

2025 WINTER
VOL 1

the **Shellback**



Bears and Birds
a century of classic racing

Online Store Reveal
membership, calendar, logo apparel

SINCE 1867
MASTER MARINERS
BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

WWW.SFMASTERMARINERS.ORG

The Master Mariners Benevolent Association (MMBA) is a San Francisco club dating back to 1867. Its purpose is to foster participation in yachting and the preservation of well designed, properly constructed, and well maintained classic and traditional sailing craft.

Member vessels include traditional and classic sailboats.



The Shellback is published each quarter. We welcome clever articles, photos and graphics, suggestions and more. Email contributions to the editor for consideration.

2024 newsletter editor is Martha Blanchfield.
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The MMBA is a 501(c)(7) California Corporation governed by an elected Board of Directors whose members each serve a three-year term.

In 1988, the Board established the MMBA Historical Small Craft Preservation Foundation (HSCPF), a separate 501(c)(3) corporation whose mission is to support charitable activities; the name was later changed to Master Mariners Benevolent Foundation (MMBF).



In maritime tradition, a seaman who has crossed the Equator is initiated as a "trustworthy shellback" into the court of Neptune. He or she may also be called a son or daughter of Neptune. Bestowal of this title acknowledges the prowess of a mariner who is able to brave the uncertainties and dangers of the sea.

KEEPING THE SPIRIT OF SAILING ALIVE

Ahoy Master Mariners,

As we enter another sailing season here on San Francisco Bay, I am reminded of how lucky we are to have this beautiful aqua-basin as our backyard. After many years of navigating and exploring the bay's nooks and crannies, I still find myself learning and being challenged by new and awesome circumstances.

This year is particularly special as we mark 158 years since our founding. When we look back on our rich history, it's more important than ever to ensure the future of these iconic wooden boats and the organization that supports them. Let's continue to nurture and grow this community, keeping the spirit of sailing alive for generations to come.

I encourage you to get your boats ready, invite your friends and family to join the fun, and share the joy of sailing on the bay; there's no better way to spread the enthusiasm we all feel for this timeless sport.

I'm truly honored to serve as your commodore, and look forward to seeing all of you out on the water soon.

Hans List
Commodore, Master Mariners



Hans List
Commodore 2022 - 25
Sequestor
hans.list@sfmastermariners.org

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Above: Let's go! Waiting on the wind while aboard *Water Witch*, January 1, 2025. Photo by John and Gena Egelston.

Cover: New Year's Day welcome committee shows Andy Flick, Lena Johansson, Anders Johansson. Photo by John and Gena Egelston.



Top two photos shared by John and Gena Egelston.



Photo shared by Melissa Flick.

NEW YEAR'S DAY RACE

Written by Melissa Flick

Our Master Mariners New Years Day Regatta is always a great way to kick-off the New Year! No matter how you feel (from the night before), there is a lot of hustle and bustle at Point San Pablo Yacht Club as our large fleet heads down the channel one by one, with a horn blow and cheering each other on!

We made our way to the start line on the east side of Treasure Island and what a beautiful sight to see 9 Master Mariners boats! The start line horn blew and we anxiously tried to lead the pack, but the reality was this was another year with little wind. It gives us the opportunity to think about our New Year's resolutions - how much time we are going to spend sailing, how much work we are going to get done on our boats, and everything else we'll accomplish this year. Cheers! Then, wow...there is a lot of time to think about that with no wind! Commodore List threw in a surprise 5-minute motor bonus with the pop question "Who wrote Billy Bones?", which was won by Mike & Sue Proudfoot! The answer was Skip Henderson, previous owner of our own *Aida* (but our kids accidentally changed the VHF channel, so we missed it!)

We made our way to Point San Pablo Yacht Club for our annual chili and fixins potluck. It was amazing to see the bar full of even more Master Mariners! We warmed up by the fire and warmed our bellies with delicious home cooked food - thank you everybody for your contributions. We then kicked-off the annual Tacky Trophy Awards, which is a 30+ year Master Mariners tradition. It is always fun and great to see some new trophies added to the mix as well as some perpetuals e.g. the large tortoise shell that goes to the last place boat - this year *Velerosa*, but happy that Bear Boat made the trip! Congratulations to Tim Murison and the *Bolero* crew for first place! Thank you to all of you and to Point San Pablo YC for hosting us.

We look forward to next year!



Photo shared by John and Gena Egelston.



Photos shared by Hans List.



AFTER PARTY & TACKY TROPHY



Photos shared by Hans List.



BEARS & BIRDS: A CENTURY OF CLASSIC RACING ON SAN FRANCISCO BAY

Among the San Francisco Bay's many storied fleets, two homegrown classes stand out: the Bird boats of the 1920s and the Bear boats of the 1930s

Sailing a classic wooden boat on San Francisco Bay isn't just about nostalgia—it's about carrying forward a legacy. When I'm out on *Velerosa*, our Bear, I can feel the weight of history in the tiller. These boats have been racing here for nearly a century, battling shifting tides and stiff afternoon winds, competing for the same trophies our predecessors hoisted at yacht clubs decades ago.

Among the Bay's many storied fleets, two homegrown classes stand out: the Bird boats of the 1920s and the Bear boats of the 1930s. These wooden sloops weren't just built for the Bay—they became the Bay's defining racing fleets, drawing some of the most competitive sailors of their time.

Today, the Bears and Birds remain active in the Master Mariners Regatta, where they race for some of the most unique and coveted trophies in classic sailing. The Gerry O'Grady Trophy, awarded to the first Bear to finish, is mounted on the original transom of *Merry Bear*, Bear #1, salvaged and donated by the San Francisco Maritime National Park.

Meanwhile, the J. Everett Hanson Trophy is presented to the first Bird Boat to finish—a prize that honors nearly a century of fierce one-design competition.

These boats have been full participants in the Master Mariners for generations. And now, as we look to the future, we're working hard to keep them on the water racing, cruising and welcoming new caretakers into the fleet.



Bird boat *Osprey's* first sail across the bay in 1922.

Article by Hans Hansen
and Will Campbell

Golden Age of One-Design Racing

The 1920s through the 1940s was the golden era of wooden boat racing on San Francisco Bay. This was when racing really took off, fueled by the rise of one-design classes—boats built to identical specs, ensuring races were won by skill rather than deep pockets.

By the 1920s, the Bird Class ruled the Bay, with fleets at San Francisco Yacht Club, Corinthian Yacht Club, and St. Francis Yacht Club. The Birds were the first locally designed one-design fleet, built specifically for Bay conditions.

In the 1930s, the Bear Class followed. The Great Depression had put expensive racing out of reach for many, and the Bear was designed as a smaller, more affordable alternative. It quickly became the largest one-design fleet on the Bay.

Both classes had dedicated divisions in major regattas. By the late 1940s, a race day at St. Francis or Corinthian would see multiple fleets on the start line—Birds, Bears, Golden Gates, and other wooden classics competing in inter-club series.



Bear boats racing in the 1980s.



Bird boat *Hummingbird*, 2024.

Bird Boats: Bay's First One-Design Fleet

The Bird Class was launched in 1921, designed by naval architect John G. Alden and built by Sausalito's Madden & Lewis. The first boat, *Osprey*, hit the water in 1922. The name "Bird" stuck because all the early boats were given avian names—*Curlew*, *Skylark*, *Falcon*, *Mavis*.

With their 30-foot length, long keels, and heavy displacement, the Birds could charge through San Francisco's notorious wind and chop. They became the dominant fleet in the 1920s and '30s, racing hard and occasionally disappearing on long cruises up the coast.

Over the years, many Birds were lost to time, but a strong core remains. Today, we're working to grow the racing fleet, find homes for restoration projects, and get more Birds back to the starting line.

Bear Boats: Small, Tough, Built to Race

The Bear Class was born in 1932, the brainchild of local sailor Marty Martinson and boatbuilder Ernest Nunes, whose family ran Nunes Brothers Boat & Ways in Sausalito. San Francisco Yacht Club Commodore Clifford Smith saw the first Bear sail and declared, "That is a bear of a boat!" The name stuck, and soon Bears were everywhere.

At just over 23 feet, the Bear was compact but seaworthy, with fir planking over oak frames and a long keel to cut through the Bay's rough waters. It was cheap to build, making racing accessible even during the Depression. By the 1950s, the fleet had more than 65 active boats.

The class has survived thanks to a small but devoted group of owners. These boats are still fast, still fun, and still entirely at home on the Bay.



Bears racing off Treasure Island during the 1939 World's Fair.



The O'Grady Trophy with the original transom of *Merry Bear*.

Bear Boats

Between *Merry Bear* in 1932 and *Velerosa* in 1976, 69 Bears were built. Today, only 19 hulls remain, and just 14 are in sailable condition.

Available for New Owners:
Smokey, Renegade, Puff

Recently Restored and Racing in Master Mariners Events:
Panda, Sugarfoot, Trigger, Chance, Magic, Kodiak, Velerosa

Needing Major Restoration:
Huck Finn, Bongo

If you're looking for a Bear, now is a great time to step up.

Bird Boats

Of the 26 Birds built, 16 are still alive.

Racing in 2024:
Cuckoo, Oriole, Grey Goose, Curlew, Hummingbird

Hoping to Get Back on the Water:
Widgeon, Kiwi, Puffin

Birds only needs six boats to have a class start. Let's get them there.

Keeping Tradition Alive

Classic boats don't survive on nostalgia alone—they need to be sailed. That's why we're pushing to get more Birds and Bears into Master Mariners events, club regattas, and the Rolex Big Boat Series. Beyond racing, these boats need caretakers. Many Bears and Birds sit idle, waiting for someone to take them on. If you want to own a piece of Bay Area history, this is your chance.

If you'd like to sail, crew, restore, or just learn more, reach out. These boats have been part of the Bay for nearly 100 years, and with enough passion, they'll be here for another century.

San Francisco Bay Bear Boat Association, www.bearboats.org

- Hans Hansen - hans@bearboats.org
- Will Campbell - rad2ltr@gmail.com

OTHER CLASSIC WOODEN FLEETS ON THE BAY

Bears and Birds weren't the only classic wooden one-designs on San Francisco Bay. During this era, many classes flourished.

Golden Gate Class (1926)

A smaller cousin of the Bird Boat, built for those who wanted a nimble 25-footer

Farallone Clipper (1939)

38-foot wooden sloops designed for both Bay and offshore racing

Mercury Class (1939)

An 18-foot plywood racing sloop designed by Ernie Nunes, still raced today

Nordic Folkboat (1942)

Scandinavian-designed, but perfect for the Bay, with an active fleet still sailing

Knarr Class (1943)

A 30-foot Norwegian one-design that found a second home in San Francisco in the 1960s

Each of these boats added to the rich tapestry of racing on the Bay, and many still have fleets today



The launch of Bear boat *Frolic* in the mid-1940s.



Bear boat *Velerosa*, 2024

ANNUAL WOODEN BOAT SHOW

JUNE 15

The Master Mariners Benevolent Association is proud to host its annual Wooden Boat Show on Sunday, June 15 at the Corinthian Yacht Club. This event celebrates the craftsmanship and tradition of wooden boat building, offering a unique opportunity for our members to showcase their vessels in one of the most beautiful settings on the San Francisco Bay. From sleek racing yachts to charming classic cruisers, the show will feature a wide variety of boats that highlights the passion and dedication of their owners.

This year's show will provide more than just a chance to admire these beautiful vessels—it's an opportunity for our members to come together, share stories and exchange ideas about the art of wooden boat restoration and maintenance. The event fosters a sense of camaraderie amongst seasoned sailors and new enthusiasts alike, allowing everyone to learn from each other and appreciate the history behind each boat.

In addition to the boat displays, the show will include a variety of activities throughout the day, including model boat building, demonstrations, and the chance to soak in the Corinthian Yacht Club's spectacular setting. Whether you're a lifelong member or a newcomer to the world of wooden boats, this event promises to be an unforgettable celebration of craftsmanship, history and the joy of sailing.

Please make sure to join us on the evening of Saturday, June 14th for our annual members meeting. Dinner, dancing and music will be held on the deck of the Corinthian YC. This is also an opportunity for members to join our dynamic board of directors and help us perpetuate our organization's efforts and history. If you are interested in joining the ranks of our association, please contact me to discuss.

Hans List

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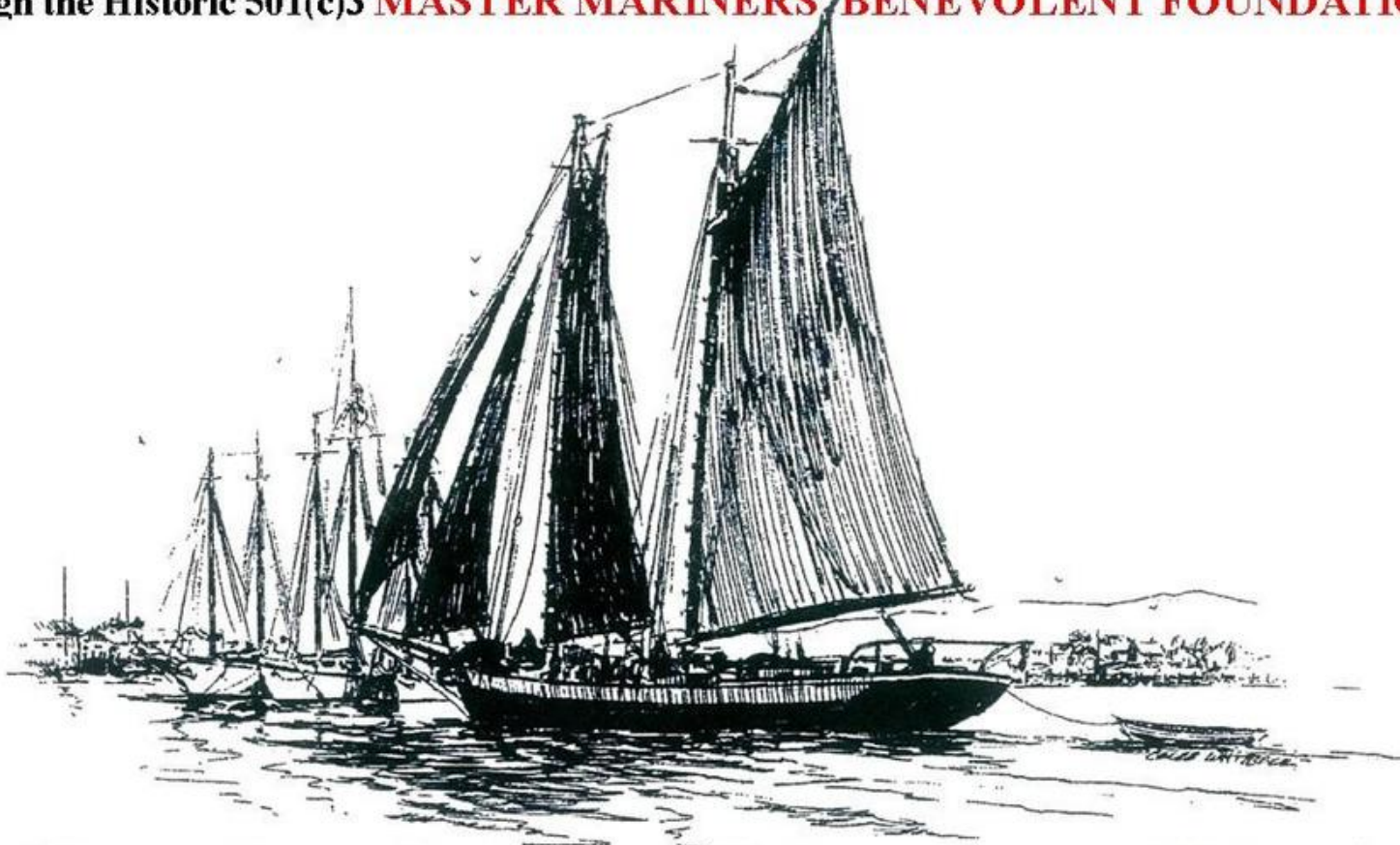
Commodore, Master Mariners

MASTER MARINERS

WOODEN BOAT SHOW

Sunday, June 15th 2025

Supports the Preservation of Classic Sailing Vessels, Seamanship and Nautical Education
Through the Historic 501(c)3 **MASTER MARINERS BENEVOLENT FOUNDATION**



Corinthian Yacht Club Main Street, Tiburon 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Admission \$20 • Children under 12 Free & must be supervised.
*A rare opportunity to view San Francisco Bay Area's
classic sailing yachts, meet their skippers and learn their history.*

Corinthian Yacht Club Outdoor Bar & Grill Open for Lunch.

Sponsored by historic (1867) Master Mariners Benevolent Association • www.sfmastermariners.org
Illustration by MMBA member Caleb Whitbeck



Hurrica v

Sailing along the Australian coast, Sydney to Brisbane
Photo from prior owner Steve Gunns

*A magnificent Edwardian classic wooden cruising yacht, *Hurrica V* welcomes Mark and Maureen Sanders to her legacy.*

*Called “the Queen of Australia,” she has a long and interesting 100-year history on two continents. *Hurrica V* continues to bring pleasure and grace—today calling home San Francisco Bay.*

1924-1941

William Oliver

Hurrica V is a design by Charles E. Nicholson of Campers and Nicholson fame, and was built in 1924 at the Berrys Bay, Sydney, yard of W. M. Ford Boatbuilders for William Oliver, a wealthy wool grazier of Melbourne. The cost: £10,000. Construction includes brown pine carvel planking, copper-roved with spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*) frames. Spotted gum is a tall straight tree native to eastern Australia and recognized by its smooth mottled bark. *Hurrica V* has a Brazilian mahogany deck structure.

Oliver was age 71 when the yacht was delivered. He used her mainly as a private vessel for cruising Wilsons Promontory and Bass Strait. She was a stand-out at the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria. In 1941, with his health fading, Oliver sold the vessel—which, by this time, had fallen into a dilapidated state.

1941-1943

Will Stuart

For £2000, her next caretaker became Will Stuart of Darling Point, Sydney. Stuart altered the internal layout and remodeled and changed the rig from gaff to Bermuda via removal of mizzen mast. Her hull was copper-sheathed at this time.

HURRICA V

1924

Designer: Charles E. Nicholson

Builder: W. M. Ford Sydney

LOA: 71 ft 4 in

Length on deck: 59 ft 1 in

Length at waterline: 42 ft 8 in

Beam: 14 ft 1 in

Draft: 7 ft 7 in

Displacement: 38.5 tons



Mark Sanders brings *Hurrica V* under the Golden Gate Bridge for the first time.

1943-1946

Royal Australian Navy

In 1943, *Hurrica V* was requisitioned by the Royal Australian Navy. The internal layout was again changed and her rig and sails were removed. To prepare for war, taken away were a two-oil lamp brass binnacle compass, bronze stanchions, a Gardner diesel engine and single-cylinder gas generator. A wheelhouse, flybridge and sponsons were added, and a machine gun was mounted on the foredeck, with cannons added aft, and armed with depth charges. A new and more powerful Superior diesel engine, genset and radios were added too. Repainted navy grey, her name was changed to *HMAS 542 STINGRAY* for duty as a patrol and search and rescue vessel in New Guinea and Milne Bay throughout WWII.

1946-1948

William Stuart

In 1946, *Hurrica V* was shipped to Brisbane and then towed to Sydney--suffering damage along the way. After the war and in poor condition, Stuart repurchased the vessel from the Navy at a cost of £1650; and had her restored to her pre-war configuration in preparation for sale in 1947.

1948-1956

Clifford Crane

A next owner was Clifford Crane of Wahroonga, Sydney. A member of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, chairman of AMP & AGL, and on the Board of CSR (building products), he sailed *Hurrica V* on Sydney Harbor and Pittwater, mooring her off Malcolm Campbell's boatshed at Rose Bay for a few years. A new teak deck was laid, a new 65 hp Perkins engine was installed and a wooden dodger was built over the cockpit. Crane had the hull re-sheathed in "Muntz metal" (also known as yellow metal, a copper alloy).

1956-1963

Henry John

Hurrica V was purchased by Henry John in 1956 and used as a private family yacht in Sydney. When John died in 1963, the title transferred to his wife Phyllis who put the boat up for sale.



Previous owner Steve Gunns and Mark Sanders in Sydney, Australia.



Hurrica V competes in the Master Mariners Regatta.

1963-1986

E. John Shaw, junior

Hurrica V was next sold to E. John Shaw, junior, of E. J. Shaw & Son at Mona Val (a building and landscape supplies business founded in 1933 and finally closed on Christmas Eve 2024). *Hurrica V* served as Crane's private vessel and in 1963, he cruised her to New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands. Shaw and wife Jan lived aboard at Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club in 1965 while the boat underwent an extensive refit. And second refit was made in 1982 with the interior being stripped yet again.

Unfortunately, in 1983, the recession hit and *Hurrica V* was left for years on a mooring—gradually sliding into a near-derelict state.

1986-1997

Gary Dover

In 1986, Gary Dover bought her for \$40,000—with only a diesel engine inside. She was rebuilt from a bare hull, with the objective to later operate as a charter vessel out of Port Stephens, NSW. Renamed *The Gift*, she ran aground a few times during Dover's ownership and was eventually sold with deadwood damage, but in otherwise fair condition.

1997-2001

Patrick Silver

A retired banker of Avalon, Sydney, Patrick Silver returned the name *Hurrica V* when he took possession in 1997. Used as a live-aboard, Silver sailed the yacht on several cruises, including one to Fiji.

2001-2018

Steve and Annabel Gunns

Once again falling into a poor state, the vessel was next acquired by Steve and Annabel Gunns in 2001. Steve, an accomplished architect and well-known ocean racer, eagerly took on an extensive restoration of *Hurrica V* with most work being done at the renowned boatyard Norman R. Wright & Sons in Queensland. The restoration took eight years at a cost of several million dollars, and was regarded as one of the finest classic restorations in Australia.

Hurrica V was stripped back to a shell, and ribs and planking were repaired. All hull fastenings were replaced, as were the massive bronze keel bolts. New masts and spars were built from laminated hollow spruce by the UK's premier wooden mast maker (Collars), then shipped to Sydney. The original engine was replaced and a V-drive was fitted to move the engine aft to make more room in the main salon.

The interior was altered, too. The yacht originally had the galley in the bow, a single berth owner's cabin, and crew berths in a space under the cockpit. Changes included the addition of two berths in the coach house, three double cabins and two heads and shower below. The galley was moved aft and fitted with a hidden freezer, refrigerator and microwave oven. Gunns sourced Italian made oil lamps that matched the originals, as well as other Edwardian-period fixtures. The copper sheathing was removed and the hull was splined. Following restoration, *Hurrica V* returned to her home port in February 2011.

2018-present

Mark and Maureen Sanders

Mark and Maureen Sanders purchased *Hurrica V* in 2018, and the vessel remained in Australia at the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club in Broken Bay, where she sailed for pleasure in the areas around Sydney. The following year, it was decided to take *Hurrica V* to America. Together, Sanders and Gunns plus two additional crew, sailed her to Brisbane. Upon arrival she was warmly greeted with a "welcome home" celebration, and some upgrades and repairs were made at Norman R. Wrights & Sons—the same yard that restored her a decade prior. From Brisbane, *Hurrica V* was shipped to Ensenada, Mexico, and in the following year, was sailed to her new home port of Westpoint Harbor in Redwood City, California.

Hurrica V regularly participates in the ROLEX Big Boat Series, the annual Master Mariners Regatta and other classic yacht events in Northern California. In her first year as member of Master Mariners, she was awarded Best of Show and received First Place recognition at the annual Wooden Boat Show, continuing a long history of recognition throughout Australia and Tasmania.

Her eleventh owner, Mark Sanders was a U.S. Naval officer, engineer, corporate executive, rancher and more. One of his most rewarding life accomplishments is development of Westpoint Harbor, the first new harbor in decades within the San Francisco Bay. Recognized as one of the finest recreational harbors in North America, this 50-acre marina resort is home to The Club at Westpoint, the Hurrica Restaurant and Bar, a vibrant youth sailing school and a rowing center, as well as fuel docks, boat launch, walking trail and berths sized from 36 to 132 feet. There is also 1,000 feet of guest dock.



History is Not Stagnant

Regatta Skippers and Sponsor Luncheon

May 16

Our history is not stagnant and preserved in museums, but rather it is being actively maintained thru the love and expense of our member vessels' skippers and crews.

Sponsorship of the annual Master Mariners Regatta is a time-honored tradition for many businesses and folks who have an understanding, and appreciation, of our membership and the vessels that make us what we are.

At the annual luncheon, our supporters participate in a vibrant, animated and energetic history unlike any other organization. As a sponsor for decades, and skipper of a member vessel, I find it rewarding to know that I am doing what I can to assist the preservation and history of San Francisco Bay's historic sailing vessels. Our regatta and other philanthropic pursuits depend on the generous actions of many.

Please support our efforts to ensure that fleets shine for generations to come.

**Liz Diaz
Sponsorship Chair**

REGATTA TIME

Time to sign up for our annual Master Mariners Regatta Saturday, May 24 (Memorial Day weekend). This is a marquee event to strut our maritime heritage out on the Bay, and showcase our lovely vessels.

It is a great opportunity to invite friends, family and Master Mariner sponsors to be part of the excitement. There is truly no other experience that compares to sailing a traditional wooden boat across the bay in a stiff summer breeze. This regatta is one of the best in the West.

We will again hold our "Parade Class" for vessels that prefer to sail more moderately. Make sure to take lots of photos and join us for the after-party at Encinal Yacht Club for dinner, dancing and drinks at the bar.

Regatta Weekend Wraps Up with "Bilgewater Brunch"

After a thrilling day of racing, the annual Regatta weekend concludes with a well-earned morning gathering: the Bilgewater Brunch.

Held dockside at Encinal Yacht Club, this is a no-frills, sailor-approved way to recover from the regatta. No band, no dancing—just strong coffee, crisp mimosas and good company. It's the perfect opportunity to swap sea stories, reflect on the weekend's races and enjoy a quiet morning by the water.

Join us for one last toast before setting sail home.

Hans List
Commodore

Marquee Event May 24



spring fling

April 4 - 5

Join us for Spring Fling at
South Beach Yacht Club for
San Francisco Giants Opening Weekend

JOIN BY LAND FRIDAY AND/OR ON SATURDAY.

**BARBARA OHLER AND GARY COSTIGAN (MORNING STAR)
PLAN TO ANCHOR IN MCCOVEY COVE FOR THE OPENING
DAY GAME ON FRIDAY AT 1:35PM.**

- **FRIDAY BBQ DINNER AT SBYC, 6PM**

SATURDAY TAILGATE POTLUCK ON GUEST DOCK A, 3PM

- **BRING FOOD AND DRINK**
- **WE'LL LISTEN/WATCH THE GAME @6:05PM**



WHAT'S IN THE STORE?

check the full selection at:
<https://www.sfmastermariners.org/store>

2024

BRIGADOON SHIRT

\$15



2023

FOLLY SHIRT

\$15





Photo by Chris Ray, Fleets at Jessica Cup.

progress on wooden boats documentary

Wind in Their Sails: Death and Resurrection

Text by Vincent Casalaina, producer


For centuries, graceful vessels like these have carried the dreams of owners, mariners and craftsmen alike. But their beauty belies a fragile reality. Through the “Wind in Their Sails: Death and Resurrection” documentary we look at the culture and history of these beautiful sailboats that still call San Francisco Bay home.

I’m 18 months into working on this documentary. I’ve found the structure by talking with over 40 owners and the people who help to keep the boats in good condition. If all goes well, we’ll see the fruits of this labor in the summer of 2026.

The question the documentary will address is “What will become of these timeless vessels in a rapidly changing world?”

Terry Klaus’ 100 year old *Brigadoon* is maintained in pristine condition so he can pass her on to the next generation. We can see that transition taking shape as Terry’s daughter Lindsey has taken over helming that boat.

To keep boats like *Bridadoon* in top condition, shipwrights and other tradesmen work hard to maintain them as tight ships capable of safely sailing in the strong winds that are a part of sailing on San Francisco Bay. No matter how much an owner can do while the boat is in the water, it takes time on the hard to do the really serious work on these boats. Hank Easom once said he didn’t know how people could own a boat like *Yucca* if they didn’t also own a yard.



It's fortunate that we have the Point San Pablo Yacht Club in Richmond. Many classic boats are docked in that harbor. The PSPYC has tools and a woodshop where owners can do the work themselves. Boats like *Gold Star* make their home in that harbor. *Gold Star's* owner has, over the years, used the facilities there to make a fishing boat into a family boat that can sail wherever the wind takes her.

There are myriad reasons why an owner sometimes cannot properly care for his/her boat. When that happens, the vessel may fall into disrepair and die. *Evening Star*, on the hard in Cree Partridge's Berkeley Marine Center, has been looking for a new owner for quite a while. Two times Cree found someone who believed he could take on that task, but each time life got in the way for the new owner. Every year she sits on the hard, the likelihood of her returning to prior glory gets slimmer each year.

Others, such as the M boat *Pursuit*, languished on the hard. She remained in Point Richmond while Sam Elliot at Svendsen's Bay Marine worked with sequential owners to first refit, and later to try to resurrect her. Unfortunately, things did not pan out well. Finally, a new owner was found who could take on the task. Unfortunately, the new owner is in France and last fall *Pursuit* was put in the hold of a container ship for the trip to the Mediterranean.

A few lucky boats have come back to life. *Freda* is 140 years old and has died twice--both times brought back to life. Harold Sommer found her in the mud of the Alameda Estuary and undertook a first restoration. When I first set foot on *Freda* in 1985, the new owners, Jerry and Diane Brenden were excited to have a boat that looked as good as she did when first launched.

"What will become of these timeless vessels in a rapidly changing world?"

When Jerry retired, the Brendens moved to Hawaii and left *Freda* in the hands of a group that promised to take good care of her. The best of intentions ended up with *Freda* sinking at her dock in the San Rafael channel.

Enter the Master Mariners Benevolent Foundation, which believed *Freda* deserved another chance and started raising money to resurrect her. Bob Darr from the Arques School of Traditional Wooden Boatbuilding, at the time in charge of the work in conjunction with the Spaulding Wooden Boat Center, served as project manager.

Now we can see *Freda* sailing the Bay again, looking just as turned out as she ever was.

The question now isn't just whether these boats can be saved—but whether we're willing to save them.

If you feel strongly about getting this story told, please consider offering time, energy and/or a donation to help make this documentary premiere in summer 2026.

*Now we see
Freda sailing the
Bay again,
looking just as
turned out
as she ever was.*



A HA-HA REPRISE ABOARD THE S&S 42 YAWL "FAIRWYN"

First three paragraphs reprinted with permission from *Latitude 38*. [Read the full article >> here](#)

The only thing more fun than doing a Baja Ha-Ha is doing it a second time. After enjoying my first Ha-Ha in 2021, and bashing back home, I was itching for another go. This time I had it all lined up: solid crew, my stupid freakin' TIP, slip in San Diego, slip in Mazatlán, offshore connectivity (thank you, Starlink), weather forecasting, meal planning, Mexican insurance, warm clothes for night watches, fishing licenses — and new downwind sails ready for a workout.

The first of three crews joined me in Emeryville for a three-night run to San Diego in "delivery mode," with no planned stops. Of course I had allowed time to make stops for weather or breakdowns, but everything ran smoothly and Fairwyn arrived in San Diego a week before the start of the Ha-Ha. San Diego marinas seem not to like wooden boats very much, so I was glad that C.F. at Koehler Kraft made room for Fairwyn. >> [Read balance of article.](#)

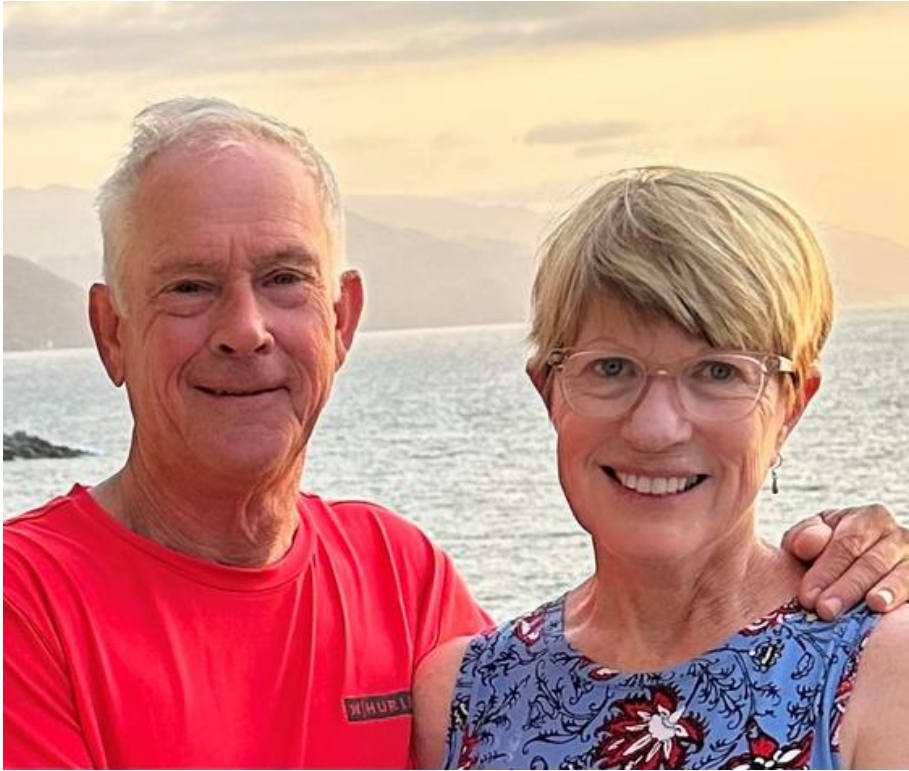
In his words...contributed by Fairwyn owner Rick Leland from the 2021 Baja Ha Ha:

The Baja Ha Ha is an annual rally of boats that leaves San Diego the first of November after hurricane season ends and travels 700 miles South to Cabo San Lucas. From there boats split up; some go up to La Paz and the Sea of Cortez, some go to Puerto Vallarta, some head for the South Pacific and some turn around and go home. *Fairwyn* participated in 2021 and spend seven months in the Sea of Cortez. We participated again in 2024 intending to spend the winter in Mazatlán and Puerto Vallarta.

As much fun as the first Ha Ha was, the second was even better. This time I had it all lined up: solid crew, my stupid freakin Temporary Import Permit, slip in San Diego, slip in Mazatlán, offshore connectivity, weather forecasting, meal planning, Mexican insurance, warm clothes for night watches, fishing licenses, and new downwind sails ready for a work out.



Rick and Gayle have owned *Fairwyn* since 2017. Prior to that, the boat had sailed for 15 years and 50,000 miles under Stephen and Nancy Carlman. ©2025 Eric Mizrahi.



The author, Rick Leland, and wife Gayle are owners of *Fairwyn*.

The first of three crews joined me in Emeryville for a three night run to San Diego on “delivery mode” with no stops. I had allowed time to make stops for weather or breakdowns but everything ran smoothly and *Fairwyn* arrived in San Diego a week before the Ha Ha departure. San Diego marinas have a strong dislike of wooden boats, so I was glad that C.F. at Koehler Kraft made room for *Fairwyn*.

Crew for the Ha Ha itself was boat partner Sarah Dime and her friend Chelsea Greene. We were all pretty salty, but after some thought, decided to use Scopolamine patches anyway. Everyone gets seasick if the conditions are bad enough or if you must change a fuel filter upside down in a seaway. With the patches we were bullet-proof.

The trip down to Cabo was wonderful: calm seas, gentle winds, stunning sunsets and sunrises and lots of fish on the line. In 2021 there were a few rough days out of San Diego and the breakdown report during the first radio net in Turtle Bay went on for over an hour. This time there was very little damage, other than one unfortunate boat that needed some help getting into Turtle Bay. *Fairwyn* suffered a broken spinnaker halyard block from my misguided attempt to center the lifting point. Fortunately I had a spare halyard rigged.

The leg from Turtle Bay to Bahia Santa Maria allowed for some beautiful photos of each others’ boats. We coordinated with Eric Mizrahi of *Bibi* to get a good photo of *Fairwyn*’s new sails.

Things got exciting in Cabo. When the fleet arrived in Cabo on Wednesday, Ha Ha organizer, known as the GRAND POOBAH, passed along a weather forecast for a big blow arriving Sunday, suggesting that all boats hightail it out of Cabo. He cancelled all Ha Ha events.

My third crew (wife Gayle, sister Kathy and brother-in-law Chris) was flying in Saturday night to help take *Fairwyn* to Mazatlán, and we did not want to risk getting stuck in Cabo for five days worrying about dragging. I took *Fairwyn* up to Frailes Saturday morning, and my crew hired a driver to meet me at the anchorage. It was exciting taking them and their luggage in the dinghy through the surf in the dark. We hunkered down in Frailes until Tuesday when things calmed down enough for a bumpy but fun overnight sail to Mazatlán.

Fairwyn spent a month cruising 1400 miles from Emeryville to the El Cid marina in Mazatlán. We plan on moving her to La Cruz in January for warmer water but in the mean time we are hitting the beach.



Gayle in Mazatlán.

THE TRIP DOWN TO CABO WAS WONDERFUL: CALM SEAS, GENTLE WINDS, STUNNING SUNSETS AND SUNRISES AND LOTS OF FISH ON THE LINE.



Interior staged photo of *Fairwyn*.

***Fairwyn* was once again the only wooden boat in the fleet. I know friends don't let friends buy wooden boats, and for most folks that is good advice, but when I was 12 years old, I sailed as a guest on a wooden sloop built in the 1930s and that set for life my idea of what a boat should be. When I retired from abstract legal work in 2017, I wanted my first and only boat to be wood, and a wood yawl at that.**

What's not to like? Wood is strong, relatively light weight, accepts fasteners, can be patched when you move hardware around, provides sound and temperature insulation, and looks good. Wooden boats are built one piece at a time which means they can be taken apart easily. All the interior of *Fairwyn* can be removed with a screwdriver.

Yes, a wooden boat requires work to keep her in top condition. I love to tinker with her, so bring it on. I also know a lot of owners of plastic boats who love to tinker. The difference is when they work on the boat they need respirators and Tyvek suits; I get to smell the leathery scent of teak.



This year I doubled down on wood and dumped my RIB in favor of a wood rowing dinghy. The rigid inflatables are indestructible and extremely stable, but let's not mince words--they are squat, ugly and totally reliant on an outboard engine, which means your boat has to accommodate gasoline, oil, spare spark plugs and a crane to get the engine on board. If that engine dies, good luck trying to row back to the boat in any headwind. When you have to land through the surf, your dinghy wheels run aground or you have to pull up the outboard just where the waves begin to break. With a lightweight rowing dinghy you don't need no stinkin' outboard--you can gently row on the top of that last wave through 6" deep water till the hull kisses the sand. And the exercise will delay the deterioration of your body from its usual buff condition on land, to the dreaded "boat bod."



You, too, can get one of these. Chesapeake Light Craft will send you a kit, and you just glue the pieces together and cover each side with fiberglass. It accommodates a sailing rig if you don't want to row, and an electric outboard if the wind fails.





INTERNATIONAL
OCEAN
FILM FEST

22

MAKING WAVES SINCE 2004

22ND ANNUAL

INTERNATIONAL OCEAN FILM FESTIVAL

APRIL 11-13, 2025

COWELL THEATER, FORT MASON CENTER FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

INTLOCEANFILMFEST.ORG

SENIOR SUNDAY
only \$40* for full-day pass

*plus online fee; purchase before sold-out

22nd Annual San Francisco International Ocean Film Festival

link to: [International Ocean Film Festival](#)

View ocean-theme films that inspire appreciation and care for the ocean. Event is perfect for viewers of all ages.

- April 11 - 13
- Cowell Theatre, San Francisco Fort Mason Center
- More than 30 films shown during 3 days, including seven from local producers
- Screenings, filmmaker and conservationist presentations, ocean community table-top presentations, receptions

Opening night film April 11 “Turtle Walker”

An award-winning documentary profiling pioneering work of Indian biologist and conservationist Satish Bhaskar, a man who dedicated his life to the study of sea turtles

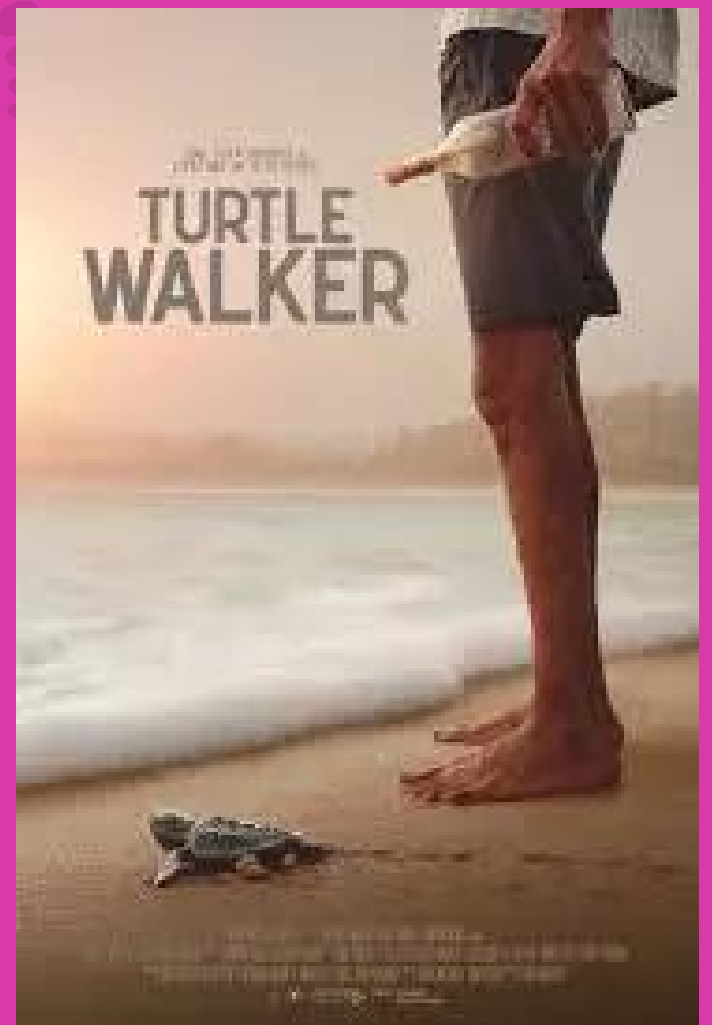
Purchase tickets:

<https://intloceanfilmfest.org/2025-tickets-passes>

View film summaries:

<https://ioff2025.eventive.org/films>

Since 2004, the San Francisco International Ocean Film Festival has attracted thousands of participants worldwide, including filmmakers and enthusiasts, athletes, educators, students, and ocean philanthropists. In the span of 22 years, more than 1020 films from 46 countries have been presented. The International Ocean Film Foundation is a California 501(c)(3) non-profit.



It's time to renew your membership for 2025. Please go to the website www.sfmastermariners.org, click on the STORE tab, and choose 2025 Membership.

If you prefer to send a check, please make it payable to MMBA for \$105.00, include your vessel's name on the check and mail to:



MMBA, PO Box 70640, Richmond, CA 94807

- If you have already renewed your BOAT OWNER membership, we thank you.
- If you haven't renewed in awhile, that's alright, we'd love to welcome you back.
- No longer own your vessel? Please let us know who the new owner is, and consider continuing your MMBA membership at the FRIEND level--just \$35/yr.

Upon renewal, you receive a 2025 membership card, bumper sticker and official 2025 Master Mariners Tidebook. Again this year custom *San Francisco Bay Tidebooks* have been generously provided by Terry Klaus.

Thank you, Terry!



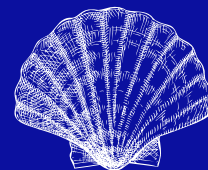
Welcome Returning Member
BUNNY
1966 Knarr sloop

David Cobb and David Giannini, owners

membership levels

Boat Owner
Friend

\$105/year
\$35/year



Know a traditional yacht owner whose boat is not a member? Email Neil Gibbs. He will extend an invitation to join the Master Mariners.



Not a boat owner but love classics?

>> Join as a **Friend**.

EVENTS

SPRING FLING CRUISE-OUT APRIL 4 - 5

South Beach Harbor/Yacht Club
April 4 dinner at 6pm

WOODEN BOAT SHOW JUNE 15

10am - 4pm
Corinthian Yacht Club

TAILGATE POTLUCK PARTY APRIL 5

South Beach Harbor/Yacht Club, dock A
3pm

GREAT SF SCHOONER RACE & BELVEDERE CLASSIC AUGUST 23

San Francisco Yacht Club
Info: San Francisco Yacht Club

PICYA OPENING DAY ON THE BAY APRIL 27

San Francisco Bay

LABOR DAY CRUISE-OUT AUGUST 30

12pm
TBD

REGATTA SKIPPERS AND SPONSORS LUNCHEON MAY 16

12pm
St. Francis Yacht Club

SEA MUSIC FESTIVAL SEPTEMBER 13

Aquatic Park in San Francisco

MASTER MARINERS REGATTA MAY 24

Race: 12pm
StFYC start line, Encinal Yacht Club party

JESSICA CUP REGATTA OCTOBER 18

St. Francis Yacht Club
Info: St. Francis Yacht Club

ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING JUNE 14

Corinthian Yacht Club

SPRING 2025 SHELLBACK NEWSLETTER DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

May 30

CLUB BULLETIN BOARD



New owner / new member Andrew Rist is spending time at KKMI, aside Kaze and Makani Kai.

He shared this cool picture of this great Bay Area boat class designed by DeWitt in the 1930's, and built 30 years later.

He says there were only 6 built back in the day.



Four of the sunset sloops designed by Jim Dewitt's dad in 1934. Sunset Sloop Makai is #6. She will soon be back in the mix on the bay.

We have launched a new email based discussion list for Master Mariners members to use to connect, network, and share knowledge.

Want to get added?

Just email

kc.crowell@sfmastermariners.org

Seeking Shellback Contributions

send photos, tips & tricks, short articles to Martha


martha@renegadesailing.com

THAT'S DEEP

Most local sailors know that the deepest point in San Francisco Bay, roughly 372 feet (113 meters), is aside the Golden Gate Bridge, but do you know much about the seafloor in other regions of the bay?

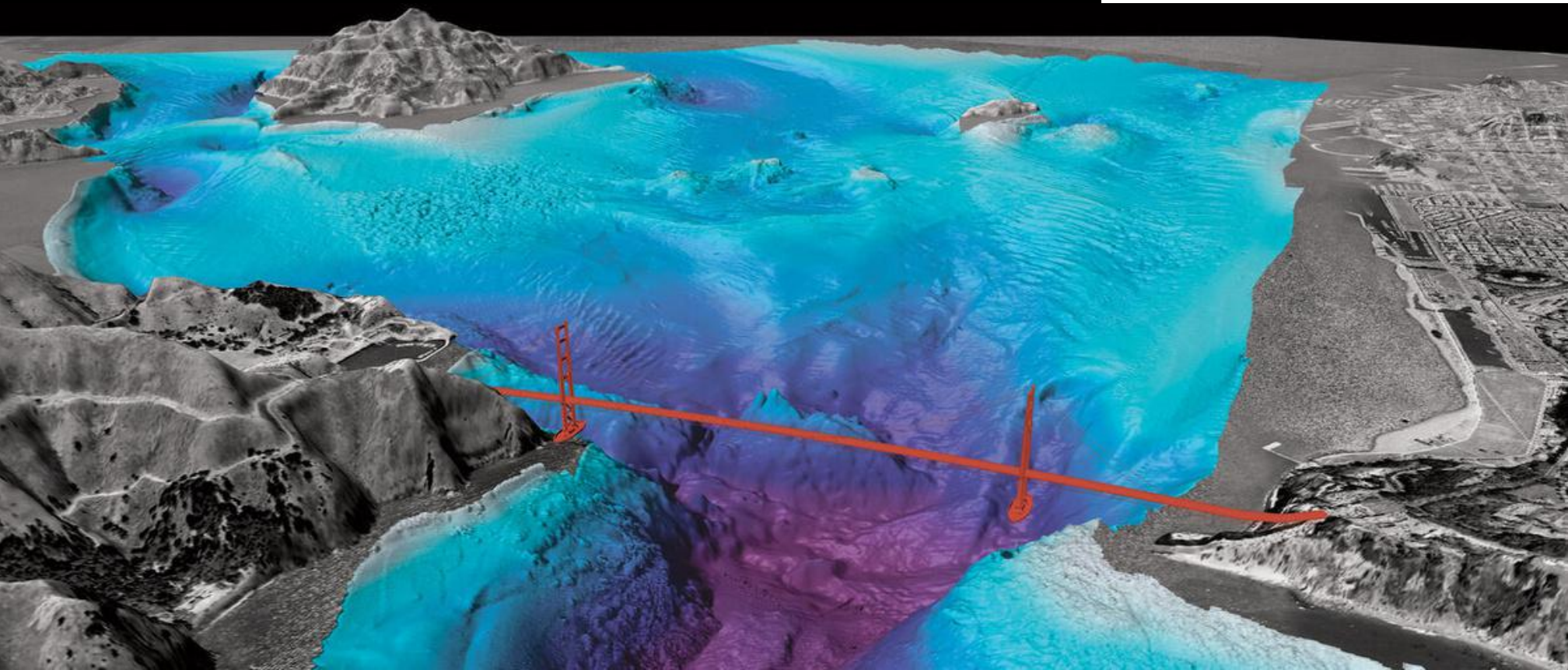
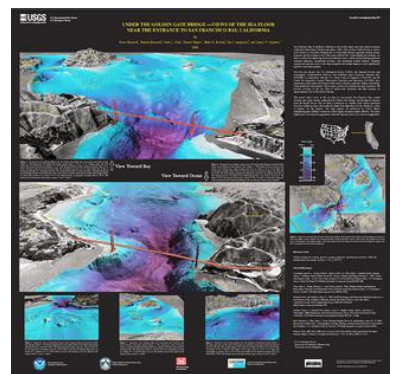
Prior to 2007, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) and the Center for Integrative Coastal Observation Research and Education (CICORE) partnered to map central San Francisco Bay underneath the Golden Gate Bridge, and through the entrance from the Pacific Ocean using multibeam echosounders.

You can download the results of their efforts-- a 2007 poster with views of west-central San Francisco Bay around Alcatraz and Angel Islands.

 Peter Dartnell
USGS Pacific Coastal and Marine Science Center

Download at: <https://lnkd.in/eHjifQtY>

USGS Scientific
Investigations
Map 2917
reprinted with
permission,
courtesy of the
U.S. Geological
Survey



*On the Fourth
of July of 1867,*

the Boatman's Protective Association staged a race among working sailboats in San Francisco Bay. After repeating the event in 1868 and 1869, the Association was recognized under a new name: the Master Mariners Benevolent Association.

Knowledge of the histories of the Master Mariner's Benevolent Association (MMBA) and the Master Mariner's Benevolent Foundation (MMBF) are essential to understand the respective roles of each organization and their relationship to one another.

While each entity is independent, they complement one another, and collectively serve the interests of all MMBA members and our community.

The Master Mariners Regatta raised funds from local maritime businesses to benefit the widows and orphans of seamen lost at sea—the spirit of which is reflected in the MMBA Burgee, a Herreshoff anchor with an “H” across its shank, standing for Hope.

By 1891, steam engines were replacing sails and the era of the regatta ended. In 1965, the Association was revived in honor of National Maritime Day, and the regatta resumed among traditional sailing vessels.

In 1978, the MMBA Articles of Incorporation were filed with the State of California, which re-established the MMBA as a not for profit social organization (California 501(c)(7) corporation) to promote the fraternity of wooden sailboat owners, the maintenance of their vessels, and traditional seamanship through the Annual Master Mariners Regatta and subsequently other events (its “Specific Purpose”). The MMBA remains one of the oldest and largest associations of traditional wooden sailboats.

Historical Small Craft Preservation Fund

In 1988, the MMBA Board of Directors established the MMBA Historical Small Craft Preservation Foundation (the “HSCPF”), a tax deductible public benefit corporation (California 501(c)(3) corporation) to help fund the restoration of the Bird Boat *Polly* (commonly known as the “Polly Project”). Since the materials, labor and capital donated to the project were tax deductible, sufficient materials, labor and capital were contributed to successfully complete *Polly's* restoration.

Annual Wooden Boat Show

In 1994, to further promote core MMBA values (benevolence), and to create a permanent venue for its Annual Meeting of Members, the MMBA Board of Directors initiated the Annual MMBA Wooden Boat Show to be held at the Corinthian Yacht Club to raise funds to promote and fund the preservation of classic sailboats, the associated skills, and traditional seamanship through education.

Knowledge of the histories of the Master Mariner's Benevolent Association (MMBA) and the Master Mariner's Benevolent Foundation (MMBF) are essential to understand the respective roles of each organization and their relationship to one another.

While each entity is independent, they complement one another, and collectively serve the interests of all MMBA members and our community.

Sail San Francisco (SSF)

In 1999, the state of California budgeted a significant sum of money to celebrate the state sesquicentennial. A portion of the state's funds had been allocated to Sail San Francisco (SSF) for the reception of thirteen Class A Tall Ships and their crews that would sail from many countries into San Francisco Bay. The state employed Alison Healey to design and organize the event.

With the vessels underway, California elected a new governor who reversed the allocation of funds for the event, and Healy was suddenly unemployed, but she remained committed and took on the additional challenge to secure funding for the four-day event and the re-provisioning of the vessels.

To attract the scope of donations to pull off the event, she needed a 501(c)(3) entity to provide donors tax deductions for their contributions. She approached the MMBA Board of Directors for assistance, and in May 1999 the MMBA Board modified and amended the HSCPF Articles of Incorporation to change the corporation's name to the Master Mariners Benevolent Foundation (MMBF), establish a separate Board of Directors, and expand the corporation's "Specific Purpose" to include funding the SSF event.

Accordingly, tax deductible donations were channeled through the MMBF to fund SSF. Alison Healy managed to secure sufficient capital, services and provisions to make Sail San Francisco a success. The event drew tens of thousands to the waterfront.

KNOW YOUR BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

The Master Mariner Benevolent Foundation (MMBF) is a separate board of directors. Its early mission was to expand the MMBA corporation's "Specific Purpose" to allow for proper funding of the 1999 Sail San Francisco event.

Since that time, the board has overseen annual philanthropic distributions to numerous worthy individuals and projects, some of which include:

- Local Semester at Sea programming for girls
- Call of the Sea: *Matthew Turner* and *Seaward* sail opportunities for youth
- Alameda Community Sailing Center
- Wooden Boats for Veterans
- Arques School of Wooden Boat Building

Each director is a past MMBA commodore.

MMB FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Craig Swayne, Chairman

Mike Douglas, Treasurer

Terry Klaus

Bob Rogers

Ken Inouye

Peter English

Bill Belmont

Steve Hutchinson

Paul Dines

In 1978, the MMBA Articles of Incorporation were filed with the State of California. This re-established the MMBA as a not-for-profit social organization (California 501(c)(7) corporation).

To preserve this status, two requirements are to create a governing board of directors and to hold regularly scheduled meetings.

Candidates for appointment to the Board of Directors are nominated by members at the Annual Meeting in June. A vote is taken at the Annual Meeting.

Elected directors serve a three-year term.

MMBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hans List, Commodore

Gena Egelston, Vice Commodore

Liz Diaz, Rear Commodore

Hans Hansen, Secretary

KC Crowell, Treasurer

Neil Gibbs, Membership

Diane Walton, Trophies

Melissa Flick, Events

Mark Harris, Technology

HISTORY OF THE MASTER MARINERS

In contrast to the East Coast, San Francisco was a crude and raw place in 1867. Its vessels were not those of the rich, used just as play toys, but vessels that were used in everyday business of commerce. They were the scow schooners, the lumber schooners, the brigantines, the barkentines, and the oyster sloops. As a result, their captains were first and foremost men of the water, and they had a courage and charter all their own.

During the late 1800's, there was a great deal of money flowing into San Francisco from the Comstock Lode and other mines. The demand for materials was great, and the load fell on the fraternity of the waterfront since those were the days before the ferry service and bridges of the San Francisco Bay. Up and down the waterways of the Delta and along the rugged coast of California from the north to the south, vessels of all description carried the necessities of everyday life.

Thus, it was in 1867, that a contest was established among those coastal sailing ships and San Francisco Bay and Delta workboats to help celebrate Independence Day. That first contest was the start of San Francisco's Master Mariners Regatta.

Thousands of spectators crowded Telegraph Hill to view the hotly contested battle of two bluewater sailing ships around a tight, 18-mile, inside the Bay course. More than 40 vessels raced for prizes that ranged from opera glasses to a cord of wood, or a ton of potatoes--all donated by local merchants. But the most coveted prize of all was, and still is, a silken swallow-tailed banner emblazoned with a strutting gamecock with the words CHAMPION embroidered across in large letters.

A great story is told of those times: during the 1880's, in a waterfront bar known as the Exchange, two skippers placed a bet between themselves. Both had commercial vessels, and both thought they could beat the other in an all-out confrontation of sail. The date was set, and the course was set.

Riding on the outcome, not only the original bets, but side bets amounting to over three-thousand dollars! The course was run as a match race, and the heavy bettor won, saying, "I don't know of any easier way to get the money, other than knocking him over the head and stealing it!"

Unfortunately, the winning vessel, a scow-sloop named *P.M. Randell*, caught fire in Suisun Bay while hauling a load of hay the next year and a rematch was never run.