

## THE 1948 NORTH AMERICAN'S

The North American Silver Star Championship, sailed on Puget Sound (6<sup>th</sup> District) in August 1948, was won by Charles and Robertson Ross (PS) in their 11 year-old home-built *CENE*, the oldest boat in the competing fleet. This the second time the event has been held, the first sailing taking place 1939 when the World's Championship was in Germany. The series intended to provide a major Class A Championship for North America during years when the World's is held on some other continent.

Lowell North with Jim Hill as crew in *North Star*, #2068 and Gerald Driscoll and George Parsons in *Dream*, #2013 represented the San Diego Bay Fleet in the North American Silver Star Championship Seattle Yacht Club, Seattle, Washington. Ernie Pennell from the San Diego Bay Fleet crewed for C. D. Helmer from Vancouver, Canada in *Totem* #2371.

Six 5<sup>th</sup> District sailors sailed in the regatta. Dean Morrison and Walter Ratcliff (WSFB) finished 2<sup>nd</sup>. Lowell North, who would become an icon in the sailing World finished 5<sup>th</sup> with Jim Hill as crew. Gerald Driscoll and George Parson finished 7<sup>th</sup> just one point behind Lowell. Gerry was involved in a dead heat in the second race with the regattas eventual winner. The late Ernie Pennell (EB), who crewed for Cece D. Helmer, later moved to San Diego and became an active fleet member. He was one of the founding members of the English Bay Star Fleet, Vancouver, Canada.

### Star Boat Classic Lures Local Pair

SEATTLE, Aug. 21 (AP)—Eleven boats, cream-of-the West Coast sailing fleets, will begin a weeklong battle Monday for the North American Star Boat championships.

Races will be sailed Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday on salt water in Puget Sound. The skippers and their one-man crews will rest Thursday, then race two days on Lake Washington's fresh water. Each race will be three times around a 3½-mile course. The entries, which won their way to this title chance, are:

The *Dream* (world's champion 1944), Skipper Gerald Driscoll, San Diego; *North Star*, Lowell North, San Diego; *Clearsky*, Phil Miller, Vancouver, B. C.; *Totem*, C. D. Helmer, Vancouver; *Vela*, Alfred Evans, *Victoria*, *Chaser II*, Bill Flicker, Pomona; *Rogue*, Richard G. Hahn, Newport Beach; *Yellowjacket*, Dean Morrison, Oakland; *Risque*, W. Wolff, San Francisco; *True Luff*, Bjarne Jensen, Seattle; *Cene*, Chuck Ross, Seattle.

## Stars Poised for Regatta

### 11 Racers in First Event

### Big Title Meet Will Open Tomorrow

by Cliff Harrison

Eleven saucy star boats, they and their crews the class of the Pacific Coast, were poised today for the start of the North American star boat championships Monday at 12:30 p. m.

First three races, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, start off Golden Gardens are over either triangular or windward-leeward courses of approximately 10 miles (three times around marker boats) and must be finished in three and one-half hours to be official. Next two races, Friday and Saturday will be on Lake Washington, starting off Madrona Beach and finishing there, too.

Seattle Yacht Club, host club, was a busy spot yesterday. Details for the handling of the big race series had been carefully worked out along with a program of entertainment which kept the visiting skippers and yachting fans busy every evening after the races plus a United Air Lines flight over the Puget Sound country for the visitors Thursday, rest day.

The competing craft will be towed to and from the racecourse each day berthing at Seattle Yacht Club each night.



Star boat sailors from up and down the Coast, with their sleek racing crafts, began arriving at the Seattle Yacht Club early yesterday in preparation for the Star Class North American championships, to be sailed here next week, starting Monday. First important task after arriving was re-rigging their boats. Here, Lowell North (left) and Jim Hill, 18-year-old San Diego youths, re-rig the mast on North's *North Star*, an outstanding California entry.

#### VYNNE TAKES RACE

Saturday's warm-up race for the Stars was won by Sonny Vynne in *Alcor*. Sonny, co-chairman of the committee handling the championships who missed by the proverbial hair's breadth of being in the series. Failing, he went to work.

Saturday he outsmarted the boys. Turning the second buoy off Evergreen Point he was only a good seventh.

But, where the rest of them headed for mid-lake, Sonny headed directly south into the wind and along the shores of Mercer, Island, then tacked across to the finish line. That maneuver moved him into first place by 37 seconds over *Chaser II*, the Newport, Calif. entry handled by Bill Flicker and Bob White which served notice definitely that it must be considered in Monday's starting event.

All but three of the Stars entered in the championship regatta took part in the Saturday Warm-up.<sup>1</sup>



NOW FOR THE RACING— Lowell North, Star boat skipper, passes down the stick with which he and his crewman Jim Hill

(left) hope their trim *North Star* will win the North American Star boat title here next week. They were photographed on arrival from San Diego at Seattle Yacht Club. First of the races is Monday, 12:30 p.m. off Golden Gardens. It will be this city's biggest sailing event. (Note: Lowell has now a two-wheel trailer, replacing his old four-wheel trailer.)

#### **Cene Sets Pace In Star Races** by Bob Sutton

Eleven top-notch Pacific Coast Star boats, led by Chuck and Bob Ross' *Cene* of Seattle, returned to Shilshole Bay today for their last salt-water race in the North American championship series. If the breezes continue favorable the sailors will get a chance to rest tomorrow before moving onto Lake Washington for the final two races Friday and Saturday.

Should the wind drop and be insufficient for the racing craft to cover the 10 ½ mile course within the 3 ½ hour time limit, then all will have to return to the Sound to try again tomorrow.

A ten-knot breeze, or better, with a continuous light rain, prevailed throughout yesterday's race, which turned out to be a tense battle all the way which resulted in disqualification of two boats.

Hardest hit by the protest committee's decision was *North Star*, sailed by two 18-year-old San Diego lads—Lowell North, skipper, and Jim Hill, crew. These boys sailed a beautiful race to finish first, but were declared at fault during contact between their boat and runner-up *Cene* and were disqualified. The decision was close and the violation minor, but a rule had been violated.

As a result, *North Star* lost all points for the day and all other boats moved up one place and one point, with *Cene* taking first. In actual point standing, however, *Cene*, with 19 ½, still would have held a slim lead.

#### ROSS BROTHERS WIN NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP

By Bob Sutton  
(*Starlights*, October, 1948)

Seattle's noted sailing Ross brothers, skipper Charlie and crew Bob, sailed their *Cene* (1552) to the overall championship in the North American Silver Star regatta held at Seattle August 23rd to 28th.

*True Luff*, sailed by Bjarne Jensen and Milt Flaten of the Puget Sound Fleet, led from start to finish the first day over the 3 ½-mile triangular course, three times around, with about a 10-knot southerly. 35 seconds behind was *Yellow Jacket*, sailed by Dean Morrison and Walt Ratcliff of West San Francisco Bay. They ran aground on the second lap, but jumped over in chest-deep water to push *Yellow Jacket* clear and make a recovery. *Chaser II* from Newport Harbor was third across the line but was disqualified for not yielding sufficient room to *Dream*; this moved *Dream* and *Cene*,

<sup>1</sup> *Seattle Post-Interlligencer*, Sunday, August 22, 1948, p 22.

the two pre-series favorites, who finished in a dead heat for fourth, up to tie for third.

The second day *Cene*, second across the finish line, was awarded the race when the first boat, *North Star* was disqualified on a contact between these two at the windward mark. *Totem* (Vancouver) which had held the lead, fallen back, and then climbed up again, was moved up to 2nd.

The wind continued to increase the third day under clearing skies, and *Cene*, with the hefty Ross brothers, led all the way. *North Star* gave her a terrific chase and might have caught her had not *North Star's* jib fouled at the last leeward mark to cause the loss of precious seconds.

The host Seattle Yacht Club put up free lunches every day for all competitors, committeemen, and even spectators on the various power-boats of whom there were many. Elaborate entertainments were provided nightly. Towing was exceptionally well handled. Thirty-eight large silver take home trophies were awarded, besides silver souvenir spoons to all. A special feature was a scenic flight in a DC4 around the Puget Sound area on rest day, arranged by the Star Fleet in cooperation with United Air Lines.

### Bill Buchan enters the Star Class

One of the observers of the 1948 North American Championship races in Seattle was Bill Buchan, Bill's father, who was an owner and operator of a retail fish market in downtown Seattle, built a variety of sailboats boats for himself in his spare time during the late 1930's and into the 1940's. Thus, when Bill saw the Stars gather in Seattle for the North American Championship in 1948 and decided, at the age of 13, that he wanted one of those boats it was natural for his father to suggest that they should build one themselves. A major factor in the decision was that at the North American's there were other sailors who were not all that much older than

Bill was. Lowell North and Bill Ficker for instance, who were both in their teens, were there and instantly became his heroes.

It happened at this time near Bill's house in the Seattle neighborhood of Madison Park that there was a garage full of Stars, some 20 in all. It was the winter storage place for the Puget Sound Star Fleet. While he and his father got the plans to build a Star from the Class, they found it easier to go to the garage and measure the Stars that were there as well as to pick up on ideas for the construction of the boat. Somehow, the resulting boat was able to measure in as a legal Star. The boat was named "Torrid", # 2830, which was completed and registered in 1949.

The Buchans, father as crew and son, now 14, as skipper, started to race with the Puget Sound Fleet. The fleet was fairly active, with 20 or more boats turning out for the important races such as the Fleet Championship or what was then called the Pacific International Yachting Association Regatta where the Puget Sound Fleet would mix it up with the Canadians from the Vancouver area.

As was the case with Lowell North, who had as a crew his father Willard North early in his sailing career, so too the team of Bill Buchan Jr. and Bill Buchan Sr. sailed together, in this case until 1958 when they went to the 1958 World's held in San Diego.

#### 1948 NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP PUGET SOUND

Pl.	No.	Yacht	Skipper	Crew	Fleet	Daily Places			Pts.
1	1552	<i>Cene</i>	Charles Ross	Robertson Ross	PS	3*	1	1	30.5
2	2456	<i>Yellow Jacket</i>	Dean Morrison	Walter Ratcliff	WSFB	2	4	4	26
3	2289	<i>True Luff</i>	Bjarne Jensen	Milton Flaten	PS	1	6	6	23
4	2067	<i>Chaser II</i>	William Ficker	Robert White	NH	dsq	3	3	18
5	2068	<i>North Star</i>	Lowell North	James Hill	SDB	6	dsq	2	16
6	2015	<i>Dream</i>	Gerald Driscoll	George Parsons	SDB	3*	5	dsa	15.5
7	2371	<i>Totem</i>	Cece D. Helmer	Euie Pennel	EB	7	2	wdr	15
8	1888	<i>Clear Sky</i>	Phil Miller	Sid Miller	EB	5	wdr	5	14
9	2463	<i>Risque</i>	Warren Wolfe	David Moss	WSFB	9	7	9	11
10	2660	<i>Vela</i>	A.C.F. Evans	P. Townsend	VI	10	8	8	10
11	2464	<i>Rogue</i>	Richard Hahn	Jack McKibben	NH	8	dsa	7	9