

2024 WINTER
EDITION 01 VOL 02

the

Shellback

MMA ANNUAL REGATTA

SATURDAY, MAY 25

New Year's: Night and Day

Parties, races and a jackass

Tradition is Timeless

Spaulding Marine Center Builds Community

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.
martha@renegadesailing.com



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).

Polly (1929 sloop, hull 19) was one of four Bird boats built by W.F. Stone & Son Boat Yard in Oakland. MMBF contributed to her restoration in 1988.

Freda, one of the West Coast's oldest sailboats (1885), was built in Belvedere. She was completely restored by the Arques School of Traditional Boatbuilding in Sausalito. On May 31, 2014, Freda was re-launched at the Spaulding Marine Center.



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.

ANNUAL REGATTA is MAY 25

SPONSOR LUNCHEON AND WOODEN BOAT SHOW COMING UP

HAAhoy sailors and friends!

As the commodore of the Master Mariners Benevolent Association, it is with great pleasure that I extend a warm welcome to every one of you as we roll into yet another sailing season. As that westerly wind starts piping up, we know the season is upon us, which brings freedom and excitement that comes with navigating the beautiful waters of San Francisco Bay.



Hans List

Commodore 2022 - 25

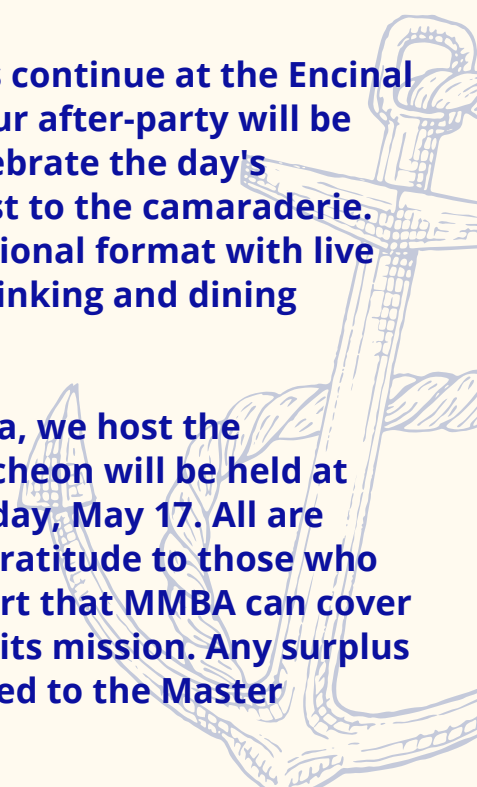
s/v Sequestor

hans.list@sfmastermariners.org

This year promises to be one filled with a lineup of great people and events. Our marquee event, the Annual Regatta, will take place Saturday, May 25. This spectacular display of traditional boats sailing across the bay is not only a visual feast, but also testament to the rich maritime heritage that we hold dear. The regatta showcases the skill, seamanship and camaraderie that define our community. We invite all to witness this awe-inspiring spectacle, and be part of the legacy that lives on through the sails and masts of these magnificent vessels.

Following the regatta, festivities continue at the Encinal Yacht Club in Alameda, where our after-party will be graciously hosted. Join us to celebrate the day's triumphs, share stories and toast to the camaraderie. For 2024, we return to the traditional format with live band, awards ceremony, plus drinking and dining upstairs.

Before we embark on the regatta, we host the Sponsorship Luncheon. This luncheon will be held at the St. Francis Yacht Club on Friday, May 17. All are invited to join us in expressing gratitude to those who pledge. It is only with this support that MMBA can cover operating expenses and further its mission. Any surplus funds from this effort are donated to the Master



Mariners Benevolent Foundation, which then allocates a portion of proceeds to individuals and efforts that preserve sailing traditions and promote maritime education. We request your assistance in seeking sponsorships from businesses or individuals who share our passion for the preservation of traditional sailing vessels on the San Francisco Bay. Your support plays a crucial role in ensuring continuity of tradition.

Wooden Boat Show

Mark your calendars for another highlight--the Wooden Boat Show, set for June 23 at the Corinthian Yacht Club in Tiburon. This captivating event attracts enthusiasts from near and far, offering a display of craftsmanship and elegance.

Dedication and Passion

I am honored to work alongside a dedicated and passionate board of directors, who share a collective vision of preserving and promoting the traditions that define us. Together, we strive to ensure that the spirit of sailing continues to thrive in our community. We acknowledge the importance of our heritage, and it is through collective efforts that we can pass traditions on to future generations.

As we prepare to unfurl our sails and embrace the adventures that lie ahead, I invite all sailors, whether seasoned or novice, to join this journey. Let us come together, united by our love for the sea, to celebrate the friendships and bonds that make the MMBA a truly exceptional community.

**Hans List
Commodore, MMBA**

MMBA ANNUAL REGATTA & PARTY

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND
MAY 25 - 26

*San Francisco
early summer
fog blankets the
course during
early hours of
the regatta.*

*Head to wind in
lively conditions
is our mystery
boat.*

*2014 photograph captured
by Martha Blanchfield.*

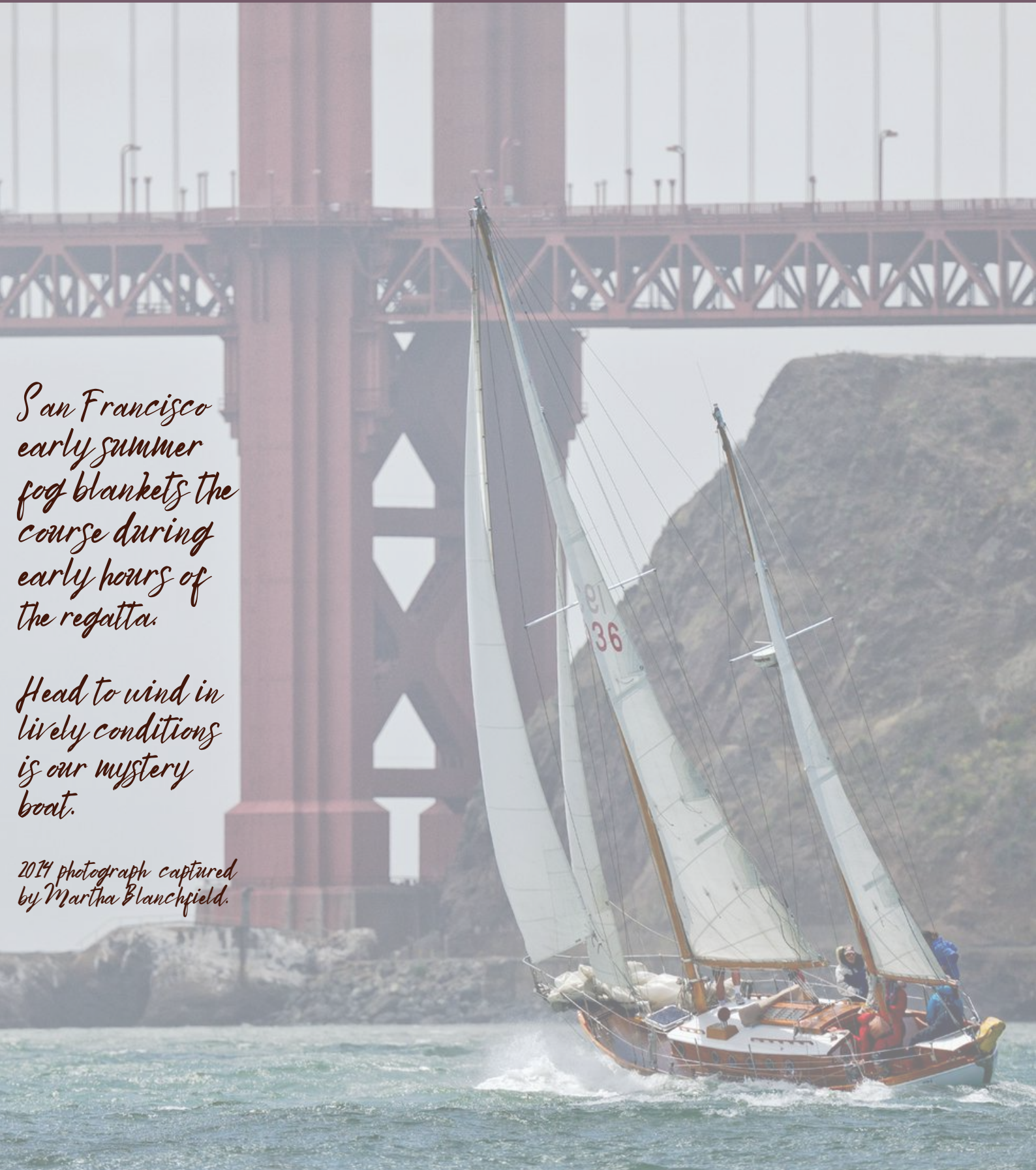


Table of Contents

Director Reports

Commodore's Message	04
Treasurer	12
Membership	13

Profiles & Tributes

Clipper Stad Amsterdam	16
Eight Bells Alice Watts	20
Tradition is Timeless	21
Formation of Foundation	26
History of the MMBA	28

Events & Activities

New Year's Day Race	08
New Year's Day Party	10
Masquerade Party	11
Spring Fling	15
MMBA Regatta Sponsorship	18
Bulletin Board	24
Event Calendar	25



Honoring the tradition: Steve and Maggie Hutchinson share a New Year's Eve kiss.



NEW YEAR'S DAY REGATTA 2024

BY BARBARA OHLER AND
GARY COSTIGAN, *MORNING STAR*

It was the morning after. Quiet. Gary and I had indeed been out too late.

Morning Star awaited our arrival at the marina impatiently. She hates tardiness. We motored from Alameda toward Treasure Island. The engine was smoking so we anchored on the east side near the race starting point. Gary went below to check the engine and had to make a temporary fix. I played my ukulele.

The wind came up a bit as a significant MMBA fleet arrived. I think I saw *Aida*, *Farida*, *Kaze*, *Nautigal*, *Sequestor*, *Black Witch*, *Water Witch*, *Vectis* and likely somebody else enjoying the sun and light winds.

When the other boats arrived and the race was about to begin, we just managed to pull anchor and start with the rest of the fleet. It was a fabulous day to be sailing on the bay. We traded tacks with several boats but *Nautigal* just wouldn't leave us alone. Then she just disappeared. I believe she either entered a vortex or I made a bad decision on a tack.

On the way sailing up the Richmond Channel we were cut off by a big ship. Evidently the other boats were already past when the ship blocked the channel. *Vectis* and *Morning Star* had to wait until the ship was tied up. It was getting dark before we could get to the finish line.

As the ABSOLUTELY last boat to tie up, and therefore the slowest boat in the race, we were honored to take home the coveted tortoise shell perpetual trophy. We are proud to display it in a prominent position somewhere in the house or shop or basement.

PHOTOS BY MELISSA FLICK



TOP TO BOTTOM:
START LINE VIEW,
SEQUESTOR,
AIDA THROUGH LIFE PRESERVER



HUMMING BIRDS, A JACKASS, A SWORDFISH, HORNS OF AN OX, REMNANTS OF A SEA TURTLE

Point San Pablo Yacht Club has become one of my favorite places to hang out on the water. Not only does it have a great clubhouse and views of the Santa Fe Channel, but the people are some of the best company on the bay. Maybe it's no coincidence that 20 percent of the membership are Master Mariners.

Our annual New Year's Day race after-party was once again held at PSPYC. The weather was beautiful and sunny, although we could've used a bit more wind for the sail. The club's fireplace kept us cozy, and all sorts of chilis, salads and sides were out for a great potluck buffet.

Towards the conclusion of the meal, the highly anticipated (sometimes dreaded) Tacky Trophy presentation began. There were some returning trophies, as well as some new. Will Campbell (*Humming Bird*) was the winner of an unknown maritime antique on which we all got to speculate its purpose. Greta List from

JAN 1 PARTY RECAP

Sequestor won a bowling-converted-to-sailing trophy. Kevin Hydes, Port Captain at PSPYC, won an antique flask which closely resembles him.

Mike and Sue Proudfoot of *Farida* won a cute little jackass tail for chasing *Aida* to the finish line. Liz Diaz (*Kaze*) won a tribal sword made from the bill of a swordfish. Andy and Melissa Flick (*Aida*) won a tallship constructed from the horns of an ox. And the grand prize for final place was awarded to Barbara Ohler and Gary Costigan of *Morning Star*. This trophy is a new perpetual, built from the shell of a sea turtle (no animals were harmed in the making).

Special thanks to the PSPYC crew for hosting, and thank you to all who came by land and sea to help kick-off the new year in proper fashion.

Flick family is awarded a trophy by Louis Nickles.

Masquerade Party



by Melissa Flick

photos Maggie Hutchinson

It was great to kickstart 2024 with our Master Mariner friends at Point San Pablo Yacht Club. The New Year's Eve masquerade party thrown by Steve and Maggie Hutchinson was a blast.

Wendy Fitz and her trio played beautiful music in the dining hall. Sophie List displayed the most amazing charcuterie board. Thank you to the List and Flick girls for decorating masquerade masks.

We counted down to the New Year and toasted with champagne purchased by PSPYC. Thank you all so much for a great event.

Treasurer Report

We ended 2023 in a good state financially, despite experiencing what many others confirm to be true: costs are generally going up across the board for things that historically were stable.

MMBA is surely not the only organization to notice items like insurance, venue rental costs, etc. slowly ticking up dollar by dollar. However, we were still able to facilitate our annual donation to MMBF, as well as a donation to Point San Pablo Yacht Club in recognition of their continued hospitality for hosting our monthly board meetings, as well as New Year's events.

Membership renewals are once again providing welcome start-of-the-year cash flow. Becoming a vessel member, or a friend if you don't have a classic boat, continue to be the most impactful ways to support our organization.

For 2024, we have refined and improved our website, especially the e-commerce functionality. Have you grumbled about missing out on a chance to purchase a t-shirt in person? Well, we've got good news: this year we'll be adding an ability to purchase merchandise from our website and have it shipped straight to your home.

On the note of our online presence, fellow board member Mark Harris and I are starting to create a new offering for both members, as well as wooden boat enthusiasts in the bay. We hope to build a discussion mailing list that anyone can join, which is centered around sharing advice, sailing opportunities and community.



KC Crowell, Treasurer

REPORTS

LAUNCHED 1904

120 YEARS

VIXEN, Steven Kibler, Staff Commodore
Peter Swanson Sloop

LAUNCHED 1924

100 YEARS

BRIGADOON, Terry Klaus, Staff Commodore
Francis Herreshoff Gaff Schooner

LAUNCHED 1950

75 YEARS

GLORIANA, Jim Mason
A.S.D. Herreshoff Schooner

FLAME, Robert and Stephanie Roche
Herreshoff, Burgess, Paine sloop

BOUNTY, Dan Spradling
Sparkman & Stephens Yawl

BLACK WITCH, Sandee Swanson
Ralph E. Winslow Gaff Sloop

VIP, Fred Taylor
Stephens Bros. Farallone Clipper

Neil Gibbs, Membership



MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Boat Owner	\$105/year
Friend	\$35/year

Know a traditional yacht owner who is not a member? Email [Neil Gibbs](#). He will attempt to locate the owner.

Not a boat owner but love classics?
>> Join as a Friend.



San Francisco Master Mariners Benevolent Association

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Vessel Name _____ Previous MMBA member? _____
Designer _____ Year _____
Builder _____ Year _____
Vessel Rig type _____ Mainsail type: Gaff _____ Marconi _____ Sail number _____
Hull Material(s): _____ Hull Const. Method _____
Spar material _____
Working Sail Area _____ (sq. ft.) Maximum Sail Area _____ (sq. ft.)
Length - On Deck _____ Waterline _____ Overall _____ Beam _____
Draft _____ Keel Configuration _____ Displacement _____ lbs.

List any modifications from design or major modifications since built _____
Please tell us about the history of your vessel (attach additional sheet if needed) _____

Berth location & number _____
Owner's Name(s) _____
Mailing Address: _____
City _____ State _____ Zip code _____
Email Address: _____ Phone _____
Yacht Club affiliations, if any _____

PLEASE NOTE: With this application, please submit a non-returnable, current profile photo of your boat under sail.

Submit this application and photo via email to membership@sfmastermariners.com, and submit your dues via the website store at www.sfmastermariners.org. Alternatively you can mail this application, photo and check for \$105 payable to 'MMBA' to MMBA, P.O. Box 70640, Richmond, CA 94807. All yachts are subject to Board approval prior to acceptance. Dues are \$105 for the calendar year. For questions or comments, please contact Neil Gibbs, Membership Chair, at membership@sfmastermariners.com.

Membership in THE MASTER MARINERS BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION offers year 'round activities including the New Year's Day Regatta/party, Spring Cruise, Annual Memorial Day Regatta and weekend Rendezvous, Annual Membership party/meeting, the Wooden Boat Show, Labor Day Weekend Regatta/Cruise, and other events as announced. We look forward to meeting you and learning about your boat.

GETTING LUCKY AT SPRING FLING



Gary Costigan looking in on the fun.

An Irish Sailor's Blessing

*May the seas lie smooth before you.
May a gentle breeze forever fill your sails.
May sunshine warm your face,
And kindness warm your soul.
And, until we meet again,
May God bless you and keep you safe.*

This year's Spring Fling was a St. Patrick's Day cruise-out to San Rafael Yacht Club, in conjunction with Point San Pablo Yacht Club.

We had a great turn-out via sea and land, with an estimated 30 master mariners. We enjoyed Irish dancers performing while we enjoyed a traditional corn beef and cabbage dinner.

We then danced the night away with the live band. We surely were lucky .

*Paddy and Murphy were
sitting down doing
a crossword.*

*Murphy asks,
"How do you spell paint..?"*

*Paddy replies,
"What color..?"*



Sharing the blarney are revellers Sophie and Hans List.



WORLD TOUR 2023-25

CLIPPER STAD AMSTERDAM

The *Stad Amsterdam* is a modern 76-metre sailing vessel. Built during 1997 to 2000, her lines and production reflect traditional boatbuilding hallmarks of the late nineteenth century. Honoring that era's fast ocean clippers, the merchant trading vessel Amsterdam (1854) serves as inspiration for the design. She is the official sailing ship of her namesake city.

The idea to build a tall ship came to light during SAIL Amsterdam 1995, when members of city leadership and private industry came together. An essential program aboard the ship is providing young people with work opportunities, skills training and experiences for personal and social growth.

In August 2023, Clipper *Stad Amsterdam* embarked on a two-year voyage around the world, with stops in Tokyo, Shanghai, Sydney, Mumbai, Cape Town, New York City, London and more. The ship returns to home port August 2025; timing coincides with SAIL Amsterdam, an international festival of tall ships which happens once every five years.

The ship remained at piers 30/32 from March 6 - 24. Captain Sune Blinkenberg is from Copenhagen.

STAD AMSTERDAM



Commodore Hans List presents Captain Sune Blinkenberg with the MMBA burgee at the SF Blue Tech leadership reception in March, hosted by Martha Blanchfield.



From pier 30/32 on the morning of March 24, members Diane Walton and Liz Diaz waved farewell to *Stad Amsterdam*.

The pair then drove to the south end of Golden Gate Bridge to capture the below photo.

photos left top and here by Diane Walton





Thank you early sponsors

- Andrew Flick: artisan
- Berkeley Marine Center
- North Beach Marine Canvas
- Patricia Howson
- Ron Young: Shocase

*W*e master mariners have taken to remembering the past because we feel this is where great lessons lie. Our role is to keep alive the vessels and legacy of our San Francisco "Great Age of Sail."

Throughout the decades, sponsorship of our annual regatta has helped preserve a piece of history, keeping it at the forefront for our local sailing culture for a few days each year.

Your sponsorship of the Master Mariners Regatta makes a significant contribution to continuing one of the longest running regattas in North America. Combined with the charitable giving of the Master Mariners sister organization, the Master Mariners Benevolent Foundation, your sponsorship supports a variety of initiatives to preserve and foster the interest, skills, trades and organizations that keep maritime traditions alive and well.

Sponsorship brings exposure in the form of display for your "house flag" and/or logo:

- Flown from aboard a racing vessel during the regatta
- At the awards ceremony after the regatta
- During the Annual Meeting and Wooden Boat Show June 22 - 23 at the Corinthian Yacht Club
- On the Master Mariners website
- Displayed within *The Shellback* newsletter

Additionally, your company name will be announced during the sponsor roll call at our annual Sponsor and Skipper Luncheon at the St. Francis Yacht Club, May 17.

Sponsorship Levels

Bosun: \$300

Receives one seat at sponsor luncheon
May 17, your flag flying aboard a vessel,
logo placement, plus Bosun level gift

Deck: \$400

Receives same as Bosun, one additional lunch,
plus Deck level gift

Mate: \$500

Receives same as Deck, plus Mate level gift

Master: \$1,000

Receives same as Mate, plus Master level gift

Afterguard: \$2,000+

Receives same as Master, plus Afterguard level gift

For an in-kind donation, contact
liz.diaz@sfmastermariners.org

Liz Diaz and Diane Walton
co-chairs sponsorship
liz.diaz@sfmastermariners.org

Info and forms:
www.sfmastermariners.org/mmba-store/2024-mmba-sponsorship

Eight Bells Remembering Alice Watts



Alice Watts helps raise the flags on *Freda B* at the 2023 MMBA Annual Regatta.

Alice Watts was a stalwart member of the San Francisco Bay Sailing Community contributing for decades, first as a volunteer and then as an employee of the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park, aboard both the *C.A. Thayer* and *Alma*. About 10 years ago, Alice became an annual Instructor at the Northern California Women's Sailing Seminar (WSS). In 2023, she was awarded the first "WSS Woman of Valor" award for her contributions. She became an active member of Alameda's Island Yacht Club, her last position was Secretary of the Board of Governors.

TRADITION IS

Spaulding Marine Center

TIMELESS

education / apprenticeships / boatbuilding / community



Getting the word out

to the MMBA membership about the activities and classes at Spaulding Marine Center has been on my radar since I started in my role as Executive Director one year ago. Our organizations have much in common, and I am pleased to report that there's a lot of collaboration underway between our two organizations.

Spaulding Marine Center is a vibrant hub of maritime passion, craftsmanship and community located in the heart of the Sausalito working waterfront. A glimpse into the workings of the center will encourage any visitor, customer or volunteer to support and become involved with our mission.

We are more than a boatyard. Spaulding is a living testament to the rich history of boatbuilding, and a dynamic space where traditions seamlessly blend with innovation. Established with a vision to preserve, promote and celebrate maritime heritage, our center stands as a beacon for enthusiasts, craftsmen and maritime aficionados.

Within our shop and boatyard, skilled technicians toil aside marine service apprentices. Our workshops and courses, such as the boatbuilding programs and our homeschool program, are fostering a new generation of maritime enthusiasts.

In our monthly newsletter we share the happenings in the yard and from our education center. We highlight how individuals can participate in our volunteer projects, and we profile how boat maintenance courses can develop more confidence as a boat owner or enthusiast. We also share stories about our crew, volunteers and customers.

Spaulding is more than just a physical space--it is a gathering place where a shared love for the maritime industry, wooden boats and education unites us. Spaulding opens its doors to all who are interested in becoming part of an ever-evolving maritime legacy. We invite guests to explore, engage and become a part of our story. Visit the yard and a crew member will welcome you and offer a tour.

We look forward to meeting you.

Matt Zarem
Executive Director
Spaulding Marine Center





Boatworks 101

Marine Service Technician Apprenticeship

In August 2021, Spaulding Marine Center launched Boatworks 101, a first-of-its-kind apprenticeship to train the next generation of marine industry craftspeople. This is a 12-month program.

Boatworks 101 offers training for young people who are interested in the maritime industry. The program also brings diversity to the marine service industry by recruiting and supporting candidates of color, women and other under-represented populations.

These paid apprenticeships provide education and skillsbuilding to enter a high-need industry within the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. Upon successful completion, a candidate is qualified for full-time employment as an entry-level marine service technician.

As anyone who works in the maritime industry likely knows, the pool of skilled marine laborers is at a lowpoint. Programs like Spaulding's Boatworks 101 are essential for addressing maritime industry employment challenges.

Boatworks 101 is demanding and fast-paced. Its structure addresses the talent shortage that has been caused by a lack of training and educational opportunities, nominal exposure to STEM curriculum, minimal work experience, lack of financial aid and other factors.

The first and second apprentice groups (12 individuals) graduated and were hired as full-time employees within the industry.

Our third group is currently engaged in an array of courses, learning machinery and woodworking, plus studying for the ABYC electrical exams that will happen this summer.

Boatworks 101 is the first and only recreational boating apprenticeship program meeting California Apprenticeship Program standards.

For many years, the recreational boating service industry has struggled to attract, train and retain qualified employees—yet no significant effort was made to create a career training and apprenticeship pathway to address the problem.

Boatworks 101 eliminates barriers to this important career pathway by providing paid training, plus support.

CLUB BULLETIN BOARD



PICYA OPENING DAY ON THE BAY IS APRIL 28

GET OUT ON THE BAY AND REPRESENT MMBA



Happy 120th Birthday

VIXEN, Peter Swanson Sloop
Steven Kibler, Staff Commodore



"Tracing 135 Years of Racing on the SF Bay."

Wednesday, April 17th

5:30 to 7:30 PM

Free Event



Speaker and owner,
Allen Gross

Did you know??

Each year, a portion of funds raised from MMBA operations is directed to the Master Mariners Benevolent Foundation?

That board allocates funds to entities and activities that preserve sailing traditions and promoting maritime education.

Remember to support vendors who support us!

CAN YOU HELP AT EVENTS?

LET EVENT DIRECTOR MELISSA KNOW

* SET-UP
* CLEAN-UP
* ORGANIZING STUFF AND MORE!

Shellback seeks contributions

send photos, tips & tricks, short articles to Martha

martha@renegadesailing.com



Events

PICYA Opening Day on the Bay April 28

10am
San Francisco city front
Info: PICYA website

Great SF Schooner Race & Belvedere Classic August 10

San Francisco Yacht Club
Info: San Francisco Yacht Club

Sponsors & Skippers Luncheon May 17

12pm
St. Francis Yacht Club
Info: Hans List and Gena Egleston

Wooden Boat Extravaganza August 17

Aquatic Park
Info: John Muir

MMBA Regatta & Party May 25 - 26

12pm
StFYC start line, Encinal Yacht Club party

Labor Day Weekend Aug 31 - Sept 2

12pm
China Camp Cleat Cruise

Annual Member Meeting June 22

Corinthian Yacht Club

South Beach Cruise-out to Giants Game TBD

Wooden Boat Show June 23

10am - 4pm
Corinthian Yacht Club

Jessica Cup Regatta & Small Boat Cruise-out Oct 19

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

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.

HISTORY OF THE MMBA

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.

Board of Directors

Hans List, Commodore
Gena Egelston, Vice Commodore
Liz Diaz, Rear Commodore
KC Crowell, Treasurer
Neil Gibbs, Membership
Diane Walton, Trophies
Melissa Flick, Events
Mark Harris, IT/Data Management
John Muir, Regatta Support

MMBA
PO Box 70640
Richmond, CA 94807

The San Francisco Master Mariners Benevolent Association
is a California non-profit Public Benefit Corporation
We are recognized under IRS Section 501(c)(7), tax ID 0847532
©2023 San Francisco Master Mariners Benevolent Association
All rights reserved

membership@sfmastermariners.com

