

# NTCA NEWSLETTER



Issue No. 4 - National Town Class Association - Date: April, 1977

## WARNING: YOUR INVESTMENT IS IN DANGER

As this newsletter will show, the Townie is in trouble. If you don't want to see the market value of your boat cut in half, as a Town Class owner you might want to do something to protect your investment.

It would be foolish to urge you to go out and race your boat if you don't want to race your boat. But there are two racing dates you could keep that would have an extraordinary value in current efforts to revive our class.

One is Marblehead Race Week, July 28-31. The other is the Nationals the following weekend.

We appeal to our fleets not to schedule races on those weekends and urge all skippers to enter their boats in those two events. If we can get 20 or 30 boats out, it will be a shot in the arm for all of us and tell the world the Townie is still very much alive.



Nate Nichols, National Champion in 1967 and '69, sails Pal around a mark. John Tucker's Long Shot, 1.

Brad Clark of Parker River Marine expects to have one of his new fibreglass boats ready for both events. You might even want to buy one. Try to make it. It's important.

## THE TOWNIE — ENDANGERED SPECIES OR COMEBACK KID? A Short History

Larz Anderson will remember that start at Marblehead Race Week as long as he lives. The year was 1948. There were 64 boats approaching the line just off Corinthian Yacht Club and there was little room to maneuver. To make matters even hairier, the wind was strong and gusting.

Anderson was barging from the windward end. He fully expected to lose the gamble, but just as he approached the line the wind died for a moment and the fleet slowed down as if to say, "After you, my dear Larz." He was off and away and never headed.

The boats were Town Class, the handsome 16½-foot lapstrake sloop

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designed and first built by Marcus Lowell and his son Pert in 1932 in Amesbury, Mass. (later Newbury). For years they were the largest class at Race Week. The peak came in 1951 when 87 boats started in three separate divisions, 37 coming from out of town and 18 from Nahant alone.

The Townie was versatile and held up equally well as a roomy day sailer, racer or training sloop for young learners. It turned out some of the best skippers in the business, among them Lou Pucharski, the Lightning champion, and George O'Day, champ in Olympic 5.5's.

However, by 1971 there were only 25 boats on the line at Race Week, the following year the class went back to one division and last year only 11 boats showed up. This year some of the top skippers have their boats up for sale, the fleet at Quanapowitt has dwindled, and it looks as though the whole class might become an endangered species.

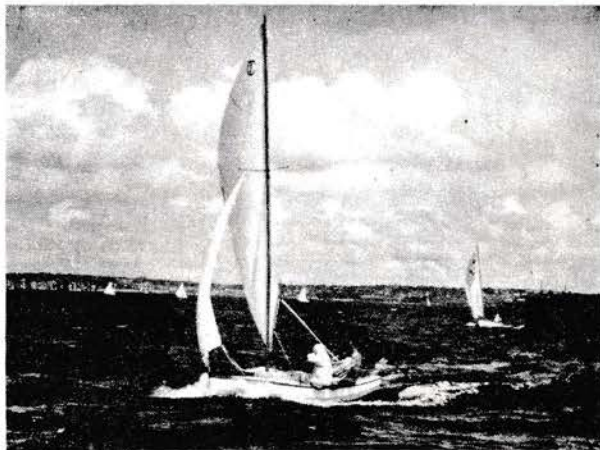
What happened? For 30 years Pert Lowell built beautiful wooden boats, but by the early 60's Townie skippers, like wooden-boat owners everywhere, were getting weary of the maintenance and drifting away to fibreglass. The plastic Day Sailer, for example, a boat with neither the looks, character or all-round sailing quality of the Townie, began to flourish as the Townie diminished.

So Lowell began building glass Townies. As with other builders who have converted from wood to fibreglass, there were problems. The new boats didn't seem as fast or as goodlooking and Pert couldn't begin to compete with O'Day, the ex-Townie skipper, in either advertising or public relations. As compared with 1500 wooden boats Lowell produced only about 100 glass boats and none have been built at all for the past six or seven years.

Recently Lowell's boat yard, Parker River Marine in Newbury, was bought out by an aggressive, competent young boatbuilder, Brad Clark. Clark has decided to resume production of glass Townies with the intention of producing a boat that is at once handsome, fast and competitive in price.

On April 16 a NTCA committee headed by Wilson Tibbo, veteran Nahant skipper and former national champ, met with Clark, applauded his decision to resume production, and promised full cooperation. Specifically, we will furnish a topflight skipper to race one of the new boats at Race Week and in the Nationals to see how it compares with the older boats.

Other members of the committee are Greg Linden of Massapoag, Phil Crowley of Newburyport, Tim Hogan and Jane Cooke of Marblehead, Bob Rex of Quanapowitt, Jack Tillson of New Bedford, who is also chairman of the Specifications Committee,



1963 National Champion Charles Chorlton  
of the Narragansett Bay Fleet



History (and Future?) of the Townie  
(continued from preceding page)

and the following members from Nahant:  
Allen Badger, Dave Conlin, Ted Billias,  
Bill Pivacek, Don MacSorley, and the  
writer.

Meanwhile there are still active racing  
fleets at Marblehead, Nahant, Newburyport,  
Lake Massapoag in Sharon and Narragansett  
Bay in Rhode Island. Nahant and Newburyport  
are actually growing, and QuanaPowitt could  
still make a comeback.

Author's Epilogue: As president of the  
Association I have two immediate goals:  
one is to get at least 20 Townies on the  
starting line at Marblehead Race Week. The  
second is to get an even larger turnout at  
the Nationals the following weekend, which  
will be either at Marblehead or Narragansett Bay. And I have a third  
long-range goal. That is to see that another sailboat that has nothing  
going for it but beauty, character, tradition and utility doesn't go  
down the drain—at least not without a fight.



Herb Bruce Winning the 1966 Nationals  
in Sisbro at Nahant

—John Cort

- BOATS FOR SALE -

		<u>Wood</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>- Phone No. -</u>
<u>Boat Number</u>	<u>- Owner -</u>			
16	Dick Butterworth, 42 Longview Dr., M'blhead			631-2924
	(Fast boat, Fleet winner, \$650)			
28	Len Meredith, 24 Canterbury Rd., Marblehead			631-5612
	(Fast boat, Race Week Champ, excel. cond., \$1,000)			
37	Tim Hogan, 8 Peach Highlands, Marblehead			631-7621
	(Fast boat, Race Week, Fleet Champ, \$900 including trailer, two sets sails, extra spars, seats, rudder, etc.)			
145	Mate Nichols, 121 Nichols St., Danvers			774-5133
	(Fast boat, former National Champ, \$500)			
77	Lynn Tobin, 1 Campbell Way, Marblehead			631-2458
854	Dick Cook, 38 Prospect St., Wakefield			245-5412
	(Fast boat, former National Champ, \$750 with trailer, Hood & Cressy sails, new Cressy jib)			
856	Allen Badger, 70 Fletcher St., Winchester			729-5360
	(Competitive boat, new Hood sails, \$700. Editor's Note: Badger will continue to sail a glass Townie.)			
989	James B. Whipple, 7 Hawthorne Rd., Marblehead			631-6333
1037	Richard Booma, Acton			263-0190
		<u>Fibreglass</u>		
2066	William Woods, 41 Wildwood St., Winchester			729-9164
	(Excellent condition, \$1800, trailer, two sets sails, boat cover, other extras)			

Editor's Note: Members who don't need boats themselves can help their  
fleets by seeing that these boats are bought by sailors who want to  
race them.

- 1976 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS AT NAHANT -

NAME	NO.	FLEET	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	TOTAL	PLACE
John Cort	429	Nahant	3/4	3/4	3/4	DNS	2 1/4	1
Bill Pivasek	937	Nahant	3	2	2	3	7	2
Robbie Tibbe	N8	Nahant	DNF	3	3	2	8	3
Bill Gilday	894	Nahant	6	8	4	3/4	10 1/4	4
Elwood Willey	2054	Massapeag	4	6	11	6	16	5
Ted Sylvia	1098	Nahant	DNS	4	10	4	18	6
Greg Linden	2073	Massapeag	5	12	7	8	20	7
Allen Badger	2064	Nahant	DNS	10	8	7	25	8
Dave Conlin	975	Nahant	DNS	7	13	5	25	8
Quent Theroux	2007	Quannapewitt	2	15	15	10	27	10
Sarge Goodenild	N35	Nahant	DNF	9	5	13	27	10
Hugh Forrest	809	Nahant	DNF	14	6	9	29	12
Len Garfield *	2049	Marblehead	DNF	5	9	DNS	29	12
Rene Michaud	80	Nahant	DNS	13	12	11	36	14
Bonnie Lombard	2006	Nahant	DNS	11	14	12	37	15
Ted Billias		Nahant	DNF	DNS	DNS	DNS	46	16
Jane Cooke	3	Marblehead	DNF	DNS	DNS	DNS	46	16
Tim Hogan	37	Marblehead	DNF	DNS	DNS	DNS	46	16
Bob Rex	892	Quannapewitt	DNF	DNS	DNS	DNS	46	16
Jack Tillaen	1106	Massapeag	DNF	DNS	DNS	DNS	46	16
* Correction: Len Garfield's thrupway should be the DNS in the 4th Race.								



## STORMY WEATHER WINS BIG AT NAHANT NATIONALS



Bob Puleston 1964 - 1965 National Champion  
Winning the 1965 Nationals at Newbury Port

Stormy Weather was the big winner at the National Championship Regatta in Nahant last August. It was like Newburyport in 1975, except that where wind and fog wiped out the entire second day at Newburyport, wind and waves wiped out nearly the entire fleet at Nahant.

Although 22 boats registered to race, only 14 even started the first race Saturday morning and only six of these finished. Six capsized, Dave Conlin going over even before the start.

Poor Jack Tillson lost his sails, Bob Rex's boat was knocked out of commission for the rest of the season, Jane Cooke broke her boom, Tim Hogan broke his tiller and gooseneck, Sarge Goodchild and his crew of wife Martha and Diana Garmey capsized and were in the water for over an hour. A genuine disaster.

### The First Race

Tim Hogan got a beautiful start and led for the first two legs with John Cort and Bill Pivacek close behind. The first leg was a reach along the lee shore of Nahant, but at Shag Rocks buoy out beyond East Point the northeaster, gusting over 30 knots, and the great rollers began to toss the boats around as they headed downwind.

Rounding the second mark as he turned upwind, Tim Hogan's tiller broke, his boat spun around, missed Cort and hit Pivacek. Pivacek's hiking stick then broke so that he couldn't get his substantial weight out, making it easier for Cort to beat him on the beat inshore to the finish line and for Quent Theroux to take second, with Bill third.

### The Second Race

The Race Committee decided to give everybody one throwaway and run three races on Sunday. Fifteen boats were still ready to start, but the fickle weather came up with a shifty drifter.

The fleet started on a run down the long leg to Lobster Rocks Buoy in Lynn Harbor, but before they reached it the wind shifted several times and they wound up on a beat. So much time had elapsed that the Committee decided to set the finish line at Lobster Rocks. Cort, who had been dead last at several points, ghosted past the fleet in the last few hundred yards and edged Pivacek by little more than a length. Robbie Tibbo was a close third.

### The Third Race

Waiting only for the last boat to finish, the Committee started the third race right there with a broad reach down to Nahant Rocks can and a beat home as the wind began to pick up and blow steadily from the northeast. The first three finishers were the same: Cort, Pivacek and Robbie Tibbo.

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## NATIONALS (Cont.)

### The Fourth Race

The fourth race was the best of the regatta, with good steady wind. Nursing his sciatica, a comfortable lead and a can of beer, Cort took his throwaway and watched the race from the committee boat. Nahant Commodore Ted Billias, at the helm of Bill Gilday's boat, got a perfect start and led throughout over a three-legged course.

The battle was between Pivacek and Robbie Tibbo for second overall. Pivacek fouled just before the start and by the time he had completed his 720 he was deep in the hole. By dint of excellent sailing he worked up to third at the finish and edged Robbie, who was second in that race, by one point.

Those who made the indoor clambake and dance Saturday night at the Nahant Country Club, which we shared with the Lions, were almost able to forget the troubles of the day. It was a lively time. The Association meeting, held after the first race, elected John Cort president, Allen Badger of Nahant secretary-treasurer, and Jack Tillson of New Bedford chairman of the Specifications Committee.

Those who did the work and deserve credit for making the best of a bad deal from the weatherman: Bill Pivacek as chairman of the Regatta Committee; Wilson Tibbo, Bob Steeves and Clayton Gates on the committee and rescue boats; Penny Billias, Lily Badger, Sarah Riley, Helen Cort, Harriet Steeves and Priscilla Culver, plus a number of unsung heroes and heroines who helped with sandwiches, beer, and odd jobs.

The consensus was that by the laws of chance we should have perfect weather for the 1977 Nationals.

### MARBLEHEAD'S '76 SEASON IMPROVES ON '75

Jane Cooke was the Marblehead Fleet Champion with firsts in the First Sunday Series, the Combined Sunday Series, and the First Twilight Series, and seconds in the Second Sunday Series and the Second Twilight Series.

Other winners, placers and showers: Tim Hogan--1st in the 2nd Twilight and Fall Series, 2nd in the 1st Sunday, 1st and 3rd Twilight, Combined Sunday, and Overall Season; 3rd in the 2nd Sunday; John Tucker--1st in 2nd Sunday, 3rd Twilight and Race Week, and 3rd in 2nd Twilight and Fall; Sherwood Mooradian--1st in all three MRA Saturday Series; Larry Brown (sailing Len Meredith's Nolo)--3rd in the 3rd Twilight and 3rd in overall season standing (based on 25 or more races); Len Garfield--3rd in Combined Sunday and 4th in Overall Season; Nate Nichols--3rd in 1st Sunday; Mary McPherson--3rd in 1st Twilight; Dave Dougherty--2nd in Fall Series.

CORRECTION: Larry Brown also took a second in Race Week.

ADDENDUM: Ed Tarlov of Nahant, sailing in his first Race Week, won three races and finished third. Not bad.

The Marblehead fleet added two registered boats for a total of 24, an increase of two over the low point of 22 in '75. The number of boats competing was 20, an increase of one over '75. The average boats per



race was 6.3, somewhat down from 30 in 1961 or 20 in 1967, but still better than the low-water mark of 6.0 in 1975.

As this issue went to press Marblehead members were about to meet at the Corinthian on April 21 to lay plans for the '77 season. With Tim Hogan's, Len Meredith's and Nate Nichols' boats up for sale, the Marblehead Association faced a problem of how to maintain its prestigious standing as the NTCA's oldest (1936), largest and most active racing fleet. But knowledgeable observers had confidence that somehow Marblehead would manage.

(Information supplied by Dick Butterworth)

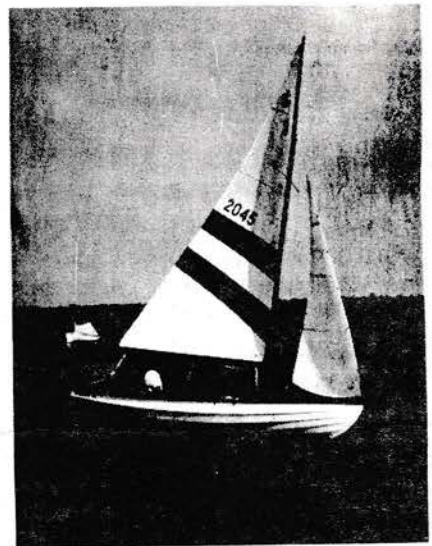
#### MASSAPOAG FLEET ACTIVE IN 1976

Massapoag Yacht Club's Fleet enjoyed a busy racing season beginning June 6 with the Spring Series and ending October 10, the end of the Fall Series. The fleet consisted of seven boats with six actively racing.

At the October Awards Dinner skippers, crew and families enjoyed good food and swapped sea stories. Awards for the Spring Series went to Elwood Willey first, Greg Lindin second, and Bill Smith third. Awards for the second Sunday Series were the same except for third place going to Jack Canton.

MYC skippers enjoyed trailering to other sailing waters during the year. Greg Lindin and Elwood Willey entered the Nationals at Nahant and both lake sailors finished the disastrous first race! In August Greg and Elwood also trailered down to Mt. Hope Bay putting in at Touisset Pt., R.I. Jack Tillson of New Bedford joined us and we enjoyed some informal racing against the Narragansett Fleet. This marked the third year for our trip to Mt. Hope Bay and we hope to continue the event during the coming season. We urge other fleets to join us. It was great to see Townies trailer to Sharon for our annual regatta. Two boats came from Touisset Pt. and two from Nahant. The Race Committee arranged for exceptional racing winds, and our guests found the trip well worthwhile.

(Greg Lindin)



Don Stoddard - 1968 National Champion,  
in Stormy III

#### TOWNIES NEAR THE BRINK AT QUANAPOWITT

The Quanapowitt Fleet consisted of 11 boats for the season of 1976. Unfortunately, four boats weren't launched and of the remaining seven only five competed. The season's high was five starters and all too often there were none. QYC's racing season consisted of three series: Spring 12, Summer 26, Fall 12 races. To qualify for trophies a class had to show an average of at least two starters in every race. The Townies managed only 1.3! The most consistent competitors were Quent Theroux's #2007 and Bob Rex's #892, with 892 holding the edge until she was finished for the season by a capsizing in the first race at the Townie Nationals in Nahant.

(Bob Rex)



### NEWBURYPORT TO ADD SEVERAL ACTIVE RACERS

Phil Crowley reports that the Newburyport Fleet expects to see several more boats at the starting line during the '77 season. One of them should be Chip Wyser, who bought John Cort's champion #429 (Black Pride). (Cort has bought #2088, a fibreglass Townie belonging to Lucien Wulsin of Cambridge that got loose from its mooring in Nahant Harbor and wound up on the rocks somewhat damaged.)

Ray Walton was the winner in the fleet's 15-race series, with Ed Coughlin second and Jim Gallagher third. A total of 12 boats competed, with the average race running around seven. The fleet seems to be in good shape.

### NARRAGANSETT MAY HOST NATIONALS IN 1977

Dick Hallberg, as we went to press, was canvassing Narragansett Bay's six Townie skippers (seven in '77) to see if the fleet wanted to host the '77 Nationals. The fleet, which races informally, sails off Touisset Point in Warren, R.I., near the Mt. Hope Bridge.

### NAHANT HAS 15 COMPETITORS, EXPECTS MORE IN '77

The Nahant Fleet had 15 competing Townies in 1976 and expects several new skippers to join the fleet in 1977 plus the return of veteran skipper Harry Edwards, whose boat was laid up last summer. However, the average number of boats competing per race was not as good in '76 as it has been in previous years.

Fleet Champion for 1976 was Bill Pivacek, who won the August Series the Wednesday Twilight Series, the Fourth of July Cup Race, and was second in the July series. John Cort won the July Series and the Labor Day Cup Race, and was second in the Aug. Series. Allen Badger was third in the July Series and the Wednesday Twilights.

Wilson Tibbo missed a number of races but took a third in the August Series. Dave Conlin, sailing Danny Perepelitza's old champ, Endeavor, took a second place trophy in the Wednesday races.

### SOME THOUGHTS ON HOW TO MAKE A TOWNIE GO

Whenever I see a Townie racing without telltales on the jib, I figure one of two things: either the skipper is unaware that the jib telltale is the greatest thing to happen to sailboat racing since the invention of the rudder, or two, he must be some kind of a whiz-bang skipper with telltales in the seat of his pants, somebody like Wilson Tibbo or Danny Perepelitza.

Even so I am grateful that Wilson doesn't use telltales, because the odds are that with them he would be even tougher to beat. Even a Tibbo can't tell as quickly as a telltale when the wind has shifted just a hair aft and made it possible for you to eat out a few more feet to windward.

For the average skipper, whose besetting sin is, was and always will be pinching too close to the wind, the jib telltale has got to be the absolutely indispensable preventative.

Most of the fast boats have sails made by Bruce Dyson or Norman Cressy of Marblehead. Hood is good but he hasn't done as much with Townies. A



new set costs about \$300. Or you might be able to pick up a decent set second hand. If they were made in the last six or seven years they could still be competitive. The test is light and medium air. The old flat sails will do well in heavy air, but for lighter stuff you need a sail with some fullness. If you can't afford a full set, at least get yourself a good jib.

Don't set the jib fairlead too far outboard. If you buy a new sail, ask the sailmaker to sail with you and help you set the fairlead in the right spot. By using your other jibsheet to hold the jib to weather you can do your own experimenting. Check the compass on port and starboard tacks (assuming a steady wind). If you're getting much more than 90 degrees variation, your fairlead is probably too far outboard.

Some skippers like movable fairleads and stick slides all over the deck. I prefer an all-purpose stationary fairlead. Winds vary so much during a race that you can lose as much as you gain by fooling with it. I could be wrong.

When I first started racing a Townie in 1971 I found it a strange and difficult boat to get moving. I was used to Mercuries and Sunfish mainly, in which you set the main further inboard. It wasn't till I learned to let the main out that the boat began to move. Telltales on the main will also help to fix the right setting. Assuming the jib is right, you let the main out until one of the main telltales on the windward side flutters a little. Dyson says the main itself should actually be luffing, but I'm satisfied if a telltale flutters.

In very light air many skippers kill boat speed by setting their sails too tight, especially on Townies. Far better to fall off a little, let sheets go and keep the boat moving than to point high and go nowhere. In sailing a straight line is not the shortest distance between two points.

On most points of sailing it is best to keep the weight amidships (fore-and-aft-wise). Light ends make faster boats. In heavy air a good long tiller extension or hiking stick is necessary to get your weight well out. Letting the boat heel too much is fatal. The center board stops gripping, the boat slides to leeward, and the sail doesn't catch as much wind. Try to keep the heel between 5 and 10 degrees. A slight heel is good. The skipper can crook his feet under the seats if the outboard slat is removed and screws are tight. The crew should have a hiking strap. Don't let the crew push against the center board trunk. This can start leaks. And don't hesitate to use a third crew if it is really blowing.

On downwind legs a boom vang is essential. It will probably be necessary to reinforce the sail track with at least one through bolt, or heavier screws. Too many through bolts can weaken the mast. Without a boom vang the main will belly out and spill much of the wind. You can also gain ground if you have an outhaul that can be released on a run to give your main extra fullness. Ditto for the downhaul, but you need an adjustable little line rigged with jam cleats on each side of the mast to hold your boom up after you release the downhaul. Otherwise the boom vang will pull it down again.

A trained crew helps here. Otherwise give the crew the tiller and do it all yourself. Ideally the skipper pulls up the board as he heads downwind and the crew sets the whisker pole (if called for), releases the outhaul, pulls in the sail a few inches, releases the downhaul,



pushes the boom up, sets the line to hold the boom up, and sets the boom vang. Don't wait too long to reverse the procedure as you approach the leeward mark, as I usually do. It's important to head upwind with everything in proper order.

No skipper should go to a starting line without having read at least one good book on racing and racing tactics. Ted Wells' "Scientific Sailing" is one of them, especially good on the beauties of "feathering", the trick of keeping your boat upright and eating to windward, especially in heavy air, by sailing just short of a pinch. Takes practice and a fine hand on the tiller.

Paul Elvstrom's "Expert Dinghy and Keelboat Racing" is a good one and helped cure me of the fixation that I had to start close to the windward end. A good start is of major importance, but Elvstrom points out that the main thing is to hit the line close to the gun and going at full speed, with plenty of room on your lee bow so that no boat is in position to make you luff or to backwind you. A few boat lengths down the line is fine or even more if the line is square to the wind. Of course if the weather end is heavily favored, then you have to take your chances. Above all, don't be timid. Get up to that line. The price you pay for timidity is too high.

For extra speed at the start, give your main more sheet or set the mainsheet block closer to amidships on the traveler, which gives the main more drive. In light air the mainsheet block should be permanently set nearer amidships.

One final tip: be sure your board is all the way down (but not forward of vertical) when going to windward, especially in heavy air. It took me four years to learn that I got some bad advice about keeping the board part way up to cut weather helm. If you have weather helm, move the mast forward. You need all that board on a beat.

That's enough free secrets for now. On the other hand, you could ignore all this advice and still beat me.

—John Cort

TOWN CLASS NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

1962 - at Nahant	Bart Snow	from Marblehead
1963 - at Narragansett	Charles Chorlton	from Narragansett
1964 - at Marblehead	Bob Puleston	from Narragansett
1965 - at Newburyport	Bob Puleston	from Narragansett
1966 - at Nahant	Herb Bruce	from Nahant
1967 - at Quanapowitt	Nate Nichols	from Marblehead
1968 - at Marblehead	Don Stoddard	from Massapoag
1969 - at Massapoag	Nate Nichols	from Marblehead
1970 - at Newburyport	Wilson Tibbo	from Nahant
1971 - at Nahant	Dan Perepelitza	from Nahant
1972 - at Quanapowitt	Dick Cook	from Quanapowitt
1973 - at Marblehead	Tom Forbes	from Marblehead
1974 - at Massapoag	Chip DuBose	from Massapoag
1975 - at Newburyport	John Cort	from Nahant
1976 - at Nahant	John Cort	from Nahant

Editor's Note: The National Town Class Association was organized in 1961, although racing fleets go back to 1936 at Marblehead.

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