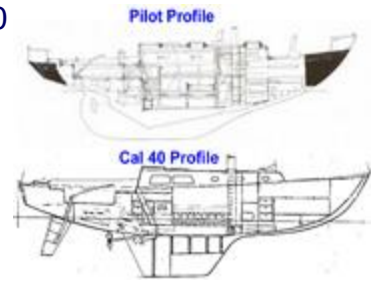


In the 60's New Designs Changes the Look of the Fleet

The Bayview Mac saw its fastest growth

"On the way to the 85th sailing"

As the 50's came to an end the Mackinac fleet expanded to 90 boats and there still seemed to be a domination by the New York 32's and Pilots. In fact Toot Gmeiner's NY32 *Apache* won overall in 1959. The era of technological advances started slowly at first but came at an ever increasingly pace. Cotton fiber sails were being replaced by polyester Dacron. The 1960s saw the beginning of lighter displacement, high aspect rigs, and short booms. Many boats were starting to be built partially or fully with fiberglass. The big wooden yawls, ketches, and schooners were largely disappearing. It also propelled the designer, C. William Lapworth, a transplanted native of Michigan, into front rank prominence among the naval architects in yachting by bringing out the famous Cal 40 in 1963. This yacht embodied the thinking of the day that would look a little like the previous generation of wooden boats with varnished wooden combings, toerails, and brightwork, but weighed considerably less than the previous generation of sailboats. These newer designs started using fin keels, spade rudders, flat bottoms, and shorter overhangs similar to what we see today. Most masts and booms were made from stronger and lighter weight aluminum. The more economical production techniques lowered the costs of new boats and contributed to the growth of the sport in the decade. By 1969 there were to be 216 yachts entered in the race.



The 82 boat 1960 race was considered the fog year. When the fog moved in Saturday night, it smothered the in shore winds and reduced the the velocity of breezes farther out. The fog hung over Lake Huron and the Straits of Mackinac until late Monday afternoon. As the sun burned through, the first accurate report from the Coast Guard cutter Mackinaw indicated at least 70 or so of the boats would finish the race by daylight Tuesday. The rest of the fleet was bunched along the final leg of the race above Thunder Bay. *Gypsy* won her first overall with three more to come.

1961 was just the opposite. The 99 boat fleet was racked with severe thunderstorms with over 50 knot winds. Yachts arrived at Mackinac Island with sails in shreds or missing. Mike Tappert's *Fleetwood* was dismantled by a 52 knot squall of Thunder Bay. Toot Gmeiner was the closest boat when it hit, "Her mast went right over in the water. I thought *Fleetwood* was going to roll all the way over." *Apache* escaped serious damage when her crew released all her sails as they saw the wind hit *Fleetwood*. Nearly 25 boats that year lost sails or parts of their rigging. 1962 was memorable by the first class victory of Doug and Maggie Wake's *Velero* and Henry Burkhard's *Meteor III*. Maggie Wake eventually became the first female Mackinac 'Old Goat'. Also memorable was the

overall win by Clare Jacob's NY32 *Falcon II*. At 76 years old he was the oldest skipper to win the race.

The mid-60s brought about the era of the *Flying Buffalo*. Maurey DeClercq designed this 36 foot boat by towing small scale models behind an outboard motor boat on Conner Creek in Detroit. She won overall corrected time in 1966 with co-skipper Karl Ness by sailing right through the much larger class A and B boats to finish 21st in a 159 boat fleet. Crewman Mike Tappert stated, "We stayed on the rhumb line between the freighter channel and the shoreline and worked her way through the fleet...Our hull was just light enough and big enough to slide from one wave to the next while the boats around us were bouncing off the waves. We must have passed 10 or 20 of the bigger boats this way." *Flying Buffalo* won the Bayview Mackinac in 1964, 1967, and 1968, the Chicago Mackinac overall in 1966 and 1967, and the Mills overall in 1966, 1967, and 1968 with truly a break through boat design. Asian boat builder Cheoy Lee eventually bought the design. They sold it as the Offshore 36 with over 1000 copies of it shipped around the world and another 100 copies shipped to the US.



Karl Ness & Maurey DeClercq's Flying Buffalo



Sapphire finishing at Mackinac Island in 1971

The new universally accepted International Offshore Racing (IOR) handicapping rule became the death nelly of the older yachts designed for the Cruising Club of America (CCA) rules. By 1971 the Bayview Mackinac had only one 25 boat class under the older CCA rating system. Many boats raced in that class were built from wood. It was won by Robert Neesley Sr.'s New York 32 Sapphire beating Tom Hansen's fiberglass Cal 36 Dauntless IV by nearly five minutes in corrected time in mostly robust upwind conditions. The real irony was Tom had sold Sapphire to Bob the previous year. This though was the last hurrah for NY32s and it was the last Mackinac victory for for this classic wooden boat design.