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# Sierra Point Yacht Club

Spyglass Newsletter – December 2016

Website: <http://www.sierrapointyc.org>

The fun yacht club of the San Francisco Bay ..... Join the family



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## 1. Editor's update

I am now settled in my little house on the Isle of Wight over the pond and I must admit it is taking time to get used to the winter weather here. Especially the north to north easterly winds that when they blow they cut through you like a knife. The cold winds blast down the North Sea picking up moisture on the way, then curve around the eastern tip of

England and then blast along the English Channel and pummel the Isle of Wight. The moisture in the air is 'penetrating' to the bones and joints if you are not suitably clothed. I went for a walk along the beach yesterday dreaming of my 'take it for granted' California weather and wondering if I would make it back to the car before the joints stopped working; this is the type of weather to 'freeze the balls off a brass monkey'. We have a winter sailing series at our sister club here called – the frostbite series; they aren't kidding.

I am starting to receive articles now and I encourage you to keep sending them in to me on: [nigelbaker10@yahoo.com](mailto:nigelbaker10@yahoo.com) to make our monthly magazine viable and interesting to read – you surely don't want to read my stuff all the time. So, let me have any article of interest whether it is boating related, tech tips, items for sale/swap, etc. by the last week of each month to be included in the next month's edition target release date before the end of the first week of the following month.

We have Commodore and Webmaster commentary's and some interesting articles this month - including a Quincy and Sarah sailing adventure update, A funny story from Kevin Cerini on his early experiences with the club, and I have included an overview of the History of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) taken from Martin Woodward's new book on the subject from a Bembridge Lifeboat Station point of view. I am bringing a copy of his book back for the club to read.

## **2. Commodore's Commentary for December**

December says Christmas Is Coming! At SPYC this means the Decorated Boat Contest on the 9th

and 10, then the annual Christmas Holiday Party at the club on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Decorated boats will be judged on both the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. by Harbormaster Mike Hahn and our own Michele Salmon with winners announced at the Holiday Party Saturday. If you're lighted you're in! The gift exchange at the Holiday Party is always a blast, definitely a big pre-Christmas highlight. I have always had a great time so be sure to come along and participate! It is hard for me to describe the excitement and hilarity of this event – you have to be there!

Not to be missed and always memorable. All donations go to good causes, and the Club matches the cash donations so you will double your Christmas giving with us. Disclosure: just today, the day I wrote this

column, I used the tool I came away from a past gift exchange with and it is a really useful item. I'll use it again tomorrow! At this time of year we are doing Sunday Breakfast on the first Sunday of the month – this month December 4<sup>th</sup>. Always a good value and good food so drag yourself out of bed on Sunday morning and get

a good start to the day. And if you want to participate in preparing Sunday Breakfast let me know – volunteers are needed to keep this going! Thanks to Jack Ritter, Jay Russell, and their crew for the new north end wall on the

deck. This will definitely make the deck a more pleasant environment year round, especially in the windy winter months. Thanks so much! On a more sober note: Please lock the glass doors to the deck!! One of the good

things about SPYC is members' unrestricted access to the club building 24/7. I know that there are people in the building meeting or socializing, or chilling out, all the time all through the week. Yes, it's a great place. On the down side, we need to be attentive and vigilant in protecting our facility. This means lock up when you are there, especially if you are alone or the last one out. It actually costs us money (\$\$) if the night guard reports unlocked doors to the police. Be sure the doors and windows are closed and locked. It's your club: please protect it by checking that all doors and windows are securely closed and locked when you leave. Thanks for your attention and participation in our club! See you at the Holiday Party.

Quincy Bragg. Commodore

### 3. Events calendar

#### Club Breakfasts

Please come along to the club's  
Monthly breakfast this coming Sunday.  
Our illustrious Fleet Captain, the right  
Honourable Kathy Stern and her very  
Dubious counterpart and partner in crime –  
Jack Ritter will be the cooks de jour. Kathy  
Makes the best scrambled eggs I have ever  
Tasted – sorry other cooks, and pity I won't  
Be there to enjoy



**SUNDAY  
BREAKFAST  
AT  
S.P.Y.C.**

First Sunday of the Month  
SPYC will serve breakfast from 9 am to 11 am  
Varied menu : Specials  
Bar

Members \$7  
Non Members \$10  
no registration required : pay at the bar

## Christmas Festivity Event

The Christmas festivity season is fast approaching and so is the annual SPYC Holiday party which will be held on December 10<sup>th</sup>. Please register for this exciting and fun day complete with a boat decorating and judging contest starting at 5pm.

Once again I am sorry for missing the event and my poor boat Haven is - to quote a royal saying "not amused" at not being decorated



### BOAT DECORATING CONTEST

The Marina used to really get into the holidays.... WHAT HAPPENED? Let's re-establish the tradition.

Make your boat look wonderful, funny, whimsical, political, sinister or whatever. Judges lead by Michael Hahn, and Michele Salmon will start on dock 6 at 5pm Friday night and continue Saturday 5pm. If your boat is lit up you are entered. 3 Grand Prizes and lots of other winners awarded at 7pm in the club house

**DECEMBER 10th**

### S.P.Y.C. Holiday Party and gift exchange

Walk the docks with judges 5pm - appetizers - 6 pm - Gift exchange at 7 pm  
Emcee - Michael Bell and his lovely assistant Diana

#### GIFT EXCHANGE

Bring a wrapped gift for the Great Gift Exchange: Lots drawn for when you take your pick from the pile or previous gifts ; then see if you keep it!!!!!!

We are limiting "stealing" gifts to 3 times!

Your gift must have value, but don't go spending a lot of money. It must be clean and complete, not part of something else. For example, a hammer handle is not complete without the hammer head, nor a set of bowls with one missing.

**Entry: \$20 per Adult donation to Second Harvest and Brisbane Toys**

The club will match your donation.

In addition there are barrels in the club lobby for toy and food donations. Many thanks to Tom Munro for organizing that.

## 4. Cruise Out Update

The Club cruiseout "Armada" has enjoyed its last cruiseout of the year to Sausalito which was a great weekend and I encourage more club members with boats and who may be interested in joining future cruise outs to contact our Fleet Captain Kathy Stern on: [kathy4730@gmail.com](mailto:kathy4730@gmail.com) During the last board meeting, we discussed possible locations – including new locations for the 2017 cruise out schedule. If members have any recommendations, please contact Kathy.

## 5. Quincy and Sarah's November Sailing Adventure

We had never been on a cruise ship vacation but a year ago friends suggested that we might like to give it a try. On our vacations staying with these friends on their boat in the Caribbean we had often encountered cruise ships the size of islands and their hordes of passengers so we had a definite prejudice against them – better the small scale of a small boat and the ability to choose where to go and what to do. But the friends told us they had heard positive things about Star Clippers, that they were very sailor-friendly, had numerous repeat passengers, and



so we were persuaded to give the fall transatlantic journey a try.



Our choice was the boat in the foreground, not the one in the background. The Royal Clipper – 439 feet long, five masts, and 191 passengers on our trip from Lisbon to Barbados. The ship was built in 2000 and is the largest in the Star Clipper fleet of three, as well as being the largest sailing vessel in the world at this time.



There were many times in the first few days of the trip when we felt like we were in a movie set or some surreal dream world. It really was a sailing ship with a zillion lines from deck to spars and masts or from here to there between masts. It is not automated

in the sense of 'push a button and the sails change' but mechanized in that all the lines are operated by powered winches on the deck and the square sails (except one as far as I could tell) all furl inside the horizontal spars. There are jibs at the bow, steadying sails between the masts, and a spanker at the stern and most of these are hanked onto stays to raise and lower with halyards and stow in place; a few of the upper ones are on furlers.

And it really does sail! The captain said that their goal is to be sailing 50% of the time. Unfortunately we had light winds on our crossing so there was only one day of just sailing with the motor off. Most of the time we were motor-sailing as the ship had



a schedule that had to be met. We needed to maintain an average speed of about 11 knots on the main part of the crossing (Tenerife to Barbados).

Only one day were we entirely without sails as there was no wind at all. The up side of the light wind crossing was that the seas were relatively calm so we had no trouble after a day or two moving about the ship or pursuing our daily activities.





There was a lot of sitting around in the sun to do, sometimes this included reading (multi-tasking?). You'll notice on the left that despite the opportunity presented by the numerous lines no one is pulling on any of them – not uncommon with guests even on your own sailboat. Lounging in the netting at the bow was popular, too. I was told that we had a pod of dolphins riding our bow wave one day but that only happened once and I missed it.

Other activities included a gym, morning exercise sessions on deck, yoga twice a day on deck, more reading, watching the ocean go by, climbing the main mast, and walking a mile in the afternoons. Some ship's officers and some passengers gave talks on their pet subjects ranging from rogue waves to proper operation of a sextant. Other people seemed to be in one or the other of the bars most of the time. There was a ping-pong tournament and a darts tournament – both on the moving deck of the ship which added to the challenges of the games. Of course there were numerous places to sit and knit.



The boat has three pools. The largest one, above the main dining room atrium, was under repair for 75% of the trip which was interesting for someone like me to watch as I passed from day to day. Eventually they got the leaks plugged, caulked, and the interior repainted so it was in use for the last few days.

And there were meals – three full meals plus three “snack” times. The food was excellent with breakfast and lunch buffets and sit-down dinner. Breakfasts were fairly routine, there was more variation at lunches. Dinners had choices of three of four appetizers, four entrees, and three

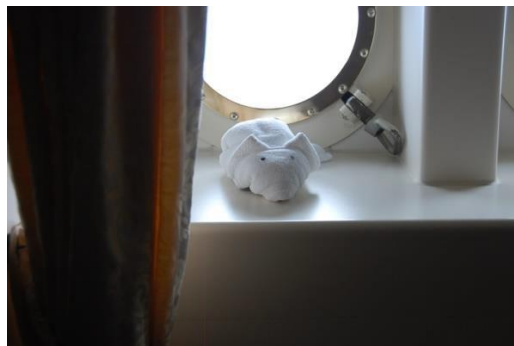
desserts; I recall only one entrée being repeated in 16 days – a lot of variety! Sorry but I did not take pictures of the food.

Night life included music and dancing; the ship carried its own musicians so most of the music was live. In the evening every other day or so there was a group activity such as trivia quiz, team Pictionary, or similar.

About 15% of the passengers were Swedish (it was a tour group), maybe 40% German, and most of the rest English speaking plus a dozen or so French. Almost everyone spoke English to some extent so it was usually no trouble conversing with people at meals. I don't believe I spoke to anyone who did not now or had not in the past owned a boat, and the vast majority were sailors so there was always common ground in conversations to help get to know people. We had been told in advance that the trans- Atlantic cruises were very popular with sailors and this definitely was the case. We met a number of people who had done this particular trip several times.

Our cruise took the ship from its summer in the Mediterranean to winter cruising in Caribbean. It was 16 days from Lisbon to Barbados with stops in Casablanca, Safi (Morocco), and Tenerife in the Canary Islands. The longest stretch at sea was 10 days from Tenerife to Barbados.

I found the cruise to be very relaxing and enjoyable. If you want more information about the ship, including interior pictures and deck plans, go to [www.starclippers.com](http://www.starclippers.com) and under 'Our Fleet' click on Royal Clipper.



Our towel mouse kept us company most of the voyage

## 6. Webmaster Update

We've made some adjustments to the mobile version of the SPYC website so it looks a little better on a smart phone. If you find something that could be improved, let me know and we might be able to make further adjustments. You can also view the desktop version on your smart phone by clicking the Desktop icon on the bottom menu.



We are planning on using the new Forms function for the website. This is a much more convenient way for you to provide information for events, etc., to the coordinator. We will begin using this for Cruise Outs to aid in providing information to the Fleet Captain, better known as Kathy Stern. In the description of the Cruise Out you will find a link to the form to provide all the standard information needed for a cruise out. This will get sent to Kathy in a nice uniform manner and hopefully easier than emailing. Give it a try!

We can make forms for all occasions, just let me know.

As our website grows it becomes more difficult to test and spot errors. If you find any error or misinformation on our site, please don't hesitate to send me a note.

Frank Gurnee

[webmaster@sierrapointyc.org](mailto:webmaster@sierrapointyc.org)

## 7. The Ole Sailor

I was leaning on my shovel watching the old man eat his snack for the morning. One of my employees was loading his dump truck with dirt with a tractor. The dust was drifting towards me, sticking to the sweat on my arms and face. I moved closer to the man to get away from the dust cloud. Finally settling a few feet away from him I looked over and made a stupid joke about the boiling summer heat. We both chuckled and we started to talk about landscaping and his dump truck. After an awkward moment of silence I looked at his shirt which had "SPYC Beer Can Races" printed on it. I asked him if he raced beer cans and looked at me like I was stupid. He informed me that he belonged to some yacht club in Brisbane. He was a sailor.

Since I was a child I would look out onto the bay with amazement as these triangles moved slowly around on the water. They would zig zag, lean, and sometimes they even seemed to fly on the water. I wanted to do that. I always wanted to do it, but I never had a way in.

"This man is my way in!" was my first thought right after he told me he was a sailor. I let him tell me a few sailing stories about how his mother taught him how to sail when he was a child and another about how he chartered a sailboat in the Mediterranean Sea. To be honest, I was only half listening because the other half of me was trying to figure out what to say to let me into this yacht club of his. At a break in our conversation I asked the man how I could get into sailing. He finished chewing the last of his trail mix when he finally said "tomorrow we are racing. Be at the Sierra Point Yacht Club at 5. It has a big star on the side. "He must have noticed his truck was all topped off with dirt because after that sentence he started walking away to his truck. Before he hopped in and closed the door I managed to yell back, "Okay!"

I turned around and smiled. Immediately my mind went crazy. What do I wear? What if I fall off? Do I need to bring a snack? I don't have white soled shoes... can I wear my boots? Will we tip over? How the heck does a sailboat even work!? The rest of that Monday and up until 4pm that Tuesday seemed to drag on.

Star on the side of the building. There it was. I stood at the front entrance with a case of Stella Artois and my jacket. Now what?

The old man stepped out of his car and said "Ah good! Real beer!" and told me to follow him. We walked down to one of the docks and with his secret key he opened the gate. As we made our way down the dock he said: "I'm putting you with the Russians. They're great people." "What do you mean? You're not coming with me?" "No I'm going with a buddy of mine"

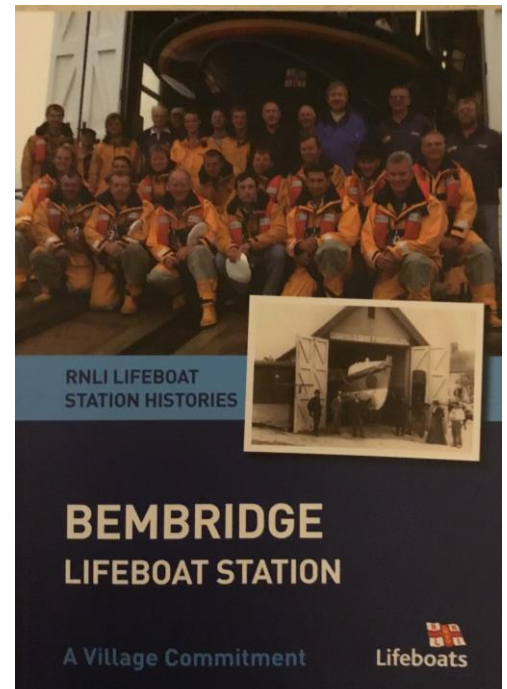
Before I could have a panic attack we rounded a corner. I could feel their Russian eyes staring at me. "Alright! He's with us! He's got beer!" I let out a sigh of relief and made my way aboard Nessie where I introduced myself to everyone. I sat in the cockpit of the boat and watched them scurry around passing lines through blocks and putting sails on the deck. About twenty minutes of observing I felt the engine rumble. Captain Mike gave his crew positions and a safety speech (I was rail meat), then we were on our way out to the bay. I was taking note of the view of the peninsula and thinking how amazing it was to see everything from that point of view when suddenly everyone started scrambling and pulling things and yelling. The mainsail was racing to the top of the mast and within seconds it was up and full of wind. With the engines off, the sound of wind filled my ears. Waves splashed against the hull and the sail subtly flapped in the background. Now I have been on my fair share of boats, but this was different and I had never experienced anything like it before. This wasn't a boat. It was like, a water airplane. This might be difficult to understand, but there was a sensation of flight when I was on the boat. We were cutting through the waves with only the sound of the wind as it pulled us through the water. It must be very similar to what a bird experiences when it is flying high above; speed and silence. For that hour we were out there on the bay, my mind was calm and everything I worried about while on land was gone.

Sailing is special to me now. Some people go through life not finding that one thing that just takes them away from the problems they face. I am so lucky to have met man with the dump truck because he has introduced me to that one thing that allows me to... escape. Thank you, Tomek.

Kevin Cerini

## 8. RNLI Lifeboat Station Histories – Bembridge Lifeboat Station

My old mate Martin Woodward who gave a lecture at the club a couple of years ago on sunken galleys and gold and silver coins, was for many years the coxswain (skipper) of our local Bembridge Lifeboat. Martin has written a book on behalf of the RNLI series of Lifeboat Station stories on the history of the Bembridge Lifeboat Station and the book makes a very interesting read on the beginnings of the service and some of the daring rescues from stricken ships over the ages. I am bringing a copy of the book back to the club for our members to read. I am reproducing some of the introduction of Martin's book below:



“Our lifeboat stations, of which there are more than 235 around the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands are an important part of the communities they serve. Since Sir William Hillary founded the charity in 1824, our brave lifesavers have been responsible for saving more than 141,000 lives returning those fortunate people to their families and friends.

The RNLI's first open rowing boats were crewed by fishermen who willingly put their lives at risk to save other fishermen and mariners from the hazards of the sea. The boats had no navigational aids but relied on local knowledge and seamanship of the lifeboat crews to avoid rocks, sandbanks and find their way in fog and storms.

Lifeboat stations are sited where there is a need and demand for our services. Sometimes the physical location of a lifeboat station has altered because a better, more accessible location has become available or, in some circumstances surrounding waters have silted up, or piers have been destroyed by fire or the elements.

New technologies have been used in the development of lifeboats, lifejackets, onboard computers, pager systems, lifeguard equipment and much more. The rowing, pulling and sailing, and steam lifeboats of yesteryear have long since been replaced by motorized vessels, with the B class, Tamar, and Shannon classes now the most technologically advanced lifeboats operating around our coasts”





## 9. Brit saying of the month

**Let's have a chin wag:** Meaning to talk to someone in an intense, gossipy manner. Example: 'Jack and I had a chin wag about Kathy's method of cooking scrambled eggs'

**That's all for this month folks**