

June 27, 1987

From: Ross Pilling
To: Anne Benedict

Subject: History of the Bilgeboarders's Trophy.

The background of the Bilgeboarders themselves is important to understanding the thinking behind the Trophy. When Brit Chance and his crew--consisting of Ted Ill, Delavan Downer and Fred Huber-- went out to the Inlands on Lake _____ in _____, 19____; they were impressed with an organization called the "Bilgepullers." The Bilgepullers were the crews of the scows sailing on the lakes. They were a lively, fun-loving bunch of hard drinking roughnecks. They all behaved more or less the same, but many of them were blue-collar workers, ie, telephone linemen, foremen from the plants, etc. One of the most colorful was known as, "Dynamite Eddie". In a friendly sort of way they were a union of crew members who had a lot to say on how things were run. The skippers were members but the crews ran the Bilgepullers.

Upon their return to Barnegat Bay the Bilgeboarders was founded with the 8 Founding Members, consisting of three skippers and five crew. This was quickly expanded to a total of fifteen Charter Members. The crews tried to put across the idea of a crew's union; this was put down with only a very small struggle. However, the importance and dignity of the crews were recognized. A sentence in the By-Laws reads, "----except that the President may not be either the owner or skipper of a scow presently active on the Bay." Also, ARTICLE X, Section 1. states, " There shall be a Bilgeboard Plaque, perpetual 'E' Sloop trophy." And, it was understood from the beginning that the crews were to receive recognition along with the skippers.

The kind of trophy that would meet the specifications was hard to find. The Bilgeboarders did not have the funds to give four equal trophies each year, and the crew rated recognition that was the same as the skipper's. In 19____ the Trophy Committee was Sunny Neff and Ross Pilling. Ross worked in an advertising agency that gave etchings to its clients each Christmas and these were very well received. The first thought was to award just etchings; then the idea was expanded. Why not silver plate the original copper plate, mount it on a plaque and each year add little silver bilgeboards with the names of the boat, the skipper and the crew? It turned out this was easy to do; just a little expensive.

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Sunny and Ross approached Mr. & Mrs. William C. Arkell who in their usual generous fashion were delighted to donate a perpetual trophy to the Bilgeboarders. The first task was to find a suitable artist; Earl Horter turned out to be the selection. Sunny gave him a photograph of his SALLIE as a guide and coached him until he came up with present print. Everyone was delighted. Earl Horter pulled 100 prints--25 years seemed like a lifetime--, J.E.Caldwell & Co. made up the Trophy with 25 small bilgeboards on the plaque. It is a matter of interest that the original 100, signed etchings now are worth over \$500.

The Bilgeboarders Trophy was first sailed for in 1939 and was won by *S. V. Merrick*. Over the years the multiple winners have been:

Of course, 25 years sped by with the speed of the wind. New prints were made from an original and more little silver bilgeboards were added to an enlarged plaque. The Trophy is sailed for on the first Mantoloking Race Day of the BBYRA and it still is much sought after.