



# NEWSLETTER

Vol. IV, No. 2, Oct. 1976 % Mystic Seaport, Mystic, Conn. 06355

## Ned Ackerman and the Leavitt

# Maritime Past Becoming Reality

From the relationship between the lives of the saints and English metrical romances to sailing a Maine coasting schooner for a living—by carrying lumber and any other available cargo from Nova Scotia to the Caribbean—that's a pretty big switch in anyone's life. But it is rapidly becoming a reality in Thomaston, Maine, where Ned Ackerman is well along in the construction of the JOHN F. LEAVITT.

Schooner sailors know Ned as skipper of

## Brilliant Wins at Essex

Continuing the same hospitality and general bonhomie as displayed in their first traditional boat weekend a year ago, the Essex sponsors were offered an added attraction on race day—wind. And Mystic Seaport's BRILLIANT, skippered by Biff Bowker, made the most of it to finish first on elapsed and corrected time.

A rainy Friday evening failed to dampen the spirits of 16 skippers and crews, but the welcoming ceremonies (and libations) were moved indoors courtesy of the Essex Boat Works.

Saturday featured the parade up the river, an event that adds a second sailing opportunity to the weekend and is rapidly becoming a tradition at Essex. As was the case a year ago, the parade started after suitable toasts ashore which can lead to some stretching of the "in orderly manner" stricture to the parade. The Lions again hosted their chicken barbecue on Essex Island Saturday evening.

A year ago at Essex, BRILLIANT was the closest vessel to the finish line when time ran out on the entire fleet. This time around she completed the course to take line honors and a corrected first in fleet as well. She led all the way in a breeze that started as a fresh northwesterly, then backed into the north and dropped a bit to head the fleet as it approached the finish, but picked up to close to 20 knots at the finish.

Second in fleet went to TRADE WIND, the revitalized Schooner, Inc. vessel which will ultimately be used for research, while third place was taken by the gaff cutter STORM owned by Howard DuPlessis.

Also appearing, but in a supporting role (not in order of finish) were: VOYAGER, HERANDIS, SARA B, ALICIA, LOIS S. DRABO, CALLISTO, TALISMAN, SWAY, GOLDEN GOOSE, HALCYON, REBEL, TRUANT and KLANG.

FIDDLERS' GREEN, the fine Culler designed topmast schooner he has sailed for the last two years, a boat Ned describes as "a substitute for a coaster." That gets us back to 1965 and a quick survey of the famed ALICE WENTWORTH at Woods Hole. That brief illusion was abandoned and Ned embarked upon marriage and the academic career that led to the pedantic consideration of the saints' lives.

But somewhere deep inside the ember of the idea smouldered, and all it took to fan it alive was the arrival one fine day of John F. Leavitt's classic study of the Maine coasters *Wake of the Coasters*.

"That was the end of my academic career," Ned remembers, "although I didn't realize it at the time."  
Continued on page 3

## Canada Retains Title In Great Schooner Race

For the first time since the days of the Bluenose and the Gertrude Thebaud, the International Race returned to the waters of Gloucester. But the results were the same as in the recent past with the Canadian representative, SEBINE, winning two straight from Ed Yeoman's challenger, AMBERJACK, in the best two of three series.

SEBINE threatened to make a runaway of the event after the first race. Sailed in very light airs, she led AMBERJACK by a whopping 35 minutes over a 17 mile course in the head to head encounter. With a bit of breeze for the second race, though, the Alden schooner came as close as any American boat has against the Canadians. Over a 21 mile course, AMBERJACK trailed SEBINE by only 4 minutes 15 seconds.

"We feel good about this one," was Ed Yeoman's comment in a letter to Chuck Gregory describing the race. When measured for a handicapped race in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, the last time she challenged for the cup, AMBERJACK received an 8 minute allowance from SEBINE over a 20 mile course. So she was well within her time for the second race at Gloucester.

The International Race is now established on an alternating basis between Gloucester and Lunenburg, and should become, with enough support from American gaff schooner sailors, the premier event on the schooner calendar.

# Bermuda to Newport in Tiki

By Sam Hoyt

The harbors at Hamilton and St. George, Bermuda, were a sight to stir the heart of any schooner sailor. To look in any direction was to see towering masts and yards with sails in harbor furl. It was undoubtedly the greatest assemblage of sailing vessels of the second half of this century.

That it turned into a somewhat disappointing voyage to Newport, at least as far as racing was concerned, was certainly overcome by the sight of these vessels at sea. And schooners. There were schooners everywhere, of all rigs, configuration and nationality, and, of course, the now famous female crew of the SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL.

TIKI, the Alden designed 85 footer sailed by Ted Charles, unfortunately missed the start due to a provisioning problem in St. George, and started several hours after the fleet. But a moderate southeaster was blowing and, as John Alden designed swift schooners, it wasn't too long before we were catching the fleet.

Still a gaff rigger, TIKI had lost her foresail to an island squall the previous week, and was now sailing as a gaff rigged staysail schooner. At first this did not seem to be a disadvantage as she sported a goodsized fisherman. With this somewhat unusual rig, she nevertheless had caught a number of vessels, including the full rigged DANMARK, by nightfall.

## Like Sound Sailing

Darkness brought an unusual scene considering that the fleet was in open ocean. All around the horizon running lights could be seen, and, with the very moderate sailing conditions, it was not unlike a summer night on Long Island Sound. During the night, TIKI overtook KRUZENSHTERN, the massive Russian fourmasted bark, and a number of other vessels as the armada sailed steadily northward.

The wind held through the night and continued to blow from the southeast at about 10 knots as day dawned. Daylight found TIKI in a setting right out of the last century, and proved to be the only true day of racing of the entire voyage. Close ahead was the Portugese bark SAGRES and, about a mile ahead and to windward, her sister ship EAGLE. Well to leeward was the Argentine full rigger LIBERTAD, recognized by her dark sails, and the two Russians, TOVARISCH and KRUZENSHTERN, were visible, the former way ahead and the latter astern. The three masted topsail schooner LINDO, from the Cayman Islands and sporting dark red sails, and a small gaff rigged schooner were on the windward horizon. TIKI would spend the better part of the day sailing through this fantastic array of sail.

Considering the size of the competition at this point, we had to work our way to windward to get past the square riggers. Tiki gradually overtook SAGRES and passed close enough to windward to hear the ship's bell on the Portugee. EAGLE was not sailing quite as close to the wind as SAGRES, but it

was another hour before TIKI overhauled her. These two sisters spent all day within a half mile of each other, with two more of their sisters, the Rumanian MIRCEA and TOVARISCH not far away. Only the fifth of the treemasted barks in the race, the German GORCH FALK, proved significantly faster on this particular day.

## Baltic Traders Fast

As the day wore on TIKI gradually crept closer to LINDO and the smaller gaff rigger, changing headsails many times as the wind lightened perceptively. LINDO is a Baltic Trader design, probably rigged as a three masted topsail schooner. And it became readily apparent as we closed with her that her sailing qualities were excellent. She was carrying gaff mizzen and topsail, gaff main and mizzen topmast staysail, gaff fore and main topmast staysail, square course, topsail and topgallant and one large headsail. All this on a vessel no more than 95 feet overall, and she was footing beautifully in the light air as her crew took turns riding a bosun's chair off the stern. Obviously built for rough weather, her speed in this situation was truly amazing.

She was, however, no match for an Alden schooner on a broad reach, and TIKI gradually worked her way to windward and by her. We were not making up much ground on the smaller gaff rigger, and, as it turned out, we never did. For by late afternoon the wind had faded to a few stray zephyrs. And that, for all practical purposes, was the end of the Bermuda to Newport race for just about everybody.

The night was passed with the main furled to prevent slatting and with first light the iron topsail was cranked up. Two days and a night of steaming followed before the wind filled in from the west, during which time we were somewhat gratified to hear that most of the rest of the fleet had also abandoned the race. We sighted only one more vessel prior to passing Block Island, a large ketch that was at first mistaken for TICONDEROGA. TI's victory over GREAT BRITAIN II, among those who sailed all the way, was a great morale lifter for traditional boat buffs.

Newport, of course was a madhouse after the calm of the two Bermuda harbors, and the first time I've ever seen a waterborne policeman actually directing traffic. So it was back to harsh reality, but the memory of those square riggers in the open ocean would be a long time fading, even for someone who thinks the ultimate rig is a schooner.

## Coming Events

Mayor's Trophy, Oct. 9  
Douglaston Windjammers, Oct. 10  
Chesapeake Week, Oct. 30, 31

# THE LEAVITT

Continued from page 1

time." The plans for FIDDLERS' GREEN were soon on the board, the size and rig more or less determined by Ned's desire to be able to singlehand her.

In May 1973, with FIDDLERS' GREEN building at Newbert and Wallace in Thomaston, Ned attended the first Marine History Symposium at Bath, Maine. Also at the conference was John Leavitt, then in residence at Mystic Seaport and "a treasured friend" of Ned Ackerman.

"I asked him about his statement in the book that money could still be made hauling lumber by

## DOG WATCH

The Vineyard Haven Schooner Race suffered from an all too familiar malady this year—no wind, and not one of the 22 schooners and gaffers could finish the course in the allotted time.

As nearly as cruisemeister Humphrey Barnum could figure, only three ASA schooners made it to the Newport rendezvous. The three that did, SAGAMORE, TALISMAN, and Dean Worcester's threemasted REBEL, all the way from the Chesapeake, had a grand time witnessing the Newport spectacle. Humphrey hopes that next year another successful cruise can be scheduled around the Block Island race week.

According to secretary Mike Sturges, membership in the association has crept upward during the summer months, which means that the present membership is doing a good job recruiting new members. A new membership roster accompanies this edition of the Newsletter.

Watch out for BOUNDING HOME, Tom Schiller's swift staysail schooner from Stamford, in the races in October. Tom did an extensive reconditioning of the vessel this summer and reports that she is faster than ever. It should be an interesting matchup if NINA and BOUNDING HOME both enter the Mayor's Trophy race in New York.

An incredible photograph of Pete Philipps' VOYAGER leading the Russian bark TOVARISCH into Hamilton Harbor appeared in a June edition of the Boston Globe. Pete says the Russian sailors manned the rigging and gave VOYAGER three cheers as the bark motored past. Pete, of course, was under sail alone.

Mainly due to a ridiculous work schedule complicated by a new crew member in the family, WILD SWAN did not make her summer shakedown until Labor Day weekend. The new hand is named Zebulon, after Zeb Tilton of ALICE WENTWORTH fame. Needless to say, he seems right at home on a schooner.

The schooner world lost a notable member with the recent passing of Harvey Gamage. The well-known South Bristol ship builder had to his credit SHENANDOAH, BILL OF RIGHTS, the Hudson River sloop CLEARWATER and the big schooner which bears his name as well as Bill Wertenbaker's fine Alden schooner TYEHEE.

schooner," Ned relates. "Murray Peterson, Charlie Sayle, Lou Parker, Maynard Bray and I don't remember who else, drifted in and out of the conversation on the way to the punch bowl. But sometime during that conversation the boat began to grow."

The plan was to have John Leavitt himself draw the hull profile and sail plan and to ask Pete Culler to do the lines and construction plan. John Leavitt died in 1975 before finishing the plans and the job went entirely to Pete Culler to finish the plans for the vessel which would carry John F. Leavitt's name.

"Pete did an admirable job and John would be proud," says Ned Ackerman simply.

The boat will be a centerboarder, 91 feet on deck, 95 feet over the rails, 23 feet of beam, and will draw 7½ feet light with the board up. She will be a maintopmasted two master carrying three jibs, fore, main, main gaff topsail and main topmast staysail. Her frame is yellow pine and white oak with some red oak "here and there." The planking will be yellow pine above the waterline, oak below, and she will be fastened with locust trunnels and bronze butt spikes patterned after those in the CHARLES W. MORGAN and made from dies at the Mystic Seaport. The deck will be yellow pine, her spars white pine and black spruce and her sails canvass.

She, too, is building at Newbert and Wallace in Thomaston, where FIDDLERS' GREEN was built. By August she had already been lofted and a good portion of the frames had been cut. Her pushboat was 80 percent finished, according to Ned.

He is modestly optimistic about the prospect of making a living from the vessel, describing it as "probably pretty much a catch as catch can operation. I plan to haul cargo, primarily lumber but also granite, cordwood, Christmas trees, paper, pumpkins, oysters and oyster shells, and we have space for six passengers. The trade will be strictly tramping from charter to charter coastwise from Nova Scotia to the Caribbean."

As building progresses, Ned is industriously gathering the tons of gear the schooner will require, a block here and a belaying pin there. Ned describes the sometimes frustrating process of outfitting the JOHN F. LEAVITT:

"The size of the gear I need is, unfortunately, fast becoming the stock in trade of marine antiquers, but there is still plenty of it hiding out in barns and longing to go to sea again. A ratty old block with good iron work can be made as good as new in no time," he adds.

Naturally, there is a good deal of remorse at the necessity to part with FIDDLERS' GREEN, but Ned rationalizes it by admitting that he can only sail one vessel at a time.

There's a certain beautiful simplicity about the entire operation, from the plans to the construction, to Ned Ackerman's outlook on the practicality of making a living by sailing a coaster. But that's the way the coasters were, and that's the way the men who built and sailed them were, as John F. Leavitt himself outlined in his book.

Perhaps there's only one certainty—that the American Schooner Association is assured of a wonderful addition to its roster of vessels when the JOHN F. LEAVITT slides down the ways sometime in the not too distant future.

140 West 16 Street  
New York, N. Y. 10011  
September, 1976

Fellow Members of ASA,

No doubt you are wondering at the somewhat unorthodox appearance of this issue of the Newsletter. For whatever their worth, there are three reasons. The first is that the typesetter goofed and set the columns too wide. Rather than waste three more days to have him reset the type (that's how long it takes in the Big Apple) I decided to go with two columns. The second reason is that I goofed and had the typesetter use too small a type face. This was not corrected for the same reason as the first.

And the third reason, fellow members, is that you goofed, not by commission but by omission. You may have noticed the lack of photographs in this issue, as well as a certain concentration on schooner news from the general western end of Long Island Sound. Unfortunately, I have not exactly been flooded with news items from the membership, and while I never expected to have the Newsletter written for me, I at least did hope to be able to give a somewhat wider geographical representation to the "Dog Watch" column. Thus the clever manner in which I have not too subtly filled up page four.

Reflecting the editor's everpresent fear of not having enough copy, I prepared for the first issue by writing a somewhat lengthy editorial on what belonging to the American Schooner Association meant to me. Now, when it is needed, it can't be found. Just as well, it was too long and convoluted anyway.

In short, what that piece said was basically that it was enough just to belong to the organization and to know that it, in fact, existed. The association itself did not necessarily have to do anything tangible for me to have value to me.

Reflecting on this over a period of time has not really changed this view much, but I do think that I can now add a more meaningful aspect to it. And that is that because any organization is made up of individuals, and because I have not had time this summer to associate with the type of individual who belongs to ASA, I have relied on this Newsletter to fill that gap, as I hope some of you have, too. As Chuck Gregory said in his message to the membership, communication has come to be the most important ingredient to a viable organization.

I certainly hope that all of you managed to get your boats in commission before Labor Day, when we finally did. You, then, were able to enjoy this summer that association with other schooner people that we missed. You also must have had some adventures that your fellow members would enjoy reading about in this publication. So, please, let's hear from you. I certainly do not want to have to resort to filling up a page in this questionable manner again.

*Sam Hoyt*

# 1976 Race Review

## Mystic

For never knows what kind of weather to expect at Mystic, but the 1976 Invitational Schooner Race — the ninth running of this event — took place in real schooner weather on October 2. A brisk northeaster which, at times, blew up to 25 knots, and gray chilly weather gave the fleet of 21 schooners a wild run to the whistler north of Plum Island, then a rough beat in heavy chop back to the bell off Fishers Island.

The sight of the massive HARVEY GAMAGE flying downwind showed beyond a doubt that it was big boat weather — with several notable exceptions. The confrontation of the day, though, was between the Seaport's BRILLIANT and Tom Schiller's BOUNDING HOME, with BRILLIANT leading on elapsed time and first to finish in just short of two and a half hours. But BOUNDING HOME was only four minutes behind on elapsed time and carried off fleet honors and the Brilliant Trophy by a margin of six minutes.

That more than half the 16 mile course was sailed to windward and the leaders still finished in less than two and a half hours shows how hard it was blowing. And who ever said a schooner couldn't go to windward?

While the spotlight was captured by the bigger boats, there were some fine performances elsewhere in the fleet. Peter Sanger's SAPPHIRE, although one of the smallest boats racing, stood up well to windward after trailing in Class C on the downwind run, and ran away with class honors by 16 minutes over OUTWARD BOUND. SAPPHIRE took third in fleet.

Rufus Allyn's NYLLA fought a close battle with both TODDYWAX and TALISMAN, but finished four minutes ahead of the former to take Class B honors and fourth in fleet by nine minutes. And Pete Phillipps VOYAGER carried off the Soundings Trophy for best corrected time by a gaff rigger for the second year running, beating TODDYWAX by less than two minutes. VOYAGER, after engaging in a right of way duel with FLYING FISH, finished sixth in the fleet behind FORTUNE.

First off the mark, Class A was led by BOUNDING HOME for part of the downwind leg, but she was passed by HARVEY GAMAGE and BRILLIANT before rounding the leeward mark. Schiller dropped his fisherman before rounding the mark and didn't use the sail for the rest of the race. Probably what won for the Sweisguth-designed schooner from



Photo Mary Anne Stets

## BOUNDING HOME

Stamford, Conn., was the decision to stand in to the Connecticut shore as far as possible before tacking for Fishers Island. Although BRILLIANT made the same decision, BOUNDING HOME fetched the second mark on two tacks while BRILLIANT overstood slightly. From the second mark it was just one tack and close reach to the finish.

In Class B Ken and Sue Randolph's AEGIR was leading on the run when she lost her steering, forcing an immediate if reluctant withdrawal. This was not the only casualty in the class as Bill Warwick's SURPRISE sprung her bowsprit but managed to finish under reduced sail.

## Rough Going

The first leg was a real horserace in Class C with OCEANUS and WILD SWAN trading the lead and the rest of the class close behind. OCEANUS led WILD SWAN around the mark by less than a minute, but both quickly fell behind as OUTWARD BOUND, SAPPHIRE and HALCYON stood up much better to windward in the heavy going. Here, too, the boats that chose to tack for the Connecticut shore fared much better than those that stayed out in the middle. SAPPHIRE won decidedly in Class C with OUTWARD BOUND second and OCEANUS third.

The Mystic Seaport staff did its customary fine job and the dinner and award ceremony, presided over by Race Committee Chairman Jonathan Harley, lasted well into the evening. Other awards were won by CLIONE, the Director's Trophy for oldest boat in the race, and WILD SWAN, the Joseph Conrad Award for youngest crew.

## Chesapeake

The racing fleets from Mystic and New York should have headed south last year, as the fourth annual schooner race during Chesapeake Appreciation Day, October 31, had a real schooner breeze and a nice day to boot, according to correspondent Dean Worcester.

Nine schooners, including the 126 foot gaff topmast schooner WESTERN UNION, made the start and eight finished the 14 mile windward — leeward course. REBEL, owned by Dean Worcester and sailed by Doris Worcester, finished first on elapsed time, but DELTA GEM, a 35 foot Van Dine glass gaffer owned by Donald Doyle and launched just the day before, took first on corrected time.

Ronald Grenier's CAVALE led at the start and was the only boat to make the windward mark without tacking. Even so, REBEL was first around, and the three-master led all the way on the reach home to finish in 2:21:25. CAVALE held on to finish second in 2:25:20, just 30 seconds ahead of Aubrey Graves' HALIGONIAN. Next to finish was DELTA GEM, with the designer at the helm, followed by GALLANT, RED WITCH and SILVER GIRL.

The American Schooner Association handicapping formula proved extremely accurate in this race as after DELTA GEM, less than a minute and a half separated the next three finishers on corrected time. And only one second separated HALIGONIAN, in second place, from third place CAVALE.

A Tradition Class for converted Chesapeake workboat types drew 10 entries: five skipjacks (three of which were bug-eye rigged and one schooner rigged), four bugeyes and one five-log ketch rigged brogan. As Dean described it, "Six of these boats made the start amidst much confusion, and only three finished the correct course." The winner was the 38 foot bug-eye CHARLOTTE F. FOSTER owned by Fred Davis, second went to the 42 foot skipjack AURIGA owned by Fred Rööp, and third was taken by the 34 foot skipjack PALE MOON owned by Don Brands.

Under the banner of the newly formed Chesapeake Traditional Sailboat Association the Chesapeake sailors are planning a rendezvous and race sometime in June. Schooner Association boats are cordially invited to attend, and those interested should contact Dean Worcester at 668 Wilson Road, Crownsville, Md. 21032.

# Dog Watch

Issue No. 13 of "The WoodenBoat" contains an article by Ed Yeomans, former owner of AMBERJACK, in which Ed makes a strong and eloquent plea for American gaff schooners "of close to but less than 36' waterline length" to compete at Gloucester. As a three-time challenger for the International Trophy in the match race series with Canada, Ed would certainly like to see a strong American challenger, and the only way to accomplish this is to get as many as possible of the best boats at Gloucester, where the challenger is determined. It's only natural that the Association should go on record as seconding Ed's plea, and members should use their influence on their gaff-rigged brothers to get the boats to Gloucester.

Ted Charles' big Alden schooner TIKI underwent extensive refitting at Consolidated on City Island and thus missed the fall races. Too bad, the matchup with HARVEY GAMAGE at Mystic would have been an interesting one. TIKI had a rapid if uneventful passage south and spent the winter in the Virgins sporting a new suit of sails.

AEGIR and Ken and Sue Randolph are currently calling Elizabeth City, N. Car., home port. Ken has taken a shore-side position to tide them over until they can get back into full-time chartering with their fine Alden 43 footer. AEGIR set a record of sorts with a 12 hour passage from South Street to Cape May the day after the Mayor's Trophy non-race. Ken reports it was quite a ride in the open ocean with the wind at about 40 from the nor'west.

We ran into a banner issue of Yachting magazine for October 1933, which, among other things, contained a light-hearted account of BRILLIANT'S record-breaking trans Atlantic passage written by Alf Loomis. During that voyage, she logged over 1,000 miles in five days. This same edition also ran plans for BOUNDING HOME under her original name SAVANNAH, plans and pictures of a ketch rigged sistership to WILD SWAN and a picture of the Alden racing schooner HIGH TIDE, which, as GOLDEN EAGLE, was a regular entry in the schooner races of the '60s.

Speaking of ketch rigged sisterships, the Brewer designed and Polish built schooner REBECCA, out of Vineyard Haven, has such a sister in winter residence at Schooner Cove. She's painted green, named PETREL and should be a schooner.

Schooner Cove, home of BOUNDING HOME and WILD SWAN, has attracted

another Association vessel for 1977. Fred Murphy has berthed his big knockabout schooner, ISHMAEL at the Stamford Yard.

Other doings at Schooner Cove include plans for the construction of a new 38' pilot schooner designed by George Stadel, who lives close by. A slightly larger version of HALCYON and OUTWARD BOUND, the boat will be built in Spain and delivered to the States this summer. And your intrepid editor is now running a full time yacht brokerage at Schooner Cove with hopes that it will ultimately become the traditional boat specialist for the general area.

VOYAGER spent the winter in the water at New Rochelle, N.Y., iced in as was everyone else who wet stored this winter.

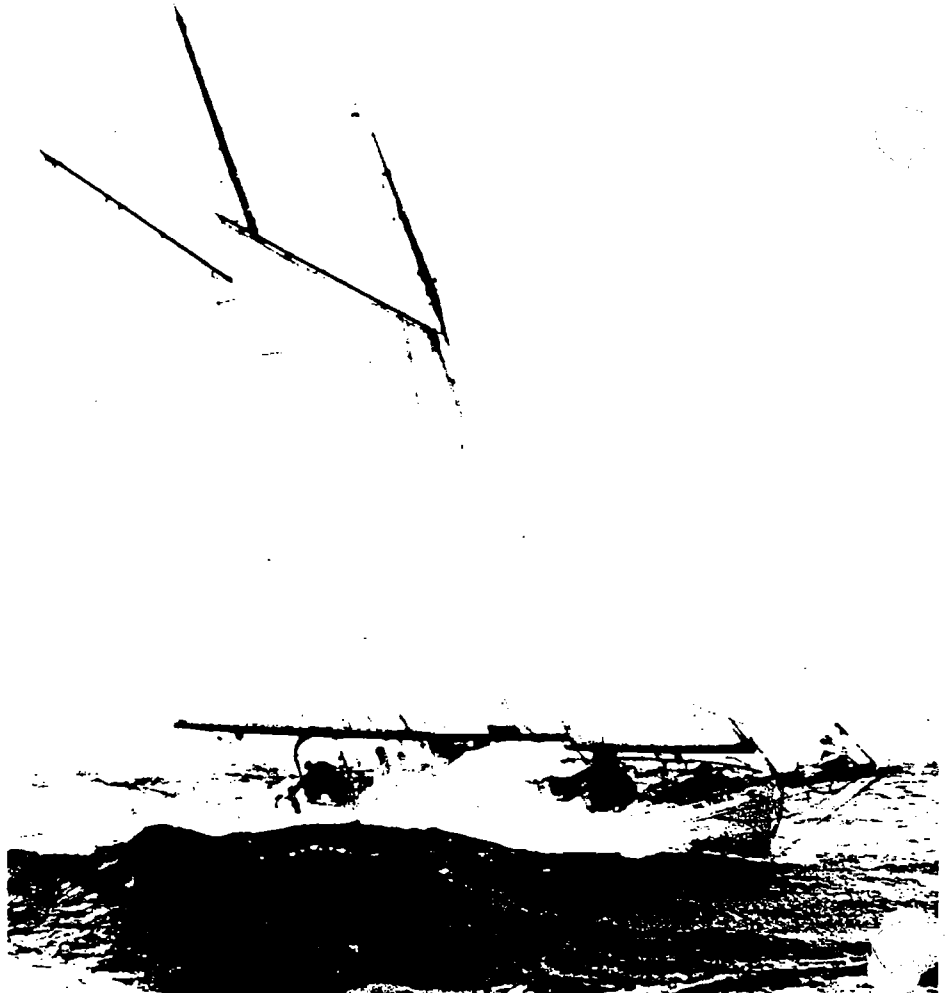
Everyone glad to hear that Bill Wertebaker's TYEHEE suffered no serious damage from her night on the Weehawken mudflats.

## Burgees

With prices skyrocketing on the now famous ASA burgee here at home, we have cleverly arranged to have the burgees made in Hong Kong, and a shipment has already arrived. The burgees are now available at the following prices:

10" x 15"	.....	\$3.25
12" x 18"	.....	\$3.50
14" x 21"	.....	\$4.00
16" x 24"	.....	\$4.25
18" x 27"	.....	\$5.00
20" x 30"	.....	\$5.75
24" x 36"	.....	\$7.25

Orders complete with check should be sent to P.O. Box 118, West Mystic, Conn. 06388. Order now and be the first on your block.



TODDYWAX

Photo Mary Anne Stets