

Toms River Yacht Club Observes 100th Year

By MIKE REDPATH

The nation's second oldest continuously operated yacht club celebrated its 100th anniversary amidst festivities and races over the July Fourth weekend. Formed July 1, 1871, by a group of local sea captains and businessmen, Toms River Yacht Club is reportedly only a few days younger than the New York Yacht Club.

July 4 was chosen as focal point for the year-long celebration rather than the actual anniversary of July 1 so that members of other yacht clubs could participate. From the looks of traffic on the Toms River July 4, few missed the opportunity.

Featured in the July 4 activities were a boat parade and an old-time boat race. The race was between the only four surviving A-cats in the area. They competed for the Toms River Challenge Cup, the oldest perpetual sailboat racing trophy for non ocean-racing boats.

The 100-year-old Tiffany coin-silver trophy was captured by Warren Law's MARY ANN on a protest. Don Ayia's SPY, Barry Connolly's BAT and the LOTUS-syndicate from Bay Head Yacht Club were disqualified for improperly rounding a mark. MARY ANN was third home.

The first Challenge Cup race, July 27, 1871, was won by VAPOR, also on a protest. A-cat races traditionally start at anchor.

Toms River Yacht Club started with 10 members and has grown to 235. From a simple clapboard structure in 1898, the club has progressed through a sizeable building with 17 slips on Robbins Cove in 1914 and finally to the present two-story facility on Money Island with 43 slips.

The yacht club is a member of the Barnegat Bay Yacht Racing Association, formed in 1914 to

organize racing amongst the bay's many clubs. Membership includes several active yacht clubs and some of the East Coast's best sailors. The association maintains a heavy weekly racing schedule through the summer.

Commodore of the sail-oriented Toms River Yacht Club during the centennial year is H. Frederic Rollmann.