

Transpacific Yacht Club



Los Angeles, California

November 8, 2009

It would be hard to find anyone who has created more Transpac history than Bill Lee, unanimously elected last Friday night to be the new Commodore of the Transpacific Yacht Club. As a designer, Lee revolutionized West Coast racing with his downwind flyers, and a model of his legendary *Merlin* was dedicated in 2009 as the first-to-finish trophy for the unlimited division.

The first winner of that trophy, Neville Crichton, had planned to attend Transpac YC's Friday-night biennial meeting, to re-set the Transpac clock to 5:14:36:20, the new course record set last summer by his maxi yacht, *Alfa Romeo*. En route across the Pacific, however, Crichton's aircraft developed a mechanical issue and returned to Australia, leaving this small task undone. The 2009 Transpac was the 45th running of the Los Angeles-Honolulu classic, and *Alfa Romeo* took 26 hours off the previous best time.

Bill Lee sailed his first Transpac in 1971, on a Cal 37, fulfilling a dream that began when he was a teenager following the race by radio. His first Transpac win, as a designer, came in 1973 with *Chutzpah*. In 1977, as designer, builder, owner and skipper, he sailed *Merlin* to a new course record and redefined the game at the top. With his Santa Cruz 70s, he set the stage for a new era. As to his new role in Transpacific Yacht Club, Lee says, "We've had great two years for TPYC sailors. This fact should never be undervalued. Our many volunteers produced very successful races to Honolulu and Tahiti. It took a huge amount of work, but each event was warmly received, and I was proud to be a part of it. We've added to the experience at both ends of the Transpac, before and after the start, and we look forward to making things even better in 2011."

Also elected to flag officer positions were Dave Cort, Vice Commodore, and Leslie DeMeuse-Disney, Rear Commodore and now the first woman to serve on the flags of the Transpacific Yacht Club. Duly noted: the absence (with leave) of board member Stan Honey, navigating a round-the-world record attempt on the trimaran, *Groupama 3*, which reeled off a 708-mile day.

The biennial meeting also offered an opportunity to award remaining Transpac, 2009 trophies to Bob Lane, whose 63-foot *Medicine Man* corrected to first place on time allowance in the unlimited division, and to Larry Malmberg, whose Catalina 38, *Hassle*, arrived last at Diamond Head after 17 days at sea. Yes, Larry, we know that's not the most-coveted of Transpac trophies, but somebody's got to do it.

The first start of the 46th Transpac is set for July 4, 2011. New commodore Bill Lee said, "As Commodore, I am inviting the widest range of skippers and crews to race Transpac. We encourage the first timers, the family crews, and the hard hitters. Our ORR based handicap system covers entries from the 100 foot boat that can race the course in 5 1/2 days all the way down to the 40 footers that race the course in 17 days. Our Aloha class provides great competition for the more traditional cruising yachts and our partners in Hawaii provide the best finish reception of any race in the world." A 2012 Tahiti Race is also a possibility, if there is interest.

Further information can be found at www.transpacrace.com, or directly to Bill Lee at Commodore@transpacrace.com

