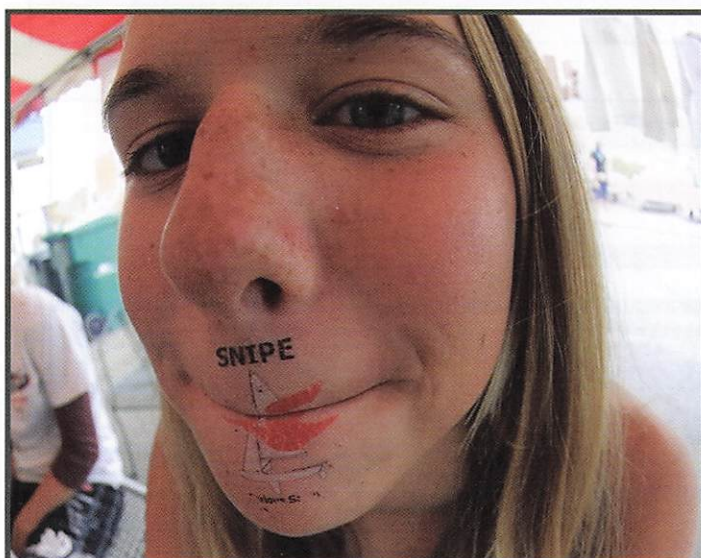
Setting the vang is largely a matter of wind velocity and the crew’s experience. Don’t use the vang at all in light air – it will cause your main leech to close, as indicated by the top batten hooking to windward and stalling the main. For upwind sailing in moderate to heavy wind, a good rule of thumb for newer skippers is to get the boat close hauled, then tighten the vang so it is just snug. In heavier air, experiment with more

vang tension to help flatten the main and de-power the rig.

When reaching or running, adjust the vang so that your top batten is roughly parallel to the boom. This usually means less vang tension than you had while sailing upwind, so you must remember to ease your vang again at the windward mark.

Some older boats have a shock cord system for pulling the slack vang up out of the crew’s way when it is released. If you have one of those on your boat, get rid of it. It serves no purpose in heavy air, when the vang is tight; in light air you should have no tension whatsoever on your vang. The last thing you want is some piece of shock cord pulling on it.

In order to be really useful, the boom vang should have sufficient purchase (at least 8:1 is recommended), and double-ended controls leading back to where the skipper or crew can easily access them while sailing – especially while hiking. If you have an older boat with a single center-mounted vang control line, the best thing to do is look at some of the newer boats in your fleet to see how they are rigged. An efficient, easily adjustable boom vang is one of the most important and beneficial things to have on a Snipe. 🐦



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2007-2008 Snipe USA Regatta Schedule

Sep 10-13	Snipe USA Masters National Championship - Winchester Boat Club, Winchester, MA Andrew Davis: andrewedavis@gmail.com
Sep 15-16	Mystic Lake Open - Medford Boat Club, Medford, MA Martin Fraser: mwfraser@comcast.net
Sep 22-23	Gull Lake Open - Gull Lake Yacht Club, Richland, MI Eric Ulbrich: eulbrich@tds.net
Sep 29-30	Frigid Digit (WH&O Qualifier) - Severn Sailing Association, Annapolis, MD Brian Hetherington: snipe@severnsailing.org
Oct 6-7	NC State Championships - Lake Norman Yacht Club, Mooresville, NC Mike Mergenthaler: mikemergenthaler@cs.com
Oct 17-21	US Championship Of Champions - Mission Bay Yacht Club, San Diego, CA Doug Hart: dbhart@cox.net
Oct 27-28	Halloween Regatta - Atlanta Yacht Club, Atlanta, GA Larry Bull: halloween2007@bellsouth.net
Oct 27-28	Carolyn Nute Halloween Regatta - Mission Bay Yacht Club, San Diego, CA Doug Hart: dbhart@cox.net
Mar 30-Apr 1	Snipe Midwinters - Clearwater Yacht Club, Clearwater, FL Dick Boblenz: boblenzrb@aol.com
Apr 4-6	Don Q Rum Keg - Coconut Grove Sailing Club, Miami, FL Gonzalo Diaz, Sr.: gcdiaz@accesspro.net
Apr 9-12	Bacardi/Gamblin - Royal Nassau Sailing Club, Nassau, BAH Lori/Jimmie Lowe: lorijim@coralwave.com



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