

# TIME

Monday, Jul. 27, 1953

## Sport: Design for Living

(See Cover) A man in a flying saucer— swooping in low over the U.S. last week— would have had the best of all vantage points for seeing America at its newest mass sport. On just about every navigable body of water, from oceans to big creeks, flecks of white canvas dotted the waterscape like daisies in a field. Coming lower, the saucer man could have seen highways specked with thousands of small trailers. On each, trundling for the nearest water, rested wooden hulls, some almost bathtub shaped, others as sleek as streamlined as space ships.

In the shipyards and backyards where these hulls came from, still others remained. Their toiling owners, in various stages of undress, from bathing suits to paint-sprayed dungarees, were busy with the sailor's shore duties of scraping, sanding and painting, and devoting more loving care to the job than most of them would expend on their cars or their homes.

On the water, boats with such family names as Comet, Lightning, Star, Thistle, Raven, Rebel, Weasel and Wood Pussy were chasing each other, waiting for vagrant puffs of breeze, or just lazing along. Sometimes, in a strong puff, one or more blew over; but after thrashing about in the water for a while their crews climbed in again, bailed, and sailed on or waited for a tow. In short, as the saucer man would have been fully justified in reporting to his interstellar G2, the Americans have found a big new way of getting sunburned, soaked to the skin and happily exhausted.

Sailing in 1953 is, in fact, more than just another sport; for more and more Americans it is rapidly becoming one of the designs for modern living, something around which the rest of the week is arranged. Families haggle over whether Buddy or the breadwinner shall have the Snipe on Saturday afternoon, just as they have long haggled over whether Buddy shall have the car on Saturday night. Mothers take their nursing babes to sea with them, rather than miss a spin with the family. On Sunday mornings, when a good breeze is stirring the tops of the trees, wise churchmen with sailors in their congregations manage to keep their sermons short.

Anyone with an Itch. There was a time when sailors were pretty well confined to short stretches of blue water between Bar Harbor, Me. and Palm Beach, Fla. with a few genteel outposts in New Orleans, the Great Lakes and the West Coast. Those were the days when a wealthy gentleman, admiring J. Pierpont Morgan's 302-ft. Corsair, asked him: "How much does it cost to run a yacht?" And old J.P. bluntly told him: "You cannot afford it. Anyone who has to ask how much it costs to run a yacht cannot possibly afford to keep one."

To the elder Morgan and his generation, a yacht was a floating palace with a crew of 60 or so, who had, among other things, to be outfitted in changes of winter and summer uniforms. Since those days the definition of a yacht<sup>†</sup> has relaxed. Anyone with the price of an 8-ft. kit boat (under \$40) can become a yacht owner; anyone with an itch to get out into a boat can be a yachtsman. Last week an estimated half million or so of them were sluicing along under sail, while another 4,300,000 owners of power boats of one kind or another ("stinkpots" to sailors) were chugging up & down U.S. waterways, happily laying down fumes of exhaust gas.

There are still some big yachts. Last week several of them, led by the 161-ft. schooner Goodwill, were making port in Honolulu at the end of a 2,225-mile race from San Pedro, Calif.\* Likewise, there are still some big, venerable and fairly standoffish yacht clubs, where the dues run to several hundred dollars a year, where it takes a crew of barmen to mix the drinks, and an orchestra plays, Meyer Davis-style, for the evening's dancing. But there are hundreds of other yacht clubs nowadays which offer the essentials—a place to moor a boat, a place for storing sails—for \$25 a year or even less.

Says a Los Angeles yacht broker, summing up the recent changes in a couple of statistics: "Before World War II there were at least 50 really big yachts here—90 ft. or more. Today, there are only 15 left. But replacing the 35 which have disappeared are at least 3,500 smaller boats." San Francisco reports a similar trend: a rise (among registered yachts only) from 1,000 in 1940 to 2,300 today; in the same period, yacht clubs in the area have increased from 20 to 34. And West Coast sailors, unlike Easterners, who generally sail in protected waters with light or fluky winds, have to cope with a minimum of harbor facilities and a maximum of brisk breezes. Around San Francisco, where winds regularly hit up to 30 knots in the bay, any craft under 25 feet is properly considered risky. But the West Coast sailor glories in his necessities: he is an open-water sailor.

Inland, the sport is taking over waters that never saw a sail before. Near Atlanta, Ga. three years ago, a federal flood-control and power project created a winding lake, 30 miles long. By now, over what was once a land of cotton, the yachtsmen of two new Atlanta clubs can sail fleets of Thistles, Y-Flyers and Snipes every day of the year. At Wichita, in the dry state of Kansas, lives the National and Western Hemisphere champion in the Snipe (15½-ft.) Class, Aeronautical Engineer Ted Wells, who does his home sailing on tiny (⅔ sq.mi.) Santa Fe Lake.

The Champion. What do sailors get out of sailing? A fair amount of peace seems to be one good answer. Unlike the highways (and increasingly the fairways), the waterways still have plenty of uncrowded space.

There are few serious smashups at 6 knots, and families with large enough craft can have their fun as families. But sailors themselves get tongue-tied or dreamy-eyed when they are asked why they like it. Typical answer: "It's a pretty sport, and there's nice sunshine out on the water."

Literary-minded sailors are fond of a prefabricated answer from Kenneth Grahame's classic book for children, *The Wind in the Willows*. Afloat one day, the Water Rat assured the Mole: "Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Simply messing . . ." Unfortunately, while the Water Rat is expounding this view, he absentmindedly runs his boat on to a mudbank.

Moreover, to a good many sailors, simply messing about in boats, charming as it is, is not enough. They take their competitive instincts to the water with them. Such a man is Cornelius Shields, 58, a Wall Street stockbroker better known as "Corny"; also sometimes known (by the competitors he has beaten) as the grey fox of Long Island Sound.

If sailing were baseball, Corny Shields would long have ranked with the Stan Musials and Joe DiMaggios; if golf, with the Ben Hogans and Sammy Sneads. But sailing is sailing, and Until last year no scheme had ever been worked out for picking a national, all-class men's champion. Then, after some 1,500 elimination races in associations from coast to coast, Corny Shields and his two-man crew beat seven other crews at Mystic Seaport, Conn, last September, and Corny was crowned North American sailing champion, the first in history.

Champion Shields looks like a sailor. He has a thatch of white hair over tanned, weather-beaten features. His clear brown eyes are edged with crowfeet wrinkles from squinting into the sun. Broad-shouldered and stocky (5 ft. 10 in., 180 lbs.), Shields stays in trim by doing a good part of the work on his own boat. A non-smoker (he gave up cigars 15 years ago) and a lifetime teetotaler, he has the wind to stay under water close to a minute at a time, as he lovingly swabs smooth the gleaming green hull of his International sloop *Aileen* before a race.

**The Absolute Skipper.** Corny has worked out his own design for living on the water. Five mornings a week, he is at his desk in Wall Street's Shields & Co., the family brokerage house. But two days a week—and as many other afternoons as he can justify to his conscience—he heads for the Larchmont Yacht Club, one block from his home, on the north shore of Long Island Sound. There he doffs his banker-style clothes for khaki pants and a polo shirt, gathers a three-man crew and hoists sail. On a good day, he can get in two or three hours of wheeling his boat around a selected course, outguessing his rivals (and sometimes being outguessed) on winds and sail settings, outmaneuvering them (and sometimes being outmaneuvered) on the turns. With practice spins, and sailing to starting marks. Corny often spends eight or nine hours a day in his boat.

Like most devout sailors, Corny Shields has brought his children up on the water. The *Aileen* is named for his daughter, who won the national women's sailing championship in 1948. Son Corny Jr., 19 (nickname:

Glick), is one of the top Long Island skippers in the speedy 110 Class boats. Mrs. Shields, in the older tradition of yachtsmen's wives, prefers the yacht club porch, seldom races with her husband, "because Corny won't let me do anything in the boat."

In his own boat, Corny is the absolute skipper. "I want all the responsibility," he says. He also admits: "I hate to lose!" Rival skippers—one affectionately calls him "a genius"—would rather beat him than anyone else for just that reason; plus, of course, the satisfaction that comes from beating the North American sailing champion. This week, Corny celebrated the second day of Larchmont Race Week by leading 19 other Internationals home in a brisk, 18-knot northeasterly. Said Corny happily: "The harder it blows, the better I like it."

"Never Get Excited." Before a race, Shields is the picture of relaxation at the tiller of Aileen. With her identifying numeral, 25, on her mainsail, Aileen is probably hailed more than any other boat in Long Island waters. He invariably answers all calls, even from total strangers who hail him as "Corny." Often he adds a compliment to the passing skipper on the looks of his boat. To Corny Shields, "all boats are beautiful."

But as the warning booming of the miniature cannon on the committee boat sounds the approach of a race's starting time, Shields settles down to the business at hand: getting off to a split-second start. Nobody racing today does it better. His eyes flicker from the tiny "telltails" of thread on the stays (for gauging wind) to his stopwatches, to the starting line, to his sails, which. Corny stoutly maintains, "are 75% of racing success." All the while, he issues quiet orders to his crew of fellow amateurs.

During a race. Shields's only sign of tension is an off-key whistling through pursed lips, a slight clenching and unclenching of his free hand. Though he insists he never gets excited ("The secret of winning is keeping calm") and though he tries never to shout at his crew ("A sure sign of panic on a boat"). Shields is occasionally moderately guilty of both. But invariably he calms down quickly, invariably apologizes in the next breath for a testy command. Ordinarily, Corny Shields, who has probably sailed and won more races than any man alive, lives up to his maxim for sailing success: "Never get excited."

What a Sailor Must Learn. Cornelius Shields was born far from the sea, in St. Paul, Minn., in 1895. Fitly enough, it was a notable year in U.S. sailing history, though the year's tidings made little ripple beyond the Eastern Seaboard. It was the year in which American yachtsmen, sailing *Defender*, a lineal descendant of the great ocean racer *America*,\* defeated the British challenger for the tenth straight time in the America's Cup series. It was also the year in which the premier international championship for smaller boats, the Seawanhaka Cup series, was launched. Though he was in no position to appreciate it at the time, Corny Shields was to help win the Seawanhaka Cup for the U.S. by the time he was 40, and was to have his own turns at the wheel of a big America's Cup boat.

It was not until the Shields family moved to Sydney, Nova Scotia, in 1901, that young Corny got out in his first boat. His father, by then the president of the Dominion Iron & Steel Ltd., bought his family a 15-footer. In that, and in a later 25-ft. Class R type sloop, Corny learned what every good sailor must learn: how to

anticipate and take advantage of every little change in weather and tide. By 1909, when the family was settled down in suburban New Rochelle, N.Y., 14-year-old Corny was the acknowledged skipper of the 25-footer, and had set about learning racing tactics in competition: to get the jump on rivals at the start, maneuver a boat so as to steal the wind from a leading boat and pass her, cut a rival off at the turning of a mark or crossing the finish line.

Fleet Skipper. Corny also became a student at Brooklyn's Poly Prep. He captained the swimming team, played end in football, and was a 220-yd.-dash man at school. But his chief interest was dashing off somewhere to sail. At 22, he won his first Long Island Sound championship in a Larchmont Interclub Class sloop.

In World War I, Corny naturally joined the Navy. He went to the first "90day wonder" class at Annapolis, served as forward turret officer on the armored cruiser Montana, later had a destroyer hitch, and ended his service in 1919 as a lieutenant j.g. But even naval duties did not prevent Corny Shields from doing some racing. In those days, each squadron had a sailboat or so for racing competition, and in the post-armistice winter of 1918-19, when Corny was stationed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, he skippered the winning 33-footer in a fleet competition.

At war's end, Lieut. Shields headed back for New Rochelle, a business career, and marriage to a New Rochelle girl, Josephine ("Doe") Lapprian. Corny made what was for him the supreme sacrifice: he sold his Interclub sloop to pay for the engagement ring. Soon he had to make another: the newly weds found that they could not afford to keep up Corny's membership at the yacht club. But by 1924, in partnership with his older brothers in the new firm of Shields & Co., Corny was able to become a Larchmont member again, and resume the winning of Long Island Sound championships.

Comes the Revolution. All through the '20s, Shields sailed and won in class after class: the old "New York Thirties" (44-ft.), the rakish six-meter sloops, Victory Class and Larchmont Interclubs. The summer of 1929 was particularly gay. Everyone, it seemed, had money for yachting: old Sir Thomas Lipton, frustrated since 1899, when Shamrock lost in the America's Cup race, was busily building the last of his challengers, Shamrock V. A new racing class, the 30-ft. Atlantic Class sloop, was hot off the drafting board of famed Designer W. Starling Burgess (Shields was to win the national Atlantic championship two years later). In the 40 ft. Mistral, Corny raced among the billowing sails of the New York Yacht Club cruise.

On Oct. 24, 1929 ("Black Thursday" in Wall Street), Shields & Co. had most of its assets in cash, happily for Shields & Co. But the bottom dropped out of the big yacht business when the bottom dropped out of the stock market. Nineteen thirty-one marked the start of the popular 15½. Snipe Class (9,514 in world waters today), and the trend to smaller boats for more people was under way. As one historian records: "People discovered that a sail was a far cheaper method of transportation than buying gas for an engine."

Trim Internationals. The America's Cup series kept going for a while. In 1937, in the last renewal, Harold Vanderbilt's J-boat Ranger whipped Briton Thomas Sopwith's Endeavour II in four straight races. Corny

Shields was active, that America's Cup summer, doing some crewing on Gerard B. Lambert's Yankee, another of the big J Class boats, which raced against Ranger for the honor of defending the cup. In the Ranger's afterguard, i.e., board of strategy, was Long Island Sailor Arthur Knapp Jr., one of Corny's ablest continuing rivals for local and national sailing honors.

That was also the year that Corny, almost singlehanded, introduced the slim, trim International Class sloops to U.S. waters.

The old Larchmont Interclub boats, he felt, had lost their uniformity and no longer provided fair competition. Corny persuaded a group of fellow enthusiasts to start all over again with a new class: the International One-Design. Built in Norway, all from the same mold, the Internationals are 33-footers (21½ ft. at the waterline) with 426 sporty sq. ft. of sail. The frames are oak, the planking Oregon pine, the decks canvas-covered spruce, the standing rigging stainless steel. "Whether the wind is 4 knots or 40," says Corny, "they're the loveliest boats in the world to sail. Nobody will ever come up with a better one."

Today, there are about 50 Internationals in U.S. and nine in Bermuda waters, another 50 or so in Norway, all built in the same three-year period. So uniform are they that American, Bermudan and Norwegian skippers can (and do) sail against one another on even terms in borrowed boats, without the expense and fuss of shipping their own to overseas regattas. As a further guarantee of racing equality, the Internationals may not be hauled, i.e., drydocked, more than three times a year, nor refitted with sails more than once in two years. One concession to change: nylon spinnakers, which blossomed on the Internationals this summer.

By constant planning and maneuvering, Corny has managed to make the Internationals the "hottest" of the hot competitive classes in the U.S. Included in the class are Knapp, second only to Corny in national honors, young Emil ("Bus") Mosbacher Jr., defending champion, and Designer Bill Luders, whose boats (Luders 16s and cruising boats) sail all over U.S. waters. Corny likes the competition hot for a sound and simple reason: "I like to beat the best." He plays golf, which he took up 15 years ago, the same way. A mid-80s player now, he says: "Sailing and golf are the only two sports I know [he recently gave up skiing] that a man can enjoy indefinitely, and also where a man is entirely on his own; you have to hit the ball, you have to sail the boat."

Summer & Winter. Corny Shields, who has grown up with the small-boat revolution, approves of it mightily, particularly for children. "It's clean and healthful," Corny says, his eyes lighting up. "Sailing teaches them hard work, self-reliance and good sportsmanship. It's a bug that gets you, and I can't think of a better one."

Sailing is a bug that has bitten Corny Shields thoroughly. Like an old sea dog learning new tricks, he took up ocean racing to Bermuda in 1946. "I'd heard all this guff about it for years," he says. "Now, I wouldn't miss it for the world." For the past four years Corny has been first mate on John Nicholas Brown's 73-ft. Bolero, helping to sail her from Newport, R.I. to Annapolis and Bermuda; in this year's Annapolis race,

Bolero came in first. After weighing anchor for eight of nine days during Larchmont Race Week, Corny, who never gets his fill, will hop right on to the Bolero again for the annual New York Yacht Club cruise.

After that, he will head back to Long Island Sound for weekend sailing in Aileen, with races twice a week. Then, of course, there is the defense of his North American all-class title, which will be sailed off in a series of elimination races and finals in the next two months. But to an ardent yachtsman like Shields, the sailing season never ends. The compulsively competitive yachtsman dreams up new reasons for getting out in his boat, regardless of weather.

In 1932, Sailor Bill Taylor, managing editor of *Yachting*\* conceived a plan for racing dinghies in the winter, dubbed it "frostbite" racing. This chilly, spray-dashed sport, with its quota of icy dunkings, takes place on days when even the most avid snowbird golfer or polar bear swimmer sits by the fire.

Corny Shields, naturally, was one of the charter members of frostbite dinghy sailing. Late this fall, Corny's little sea-green beauty named Dainty—Shields at the tiller and some neighborhood youngster along as crew—will take up where it left off last spring. Corny, who would "sail pumpkin seeds if I could find competition," sees nothing unusual about his year-round sailing compulsion. To Corny Shields, as to most other sailors, the sport is the thing, no matter what hardship is involved. Hardship? "Why," says Corny, "I keep so warm sailing that little dinghy that most of the time I don't even bother to wear winter underwear."

† An old longshoreman's definition which still has some validity: "You gets any sort of craft you please, fill her up with liquor and see-gars; you gets your friends on board and have a good time—and that's a yacht."

\*Although, this week, on corrected time, the winner in the 32-boat fleet appeared to be the small (39 ft.) ketch Staghound. \*Until the 1850s, both British and U.S. racing yachts were typically constructed on a "cod's head and mackerel tail" plan, i.e., full bow, lean, clean afterbody. The America, designed in 1851, reversed the plan with a sharp prow and filled-out afterbody, became the prototype of modern racers. \*And the only sportswriter ever to win a Pulitzer Prize (for his New York Herald Tribune coverage of the 1934 America's Cup races).

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