



**Current News of the  
Northern California Fleet of the Classic Yacht Association**



**ISSUE 2—2020**

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**Commodore's Report**—by *Bernadette Sweeney*

Since the early 1890's **Opening Day on San Francisco Bay** has been associated with the activities of yacht clubs celebrating the spring season. This gradually became identified with the manual opening of the bridge at Corinthian Island in Marin County. Sailboats and "arks"



Elizabeth cruising outside the Corinthian Yacht Club

through to the Bay. Individual clubs held their own "Opening Day" celebrations either independently or jointly.

Since 1917 an annual parade of all Clubs on the Bay led by the Northern California Fleet of the Classic Yacht Association has taken place. Sadly, due to the Corona-virus that is impacting all our lives in so many ways this is the only time other than during WW II that it was cancelled.



This year, Jim Sweeney showed his model of the Sweeney's Runabout

that had been stored in Tiburon Lagoon to protect them from the ravages of winter passed

We have personally participated in the parade most of the past twenty years with our 1929 43 ft yacht Elizabeth.

This year the PICYA gallantly held a virtual parade encouraging pictures of



**THE CLASSIC YACHT ASSOCIATION IS DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION, PRESERVATION, RESTORATION AND MAINTENANCE OF FINE OLD PLEASURE CRAFT**

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## Commodore's Report—continued from page 1

past years and model boats. Jim Sweeney submitted a picture, shown on previous page, of the model he built of our 24 ft mahogany runabout we keep at Lake Tahoe. Photo below is a photo from last year showing



Elizabeth in Opening Day 2019 following Eslo

Elizabeth joining other Classics on the Bay behind Tom and Nancy Clothier's Eslo. Next year let us hope to return to those more normal times.



## Vice Commodore's Report—by Rob Sesar

Headed out of Glen Cove early on the third of July for Owl Harbor. With Marco in his Islander 28 following behind. Marco has never ventured into the delta before. Beautiful sunny day as we paid tribute to the sailors lost at Port Chicago, enjoyed the underside architecture of the Antioch bridge, motored through false river and up the fisherman's cut, and relicts of the past as we made our way to Owl Harbor. Sunset was stunning and worth it. What I mean by worth it is as soon as the sun sets the mosquitos arrive. Reports are they are more plentiful this year than ever before. Luckily I was prepared. Used the bug zapper inside to kill the ones getting through the make shift screening.

The fourth was a full "Buck" moon with a partial



Skal arriving at Grindstone Joe's

eclipse. After a big delta breakfast, five people, two dogs set out for a five your cruise on Skål. Under the Moke-lumne River Bridge stopping traffic on California Highway 12, we past over the Georgiana Slough whirlpool (65 feet deep on the 4<sup>th</sup>). Under Tower Bridge, past the vegetable sheds until we crashed the party at Grindstone Joe's. Seeing Scott (Gerry and I had given him up for dead, but that is a different story.) was like longing for a lost summer. Scott is scary in his mask for some reason.

After a little social distasting conversation, a walk around the island eating blackberries we headed down Little Potato Slough avoiding the sand bar at Potato Slough, the angry swans and the ferry cable we rejoined the San Joaquin River.

It was fun to see the large number of pleasure boats cruising the river. Most would come up along Skål and give us the thumbs up. There must have been two hundred boats anchored in Potato Slough waiting for the Hilton fire works that never did light the sky. Like us they all had to be satisfied with a good boat, a great river and a buck moon.

*Editor's Note: The fireworks have been rescheduled for Labor Day weekend, September 5.*

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In this update on the *Allure* refit I will stop myself from talking about carpentry. I need to pace myself a little... Instead I will cover some of the technical updates we have done on *Allure*.

We installed an 3kW inverter and sufficient batteries to last until we know how much battery capacity we really need. Here I will not lose myself in battery sizing, but focus on what the inverter has allowed us to do in the galley and elsewhere. Of courses a generator can give you the same benefits, but a generator comes with noise and other maintenance downsides.

First, the gas stove was replaced by an induction cooktop. Instant heat and perfect temperature control. Below used together with a cast iron pot from Erika's grandmother. The pot is quite possibly older than *Allure*.

Second, a micro. Nothing special here, just convenient. Third, an Airfryer. An Airfryer is basically a small con-



vection oven. Since it is small, it can be quite fast and efficient. No excuse to not having perfect french fries on the boat. Since it is an oven, it can do it all from bread, roasted vegetables, to even steaks. (Flank steaks work especially well, since they are quite thin and cook easily.)

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Fourth, a Nespresso machine. What sunrise in the cockpit or what dinner is complete without a perfect cup?

While we are in the galley, I should mentioned that we installed a LED UV water filter unit. After some research we selected Acuva. Below is a picture from the installation.



Fifth, and we are now out of the galley, the inverter allows a heat pump that can either take the edge of the cold of the bay or the heat of the delta.

That was a small update on the new creative comforts of *Allure*. When you have spent a full day sanding and varnishing, creature comforts have their place.

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As many of you know, several NC fleet CYA members are also members of an organization known as the Grindstone Joe Association. Grindstone's operates a private facility located off Little Potato Slough, not far from the Tower Park resort in Terminous. The facility was originally built in the early 1920's by a Chilean sailor named Joe Attelo. Legend has it that Joe jumped ship in San Francisco, obtained a row boat, and rowed all the way to the Delta, where he found a disused spit of land. He built the land up using a wheelbarrow to create a lagoon where he farmed catfish. In the mid 1920's Joe built some docks, and various classic yachts would stop in and stay a few days. Grindstone's member Theo Stephens Jr. gave me a copy of the log book from CYA yacht Killara (1929, 34' Stephens) that chronicled her maiden voyage, which included an overnight at Grindstone's. Joe passed away in 1944, and the yachtsmen who frequented the place arranged to buy it from the local owners (Joe had never held the title). In 1945 the Grindstone Joe Association was formed to maintain and operate the facility (known by members as "The Island", even though it is possible to get there by car). There are currently about 33 members (the bylaws allow a maximum of 50).

Today, we have 1600 feet of docks with water and 30/50 amp power, bathrooms and showers (currently under renovation), and a covered party deck with large BBQs, a great ice machine, tables and chairs, and a giant Jenga set.

The Island is home to great blue heron, snowy egrets, kingfishers and cormorants. Otters, beavers, and the occasional seal are frequent visitors, and the descendants of Joe's cat-

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fish still live in the lagoon. It is a very laid back place, and a perfect Delta cruising destination. Over the water, it is a little over an hour from the Highway 12 Mokelumne River Bridge area, and can be found either via the south fork of the Mokelumne (past the bridge from Willow Berm), or by Potato Slough off the San Joaquin River (no bridges).

Normally, the Island is not open for cruise-ins (other than members and their guests) from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

However, recently we have relaxed that rule because of low usage resulting from the pandemic and various facility improvements. Berthing is \$50 per boat per day (currently reduced to \$25 while the bathrooms are being renovat-



Skal, Allure and Catherine E at Grindstones over Fourth of July 2020

ed- hopefully before the end of July).

If you are interested in visiting (or membership), contact me, and I'll try to find a time when a member sponsor is planning to be on the island.

The Stephens Yacht Rendezvous is on for September 11, 12, & 13. This will be a spectacular weekend. Village West Marina & Resort is excited that we are coming and they will go all out to welcome us. Village West Yacht Club is excited about our coming too. The club has declared it the “Roaring 20s Weekend” so break out your flapper outfits and your Gatsby clothes, it is probably best to leave the Thompson at home.

Boats should be coming in all day Friday. In the evening we will enjoy cocktails on the dock. Garlic Brothers restaurant at the marina is open for dinner and possibly the galley at Village West Yacht Club (a few things are still in flux).

On Saturday Rusty will put on his audio / video presentation of the history of Stephens Brothers boats. This is a great presentation and well worth attending. We might have a couple of other guest speakers there along with some memorabilia from personal collections. In the afternoon we will make contact with Dick Stephens via electronic media and wish him a happy birthday.

We have reservations at the club for dinner that evening. They always have good food so I am confident it will be an excellent dinner. The bar at the club will be

open all weekend for our pleasure. Whatever COVID restrictions are in place at the time we will be able to comply with. The club has a large outside deck if needed.

Sunday we will parade up into McLeod Lake and then down past the Stephens estate on the Calaveras River. There is a possibility to cruise on to Grindstone Joe’s for a visit while cruising back down the river, more on this later.



*Rusty Areias accepted award for Dick Stephens*

Dick Stephens received the Hal Schell

Award at the July Delta Chambers mixer held at Wimpy’s Marina Cafe. Dick could not be present so he asked Rusty to fill in for him and accept the award. Rusty says he is part of “the Portuguese branch of the family” and indeed he should be. He is very close to the family and has the world’s greatest collection of Stephens yachts at this time.

Barron Hilton started shooting off Independence Day fireworks at his duck club on Venice Island in 1958. Over the years more and more people stopped by to watch on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July until he finally had to hire a Dutra barge to use as a platform to fire them from. Unfortunately Mr. Hilton died last year but he left an endowment to continue the fireworks “in perpetuity” unfortunately the COVID pandemic came along and they cancelled the fireworks for July 4<sup>th</sup> this year but take heart, they have rescheduled them for September 5<sup>th</sup> – Labor Day Weekend. You should consider stopping here on the way to the Rendezvous

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Before Pat Pending became part of the Owen family household, the yacht had a colorful past since her launching in 1929 at the Lake Union Dry Docks in Seattle. During the 1930's the idea of racing yachts up the coast of California was met with a lot of enthusiasm by the yachting community.

This April 1931 Pacific Motor Boat magazine article describes the details of one of these races that had Pat Pending as one of the participants, only then the yacht was named *Lightnin'.* But, in the yachts listing for the race the owner used her nickname, "Mammy". That was because Al Jolson often crewed for the owner, Lloyd Bacon. Lloyd worked for Warner Bros and directed *The Jazz Singer* and 60 other movies in the 30's. Today, Jolson and



Below is the crew on *Lightnin' (Mammy)* ready for the race, with extra fuel tanks putting the exhaust under water with the crew standing on the Transom.

The Third Annual All-California Power Cruiser Handicap Race took place in April 1931 with nearly 35 yachts signed up. The handicap was established based on the projected speed of the yacht by the owners. The owners were required to provide the number of revolutions per minute they desired to run their motors during the competition. The handicap was established based on the speed that the yachts would make at the specified number of engine revolutions. Penalties were handed out for yachts not maintaining their projected speed. The largest yacht that entered the race was the 82 foot *Seyelyn* and smallest, the *Ahoyoha* at 34 feet. Both yachts belonged to the Long Beach Yacht Club. The average length of the yachts in the race fleet was a little under 55 feet.

The race provided for three classes of yachts:

Class A: Yachts not to exceed 10 MPH

Class B: Yachts whose speed would be between 10-14 MPH, and,

Class C: Yachts who would maintain speeds greater than 14 MPH.



The start time for the race was 9:00 a.m. off the Pacific Coast Club in Long Beach. The first leg of the race ended at the Santa Barbara Yacht Club, some 89.4 miles away from the starting line. The second day was an arduous run of 200.3 miles to Monterey and the starting lineup was based on the yachts handicap. So, theoretically all of the yachts

"Mammy" would not be politically correct.

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would arrive together at Monterrey.

The fourth day start from Monterrey brought the racers into the San Francisco Bay with the finale at the St. Francis Yacht Club

Lloyd Bacon thought he had won the race, but was given second place. He was so annoyed he left the boat at the St. Francis and sold it to Ellis Arkish. Lloyd never saw the boat again. Arkish sold Lightnin' to Eugene Bennett, trial lawyer with Pillsbury Madison & Surtro. My father, a San Francisco attorney, purchased the yacht from on Oct. 12, later went vice during War II and war was chased Navy by family and with them for four tions.

the Bacon kept the place tro- gave it to Mel some years ago.



Second Place Trophy for *Lightnin'* the former name of *Pat Pending*

Bennett 1940. It into ser- World after the repur- from the the Owen has been ever since genera- Luckily, family second phy and

## Stephens Rendezvous 2020 September 11–13, 2020

### Village West Marina, Stockton

**Location:** Village West Marina, Stockton, dock fees \$.75 per foot per day, two day minimum. Come earlier or stay longer with separate agreement with marina. Cabins and RV spaces available too, make your reservation early 209-951-1551. More RV spaces available at Riverpoint Landing 209-951-4144.

The event will kick off with the arrival of boats on Friday Sept. 11. Village West Yacht Club will be open for cocktails. For dinner there are two great restaurants at the marina. Bob's - serving breakfast, burgers, and sandwiches, and Garlic Brothers - serving seafood, steaks, & pizza.

Saturday afternoon we will have Rusty Areias presenting his Stephens Brothers history in the VWYC clubhouse. Rusty has restored a few Stephens yachts and is an expert on the craft. The bar will be open all day. At some point we will be in touch with Dick Stephens so we can all wish him a happy birthday. We have reservations at the yacht club for dinner.

Sunday - no host breakfast at Bob's at the Marina and departure. We plan to parade up into the Stockton Channel past 5 Star Marina and other historical sites and then we will travel downstream and cruise past Dick and Donna Stephens home on the Calaveras River to pay homage to Dick on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. You can stay longer at the marina if you want by special arrangement with the management.



Gig Owen passed away on April 18, 2020. Mel and Gig were some of the first people we met in the Classic Yacht Association in 1984. They were auctioneers at an event in Petaluma. Gig's enthusiasm for everything was evident at that first meeting. Gig loved to be the host of a party, either on Pat Pending or at her home. As they say, "she really knew how to throw a party."

Quote from Gig's obituary, "She was known for her infectious smile, boundless energy and enthusiasm. Her kindness, generosity, and positive approach to life was remarkable. Gig was renowned for remembering every name - man, woman, child, dog, and cat. She had an uncanny ability to make others feel good about themselves thus having an enormous and indelible impact. " This was so true.



Our dog Nellie was the beneficiary of Gig's generosity with her collar and leash from the San Francisco Yacht Club.

Gig mentioned she missed their big house in San Francisco, but the San

Francisco Yacht Club became their entertaining hub. Many a fun breakfast, lunch or dinner there.



Our good friend and boating buddy, Mavis Engfer, passed away on May 18, 2020. Tom and I spent many days cruising the Delta with Dick and Mavis. We would leave our dock in San Francisco and cruise to Antioch to meet up with them on Hiltot. We had our favorite spot for dinner at Mac's Roadhouse.

Once we thought it was gone, but we then realized we were in the wrong place. It was known for a lot of food at a reasonable price and tattoos.

Mavis' daughter Lindsay shared some of Mavis' early life at her memorial service. Mavis was born on June 18, 1926 in an area of London called Hamstead Heath. That's where she got her British humor and wit. She was evacuated to Wales with 2 younger siblings during World War II. She remembered riding the train with the windows blacked out so German bombers wouldn't see the train. Later back in her hometown, she remembered the air raid sirens and her family evacuating to the air raid shelter.



Mavis immigrated to San Jose through Canada in 1967 with her first husband and 2 daughters. Mavis crossed the Atlantic 5 times on passenger liners. Maybe that started her boating interest. After the death of her first husband, Mavis met Dick. Dick had also lost his first wife.

Tom and I spent many an afternoon or evening on Hiltot, enjoying a soda or glass of wine. Mavis loved her white wine with an ice cube. On our Delta adventures, we would host them for breakfast one morning and they would host us for the second day. She loved a cup of tea, but not iced tea. She didn't like sweets although she made the best chocolate brownies. Mavis loved spicy foods (from a Brit no less) and there was a rumor about some hot sauce that went missing from The Rusty Porthole in Bethel Island. Right George Homenko?



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No need to tell anyone that not much has happened anywhere because of the Pandemic. One after the other of our events has wound up on the chopping box, beginning with the traditional Opening Day on the Bay back in April. Most recently, the event I was looking forward to that was to be staged from the Glen Cove Yacht Club has now been canceled, leaving us (hopefully) with our annual cruise-in to the Corinthian Yacht Club, but this one, too, has been scaled back in consideration of the surge in COVID cases that face us as the summer rolls forward. Last word is that the Club can only handle yachts 50 feet in length or less, which leaves our cruise captain, Gerry Kamilos on dry land this time.

Those of us who hold memberships in Bay and Delta yacht clubs have also felt the loss of good comradeship with the closing of almost all of these facilities in one form or another. Encinal, my club, closed up but continued to provide take-out meals on the weekends. Our chef and his staff did a remarkably good job with this dining option and when I have to travel back down to the Bay I try to take advantage of this service as often as I can. One note of progress, the new guest docks at Encinal are now completed, all done by volunteer help by members of the club, and they look great. Encinal is a great place for a cruise-in and with any luck one day we



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might be able to schedule something and take advantage of the new docks.

For a number of reasons, I took North Star back to the Delta in early June. With my school closed up and on-line classes replacing in-face lectures, I have been working at home as I know many of you have as well. It is not a well kept secret of my dislike of the Bay; too rough and windy most of the time, and dodging ferries which seem to come out of nowhere has never been my idea of a good time. So I went home to Oxbow but not before the Bay

took one last stab at me and kicked up some nice swell about a mile out of the Carquinez Bridge. Coupling with that both engines quit on me, and we were broadside to the waves for a couple of minutes until I fixed the problem and we were once again on our way. My son, Christopher was piloting at this point and was having quite a good time “surfing” North Star from one wave to the next as they picked us up on the stern and hurled us forward. Of course, Chris

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*18th Annual Taste of the Delta  
August 3, 2019  
Village West Marina, Stockton*

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is a sailor, so he thought nothing of this but the fun of it. I on the other hand, spent the time worrying about the integrity of the hull fasteners. Anyway we made it



*Social Distancing at Grindstone's*

into the calmer waters of the strait and without further incident docked overnight at the Pittsburgh Marina where we fueled up for the final leg the next day to Oxbow. It was good to be back.

Within two weeks *North Star* was joined by *Allure* as Per and Erika, not being able to make their annual pilgrimage to their home in France, decided to spend the summer working on *Allure* but also to explore the Delta in parts that they had never ventured into. Per will have another report on their progress in their complete restoration of this beautiful Stephens in this issue. I left them last weekend merrily (at least I think they were merry) sanding away on the varnish of the aft overhead trim. The yacht will sparkle come time for the Stephens Rendezvous.

George and Candace, along with Scott and Susan and Bill and Sue are all berthed at Oxbow too, so we have quite a fleet all in one spot at least for awhile. Over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend we, minus Bill and Sue and plus Martin and Janis McNair, got together at Grindstone's (social distancing was easy on the club

deck) and it was good to see everyone. Martin told me that they had sold their "9" level Mediterranean home at Point Richmond but found a single level (on the Bay, no less) just east of the original property. Easier to get around with no steps. They still keep the houseboat at Grindstones.

While COVID has been a nuisance (I only say that because as far as I know no one in the fleet, knock on old wood, has been infected) it has certainly been a tragedy to many others. While not COVID related, our sadness has been in the passing of two of the loveliest ladies I have had the honor to know, Gig Owen and Mavis Engfer. Both of them led exciting and fulfilling lives and we miss them each and every day. Heartfelt condolences to Mel and Dick for their losses.



*Aerial View of Grindstone's from George Homenko's Drone*

An advertisement for Melgoza's Yacht Restoration. The background shows a boat on the water. The text is as follows:

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## Coming Events

**Taste of the Delta**  
August 8, 2020  
Village West Marina

**Classics at the Corinthian**  
August 28-29, 2020  
Gerry Kamilos, Chair

**Stephens' Rendezvous**  
September 11-13, 2020  
Bill Wells, Chair

**Lighted Boat Parade**  
December 5 or 19, 2020  
Steve Kadzielawa, Chair

**Change of Watch, 2020/2021**  
Venue and date to be determined  
David Cobb, Chair

### **PICYA Report**—by *Jim and Bernadette Sweeney*

The first meeting took place on June 1st and the second on July 6th. In consideration of coronavirus regulations both were virtual meetings conducted via Zoom technology. A total of 91 delegates and officers participated in the June meeting and 57 in the July meeting. Bill Wells substituted for Jim and Bernadette Sweeney in June as they were enroute to Lake Tahoe.

Both meetings were primarily concerned with the ongoing cancellation or postponement of yachting events. The most notable of these are the Margot Brown Wheelchair Regatta and the Lipton Cup Regatta. The fall management conference is now scheduled for October 3 at Loch Lomond YC. If pandemic restrictions are still in place, consideration will be given to make it a virtual event. The RBOC is actively supporting recreational boaters' interests in Sacramento but is becoming desperate for funding due to the numerous yacht club shut-downs. Donations are urgently needed to continue RBOC operations. Recent notable donations include \$1,500 from the South Beach YC and \$800 from the San Pablo YC. A combined sum of \$2,700 has also been donated by the Village West, Stockton, Tahoe, South Lake Tahoe and Loch Lomond yacht clubs.

The PICYA Scholarship program has six applicants and will be able to award three scholarships in 2020. Further details on the above and other activities can be found on the PICYA web site. The Next Delegates meeting will be held on August 3.

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