

# 07 APRIL 2006

[Excerpts from the LA Times, Latitude 38, and 48 Degrees North.](#)

## **EIGHT BELLS**

**William "Bill" Lapworth -- perhaps the foremost West Coast Naval Architect in the post World War II period -- has passed away. Born December 12, 1919 in Detroit, Michigan, he attended and graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in marine engineering and naval architecture. At the end of World War II, after serving as a United States naval officer, he decided to make his home on the West Coast and began a design business. Work flowed to him readily and he was responsible for the design of some major changes to well known West Coast yachts that required new rigs to keep them competitive--the 82' sloop Patolita, later Sirius II, the conversion of the 98' schooner Morningstar to a modern Ketch rig; and the 77-foot Herreshoff Schooner Queen Mab with a new staysail schooner rig.**

**Soon he was designing a series of light displacement racing sailboats that began to win or place highly on the East and West Coasts, beginning with Flying Scotsman and Nalu II, 46' -- a four time Class C Transpac race winner and first overall in 1959. Next came the 50' sloop Ichiban, second overall in the 1961 Transpac. By 1958, more than 70 of the wooden L-36' sloops had been built; but, by then fiberglass was becoming the material of choice.**

**With Bill recognizing fiberglass properties as an ideal and readily available material for sailboats embodying both strong and light construction properties he began designing fiberglass hulls. He had phenomenal success in the major races on the West Coast. He designed Cal boats in all sizes from 20-48 feet and of course the famous Cal 40. That design proved itself over and over, winning many races including the Bermuda Race in 1966 and the TransPac in 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1985. The Cal 40 was so successful that it was inducted into the American Sailboat Hall of Fame, and led Bill Schanen, the editor of Sailing magazine to hail Lapworth as one of the sport's greatest designers. In cruising designs his Cal 46 was also produced in great numbers and continues to be enjoyed by the cruising set.**

**As a shipmate Bill was absolutely tops to sail with; a consummate helmsman and extremely valuably tactician; always sought as a crew on**

**major races. He also sailed on boats not of his own design, providing these most useful characteristics to their owners. His designs gave him a primacy never before achieved by a naval architect as yet on the West Coast. His calm demeanor was a most recognized characteristic and his evenhanded nature fostered only the best in his fellow sailors.**

**Bill is survived by his wife of 40 years Peggy Lapworth. His children Barbara Burman Rolph, Charles William Lapworth III, Robert Lapworth,**

**Jr., Susan Cohl and Kim Sorenson. A private burial at sea will be held on Friday, April 7, 2006. A reception will follow at 3:00 P.M. at the Newport Harbor Yacht Club, Balboa, CA. In lieu of flowers, a donation to the Newport Harbor Sailing Foundation would be appreciated.**