

Our special thanks to
Director Bev Partridge
for giving us a glimpse
of her life full of
Classic Corinthian Yachting.

Bev Partridge Shares Her Story of Bob & FANTASEA

It was an MG TD and the Sports Car Club of America that led Bob to the Classic Yacht Association! In 1953 sports cars were our hobby with rallies and gymkhanas our weekend activities. Then Bob began racing in the SCCA races. In June 1960 one of the racers was killed at Laguna Seca Raceway. On our drive home from Monterey, I reminded Bob of his love of boats and suggested that a change from fast cars to a slow boat might be in order. He agreed, and on July 4th we found "Fish Hook II" at Bethel Island. She was a Matthews 38 built in Port Clinton, Ohio in 1925. She was thirty-five years old, but so were we so it was a perfect match. We sold the MG TD, MG TC and Jaguar 120, took the \$5000.00 and bought the boat. We changed her name to "Fantasea" and Bob's lifelong passion had come into our lives.

Our first adventure aboard "Fantasea" was a trip to Ensenada, Mexico in 1962. Unlike today where boats go out the gate and turn left in a constant parade, very few made the trip in those days and power boats were a rarity. Nevertheless, with our 10 year old daughter (I baked her 11th birthday cake on board) and nine year old son we set forth on July 28th after a terrific send off from Pete's Harbor in Redwood City. Our navigation aids were a depth sounder, AM radio, Radio Direction Finder and charts! We gunk holed down the coast leaving early in the morning



Historian File Photo

so as to arrive in the next port before the fuel dock closed. Our itinerary was: Monterey, Morro Bay, Santa Barbara, Newport, San Diego, Ensenada. We had guests aboard on some parts of the trip and one couple from Salt Lake City sailed with us from Newport to Ensenada and back to San Diego. It was their first seagoing experience and our friend is convinced that the Coast Guard designed its diagonal red stripe across the bow of its ships after observing "Fantasea" decorated with his Bloody Mary in a similar fashion. Seasickness was experienced by most of our guests and both of our children from time to time. While in Southern California we took the children to the zoo in San Diego and Disneyland in Anaheim and spent a week at Catalina Island. Traveling North is always a challenge and we experienced a number of them including an engine failure, gale winds that forced us back to Santa Barbara with a Coast Guard helicopter hovering above us and several attempts to get around Point Conception. I'll spare you the details of some of the more harrowing moments. We arrived back in Monterey on September 4th to be greeted by Bob's parents and my mother. Bob, Sr. laughingly said he had checked with the Coast Guard so many times that they were on a first name basis. Looking back now, I can appreciate how worried about us they must have been.

This trip convinced Bob that we needed more outside space and after seeing a newer Matthews with a fly bridge, he designed and began building one for "Fantasea". We still made trips to the Delta and Santa Cruz as well as to San Francisco as members of Golden Gate Yacht Club, but work continued whenever possible. In 1969 Bob was assisting a client in locating a place for his large yacht. He discovered Ballena Bay which was a recently created island located in Alameda. Bob rushed home to tell me that he had made a deposit on a "sand lot, twenty-five feet wide, half under water at high tide and a promise to build a house on it and best of all there would be a dock attached to the house!" Fortunately, it took nearly a year for the house to be completed and for me to get used to the idea of leaving the peninsula where we had lived for nineteen years, but in June 1970 "Fantasea" had a new home and the Partridge family moved with her. We loved Ballena Bay and our new boating community. In fact, in 1978 Bob moved his law firm from the 24th floor of the Shell bldg. in San Francisco to the 2nd floor of a yacht broker's bldg. in Ballena Bay. We were truly committed to a new life style.

By this time we had heard about the Classic Yacht Association based in Southern California and had met Warner Holcombe who was the Commodore of the Northern California Fleet.

Warner encouraged us to join, but Bob hesitated because of the changes he had made. However, Warner persisted and in 1980 "Fantasea" was accepted for membership #269. For the next 22 years CYA was paramount in our lives. Bob became Rear Commodore in 1985 and had the honor of being Commodore in 1987. The highlight of that year was the 50th birthday celebration of the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge. Our three day event found twenty-two classics gathered at South Beach Harbor on Friday, May 22nd. On Saturday our boats paraded to San Francisco YC for lunch and on Sunday, we formed up for the big parade in spite of a 25 knot wind. "Jeremiah O'Brien," "Californian," "Jacquelyn," Master Mariner yachts and boats of all shapes and sizes also participated. After a 30's type dinner at the old Java House restaurant, we were scheduled to return to the Bridge for the fireworks and lighting of the Bridge towers. Not everyone was anxious to go out again to face the wind and waves, in fact, Donna Hamilton told Bob that her half of "Marcy" was NOT leaving the dock! We happily took them on board "Fantasea" and braved the elements to enjoy the celebration.

During the 80's, CYA was a young and growing organization. The Classic Yacht Association 10th Anniversary Membership Roster, published in 1980, contained just twenty-three pages. The

membership section was divided into Home Fleet, Northern California Fleet, Pacific Northwest Fleet, Canadian Fleet and Alaskan Fleet, but the Calendar of Events listed just fourteen dates without separating fleet activities. In 1982 the "Home Fleet" was replaced by "Southern California Fleet" and although it included some additional membership information, it was not until 1987 that By-Laws were printed in the seventy page roster. Our 2006 Roster contained 133 pages and registered membership #1161. My, how we have grown! Northern California CYA has followed the same pattern. In the early years, there were just two events besides Opening Day parades – one at Village West in Stockton in the summer and one at San Rafael YC in the fall. The summer rendezvous was a gala event with vintage clothing the preferred attire for the Saturday night dinner dance. The Rear Commodore, when elected, discovered he was the chairman for this event! By the mid 80's we started adding more events and our Change of Watch banquets became a treasured social event. It is difficult for me to recall missing a CYA event as the organization was so important to us. "There may have been times when "Fantasea" had to be absent, but seldom the Partridges.

Having our boat in a slip behind our house made impromptu trips on the Bay

frequent occurrences. If the morning paper told us about an interesting event on the Bay "Fantasea" would be there. When the Her Majesty's Ship "Britannia" visited, "Fantasea" was there to greet her; when the Blue Angels performed, "Fantasea" had a front row spot; after the Loma Prieta earthquake, "Fantasea" made frequent trips for us to view the broken bridge and follow the repairs. Family birthdays and holidays were often an excuse for a cruise to Angel Island and 4th of July fireworks were enjoyed from her bridge. A Christmas tradition was our cruise around our little island with carolers aboard and Bob, in his Santa hat, shouting "Merry Christmas" to our Ballena Bay neighbors. The last trip Bob made aboard "Fantasea" was on May 1, 2002 when we watched the last gigantic crane glide under the Bay Bridge. Now as I cruise the Bay as a docent on the "Potomac" and see the progress being made on the new Bay Bridge I think to myself, "If Bob were here, he would have "Fantasea" ferrying us out on a regular basis to observe this construction project."

"Fantasea" is still in her slip and my wonderful CYA friends help me maintain her. CYA is as dear to my heart as it was to Bob's and I cherish my membership in this unique organization.

Director Bev Partridge, second from left, enjoying the company of members from several fleets, aboard Woodrow on the National Commodore's Cruise around Lake Union and Lake Washington this past January.

Rick Olson Photo

