

2010 Maine Retired Skippers Race

CASTINE—The 59th annual Retired Skippers race will be held in and off Castine harbor on Saturday, August 21.

The Retired Skippers Race is the oldest consecutively sailed sailing event on the Maine coast, according to organizers. The 12-mile race may be entered by cruising boats 25' and up, steered by skippers who are at least 65 years old who have the experience and competency to perform as skipper. Skippers need no longer be residents of Maine.

The retired skipper must steer at least the first and last legs of the race and as much of the other legs as he or she is capable of.

The race is handicapped (with allowances for boat design and size) for a staggered start, so the first boat to cross the finish line is the winner. Of course, no handicapping is perfect. Individual vessels will respond differently to any given weather conditions; for example, some boats handle better in strong winds while others respond better to light winds, and you never know how conditions might change once the race gets under way.

No spinnakers are allowed in this race.

The race will start and finish at the Castine harbor entrance bell at the mouth of the Bagaduce River. Spectators should be able to see the start/finish line (between the harbor bell and the committee boat) and can listen in on VHF Channel 6 for communications from the Race Committee.

The race is sailed in five legs encompassing Islesboro Ledge, Turtle Head Point and back to the Castine harbor bell buoy, then out to Islesboro Ledge and back again to Castine harbor.

Perfect conditions in 2009; Falcon wins second year running

The day was bright and winds were right for the 58th Maine Retired Skippers Race in 2009. Conditions the previous two years were not so favorable.

Some crews chose to forego starting in 20-knot winds in stormy 2007, and a half dozen more retired early as winds built, gusting to more than 50 knots (over 60 miles an hour). The doldrums of 2008 were another story—with winds so light one boat was reported to go backwards from the starting line. Last year, third time was the charm, with southwest winds generally 5 to 15 mph, and good visibility.

Three markers designated the course,



Wind just right for the 2009 Retired Skippers Race—not too little, like 2008, or too much, like 2007. Photo by Barbara Southworth

starting at the Castine Bell off Dyce Head, to a marker east of Turtle Head, on to a mark at Islesboro Ledge and back to Castine Bell to form a triangle, then out to Turtle Head again and return once more to the bell. The committee boat's starting signal lagged five minutes, but once underway the race proceeded smoothly.

Last year's race ended as 2008's did, with *Falcon* in first place and *Cats Paw* second. Last year's third place winner, *J'aitu*, also came in third in 2007.

The defending champion's owner, Bob Scott, learned to sail from *Falcon's* designer, Olin Stephens, renowned for thousands of yacht designs and celebrated for designing or consulting on six America's Cup winners, who died at the age of 100 in September 2008. *Falcon's* skipper again in 2009 was John Gardner of Castine.

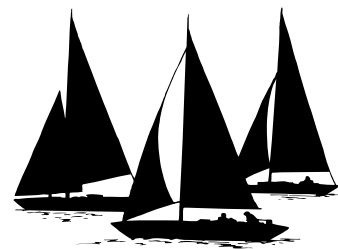
Should Gardner race in 2010, he will surely be aiming for first place and the three-time winner's honor of permanent possession of the Henry Whitney Challenge Cup, awarded to first place captain.

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2010 Retired Skippers Race entrants by press time

Boat owner	Boat name	Skipper, residence, age
Doug Benjamin	<i>Ben Jammin'</i>	Doug Benjamin, Castine, 73
John Bradford	<i>Pi-Mut</i>	Merrill Bradford, Bangor, 92
Robert Cassatt	<i>Querencia</i>	Robert Cassatt, Brooksville, 81
Betsy Dyer	<i>Ariel</i>	Richard Gibson, Surry, 90
Elizabeth Fisher	<i>Golden Fleece</i>	TBD
Dudley Fort	<i>And Thou</i>	Dudley Fort, Islesboro, 76
Mike Giles	<i>Apogee</i>	Bob Harris, Yarmouth, 78
Fred Hollowell	<i>Fortitude</i>	Ken Hollowell, Penobscot, 67
Frederick "Butch" Minson	<i>Cat's Paw</i>	Dick Greenfield, Sedgwick, 71
Richard Stover Jr.	<i>Puffin II</i>	Richard Stover Jr., Richmond, Mass., 67
Richard Wiken	<i>Morning Star</i>	Muriel Fahey, Bass Harbor, 69

Registration remains open and is expected to increase prior to race day.



Best of luck to all the racers!

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Good Luck to Skippers and Crews from

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2010 Maine Retired Skippers Race

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According to a press release from the Race Committee, "A major problem developed on board the committee boat, the absence of a working GPS. The time-keeper synchronized his watch to what he believed was the correct time and started the racing sequence. Unfortunately, his time differed from GPS time, being five minutes slower. As most racers use the GPS time for their start, and do not pay attention to the flags raised on the committee boat, the first few boats went over the line five minutes early. Another problem was that the flags flown by the committee boat were too small and many of the racers could not determine where the race committee was in the sequence.

"With several boats over the line, Race Committee head Jon Johansen realized the problem and made the decision to add five minutes to the times of those who had gone over the line early."

All boats finished just barely under three hours, with no major stragglers. The honorable and traditional clam hod, always awarded to the last boat, went to *Western Way*, skippered by Walter Guinon of Lincolnville.

"Thankfully this year the Race Committee heard no protests," the committee's press release noted. "However, they did hear plenty on the time issue. Some wondered why a general recall had not been given, but with the numerous skippers, who do not race consistently, and the size of the flags, it was deemed that this would have caused much more confusion." The race committee plans on having a working GPS on board this year to avoid such problems.

The first race

The first Retired Skippers Race was run in 1952 in Eggemoggin Reach by Capt. Philip Haskell of Deer Isle and Capt. Frank Delano of Bucksport.

Why? Because of letters printed in the *Bucksport Free Press* at the time, in which Burt Cleveland of Deer Isle said



Ted Rodgers, former head of Maine Maritime Academy, was the oldest entrant at 93, and skippered the "rocket ship" *Revolution IX*, handicapped as the fastest boat in 2009. Photo by Barbara Southworth

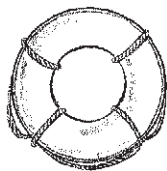
Deer Isle mariners were the best and Capt. Edward Mercer of Bucksport wrote that Deer Isle mariners were "shallow water boys, lobstermen, and clam diggers," according to *The Castine Visitor*.

Deer Islanders accepted a challenge from Mercer, who asked Delano to sail for him due to his health.

Haskell won the race by a scant three minutes and presented Delano with a clam hod, which is still presented to the last-place finisher in the Retired Skippers Race.

Falcon, sailed by John Gardner of Castine, nears the finish line, first in 2008 and 2009.

Photo by Barbara Southworth



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