

# Memories Buoy Room or Else

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The boat clubs that focus on sailing more than anything else such as Schattemuc, Chelsea, Nyack, and Minisceongo Yacht Club

had fleets of one design sailboats that were large in numbers for a few years and then would fade away based on the enthusiasm of the club members. That still exists in many clubs.

Ensigns, Lightnings, O' Days, Lasers and many, many more dominant the clubs roosters because of this phenomena.

The major problem that the owner of the one design boat has, even to this day, is keeping his crew happy throughout the sailing season, no matter what the weather. Usually the owner of the boat is kind, gentle, loving, and most appreciative of his fellow crew, both male and female, young and old.

During this time period in my life, the "60's", I was called upon by a number of my friends to "campaign" or be part of a crew at the mentioned clubs. Larchmont Yacht Club on Long Island Sound, and Schattemuc, Nyack and Chelsea on the Hudson River.

I spent these years in winter iceboat racing whenever there was



ice, sailing gaff rigged stern steerers an Marconi rigged arrows whenever I could. In the summer, I knew I could get out of painting the house, cutting the grass, or whatever else was required of me by saying to my sweet wife, Maryellen, "I got to go Maryellen, Walter is depending on me!". Now Maryellen loved Walter and Betty Tripp so much so she would always say, "Hurry Home".

In those years Walter Tripp was "campaigning" a 19 Ft Lightning sailboat. There was always a race, every weekend somewhere, either at the local club, which he belonged to Minisceongo Yacht

Club in Grassy Point, or traveling to one of the other yacht clubs on Haverstraw Bay.

This particular day the race was at Schattemuc Yacht Club in Ossining, NY. The crew was Walter, myself and one other person.

Walter would handle the tiller with one hand, while in his other hand would be the "sheet" or rope that controlled the main sail.

Adjusting the jib, or foresail was usually my job, or the other person in the boat. You could do all this with two people but it was better with three especially on a windy day.

Lightnings, like every other sailboat and iceboat I ever sailed depended on the weight, and skills of the crew working as a team as much as anything else. That is why the owner's crew was so important to the overall "campaign" for the season. In Walter's case he kept me happy by offering, and my accepting a touch of Scotch before the race. during the race, all bets were off, and this is the heart of my story.

On this particular day we were heading for the upwind mark, on Haverstraw Bay. (You are probably not aware of it, but Haverstraw Bay is the only place on the entire Hudson River where the incoming tide begins filling the East side of the Hudson River first, while it is still going out, or down, on the West side. The currents actually travel in circular counter clockwise directions. Anyone who sails in this area for very long soon knows that races can be won and lost by taking this into account!)

The course in this area is usually three legged, with an upwind mark the furthest away and difficult to see in some cases depending on the weather conditions.

This day the winds were light and variable. We had to "milk" our way up the river against the tide with the winds coming and going. It was frustrating to say the least, and Walter was not happy. I should point out that Walter Tripp was an excellent sailor, who really knew how to take advantage of every breath of air and tide condition.

We finally saw the upwind mark just south of Stony Point and we, along with 5 other lightnings, all worked as hard as we could to be the first around the mark. As we got closer and closer the variable breeze and the current worked against us, nevertheless, Walter edged his boat into a position that only he could do. The rule is that other boats must allow "bouy room" for the closest boat to the mark.

Suddenly Walter yelled, "John hold the tiller" an at the same time jump up, grabbed the paddle and leaped to the very bow of the boat. He grasped the for-stay and swiveled all the way out to the very tip of the boat, screaming "bouy room, bouy

room. The poor sailor in the other lightning was flabbergasted that anyone would do this and just let everything go and fell off. Walter, red in the face, and mumbling to himself, jump back to his seat on the tiller. No-one said a word as we rounded the mark first and made our way across the finish line.

From that day forward anyone that was familiar with the event always said, "Don't worry Walter we will give you bouy room!"