

Race Report: Thistle District Regatta 2006

By Doug Stumberger

Flannery Wins 2006 PN District Championships at Sequim, Wa.

Franks Flannery on Thistledown (3754) has won the 2006 Pacific Northwest district championship, winning two of six races at the district regatta, held this year in July at Sequim, Washington. Ted Sumner and Michael Rees on Fling (3590) finished in second place in the sixteen-boat fleet, and Kerry Nielan on Way Beyond Bitchin' (3928) finished in third. Flannery, a member of Thistle Fleet #61 in Seattle, was racing 3754 for only the second time; it was previously owned by long-time PN Thistler Ken Tucker, who has retired from active racing.

On Saturday, the fleet sailed out into Sequim Bay in the bright July sunshine and warm temperatures that are our reward for the Pacific Northwest's dark winter months. Racing got under way at noon, in a ten-knot sea breeze that started at a median of 315 degrees, veered for the second and third races, and then backed by forty degrees around four o'clock. The first race was a wire-to-wire win for Nielan, who blasted off the middle of the start line, gybed immediately after reaching the windward mark, and led the pack on the remaining three legs of the race. Stephanie Winchester (3935) finished in second and Dwaine Trummert (3669) finished in third. The second race, another windward-leeward course, was run in the strongest and furthest-right wind of the

day. Flannery (3754) won, with the team of Michael O'Brien and Rusty Lhamon (3640) finishing in second and Trummert in third.

The third race gave the racers a chance to practice their reaching tactics, as the race committee set a long Olympic course. There were gains and losses to be made at the start of the first reach, as clumps of boats fought to go high and others tried to escape on the rhumb line. But the puffs were coming in from the right, and the high-liners worked up and over the rhumb-liners. Flannery led at the leeward mark and consolidated his lead on the next three legs, winning his second consecutive race. Gerry Gilbert (1162) finished in second, and Trummert posted his third consecutive third-place finish, to finish the day in second place three points behind the leader Flannery.

As usual, the Saturday night dinner was delicious, a "bring your own protein" party with the addition of fresh-caught Dungeness crab and side salads. Frank Flannery and Gretchen

Kaiser passed around helpings of grilled King salmon that they had caught in Alaska a few weeks prior, and



Frank Flannery (center) receives the district championship trophy with crew Gretchen Kaiser and Karl Unterschutz.

SKIPPER	BOAT	PLACE	INDIVIDUAL RACES						TOTAL
			1	2	3	4	5	6	
FRANK FLANNERY	3754	1	4	1	1	2	6	3	17
TED SUMNER/MICHAEL REES	3590	2	5	5	6	8	2	2	28
KERRY NIELAN	3928	3	1	6	11	7	3	1	29
RUSTY LHAMON/MICHAEL O'BRIEN	3640	4	11	2	8	1	4	6	32
DWAINE TRUMMERT	3669	5	3	3	3	15	11	4	39
STEPHANIE WINCHESTER	3935	6	2	9	4	11	13	8	47
GERRY GILBERT	1162	7	8	7	2	6	15	9	47
WAYNE BALSIGER	3664	8	12	4	5	13	5	19	49
CHRIS GEDROSE	3769	9	13	10	12	5	1	11	52
ALEX KIMBALL	3666	10	7	13	7	3	10	14	54
DAN WINCHESTER	3925	11	6	8	14	13	8	7	56
JOE BURCAR	3959	12	10	14	10	9	9	5	57
NEAL FREELAND	1160	13	9	12	9	12	7	12	61
CHIP BALOUGH	3956	14	14	11	15	4	12	13	69
DAVE BOGUE	3520	15	15	15	13	10	14	15	82
JACK/JEN WISEMORE	2665	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	96

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Deanne and Dwaine Trummert brought home-made strawberry shortcake, with Deanne baking nearly ninety biscuits for the event!

The Tacoma fleet (#115) is a small one, with no organized weekly racing, but the handful of active members each year hosts the Sequim traveling regatta, one of the best regattas of the summer. This year Gerry Gilbert sailed his shining new Beneteau up through the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Sequim for use as the committee boat. Former Thistle owner Mark Peele was the PRO, with help from fleet member Richard Paul (1317) and retired PN Thistler Harry Wingard.

With the first start scheduled for 9:30, and the marina parking lot crowded for the first day of the commercial crabbing season, it was an early and hectic start on Sunday morning. The fleet sailed out on a light northerly under cloudy skies, but the wind promptly faded away and a game of water-ball started. The development of the thermal sea breeze was a topic of conversation on Trummert's boat as we drifted through the fleet, dodging airborne attacks. In case you don't have Dr. Stuart Walker's famous 1973 book *Wind and Strategy* at hand, here's his comments on the Pacific Northwest thermal:

The major surface flow in Puget Sound in the summer is the sea breeze flowing in from the relatively cold ocean through the gaps in the coast mountains toward the heated valleys. As the major gap in the coastline is the Strait, the majority of the flow reaches the Sound through this entrance. A sea breeze cold front advances down the Strait each morning displacing the stagnant air over the Sound ahead of it. As is true of all sea breezes, its velocity is directly proportional to heating ashore and is dependent upon the clear sky provided by the East Pacific High.

Sure enough, the sun popped out and the thermal marched down from the bay from northwest, though light and patchy and well left of Saturday's wind. The first race of the day was a drag race to the left (west) for better pressure, and there were few opportunities to pass Rusty Lhamon on 3640 as he played up the left and then worked away from the fleet on the downwind. Flannery finished in second and Alex Kimball (3666) in third. The left was still the place to be for the second race, but the boats that gybe set to the east on the run rode a sustained breeze line down to the leeward mark, picking off boats that held on too long on the west looking for favorable current. San Diego transplant Chris Gedrose (3769) won this race, while Ted Sumner and Michael Rees on Fling finished in second. The



Dwaine and Deanne Trummert accept the district novice trophy from Northwest district governor Dave Bogue. Not shown: crew Doug Stumberger.

third and final race of the regatta was run in a ten-knot thermal and gave tactical racing upwind and down. Nielan book-ended the regatta with another wire-to-wire win by taking advantage a series of shifts up the middle of the first beat and extending his lead with great boatspeed on the run. Second, again, was the Sumner and Rees team, with Flannery a close third.

Racing was done for the day, and after the boats were packed the fleet gathered on the grassy hillside next to the marina. District governor Dave Bogue (3520) awarded the district championship trophy to Flannery and his crew Gretchen Kaiser and Karl Unterschut, and second place to the "stealth" team of Sumner and Rees with crew Paul Cone from Portland, who sailed a consistent series—no race worse than a 7—to take second place by one point. In third place was Kerry Nielan (who previously sailed with Detroit River Thistle Fleet #2 out of Crescent Sail Yacht Club on Lake St Clair), sailing with wife Mary Goodman and crew Scott Lovell.

Several other trophies were awarded, including the district novice traveling trophy, awarded this year to Dwaine and Deanne Trummert (3669); the PN traveling trophy, awarded to Wayne Balsiger (3664); and the family trophy, awarded to Chris Gedrose, who raced with his son Ian and long-time crew Moni Lampe. Finally, the Tacoma fleet took home the fleet participation trophy, and our hearty thanks, for hosting another great Sequim regatta.

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