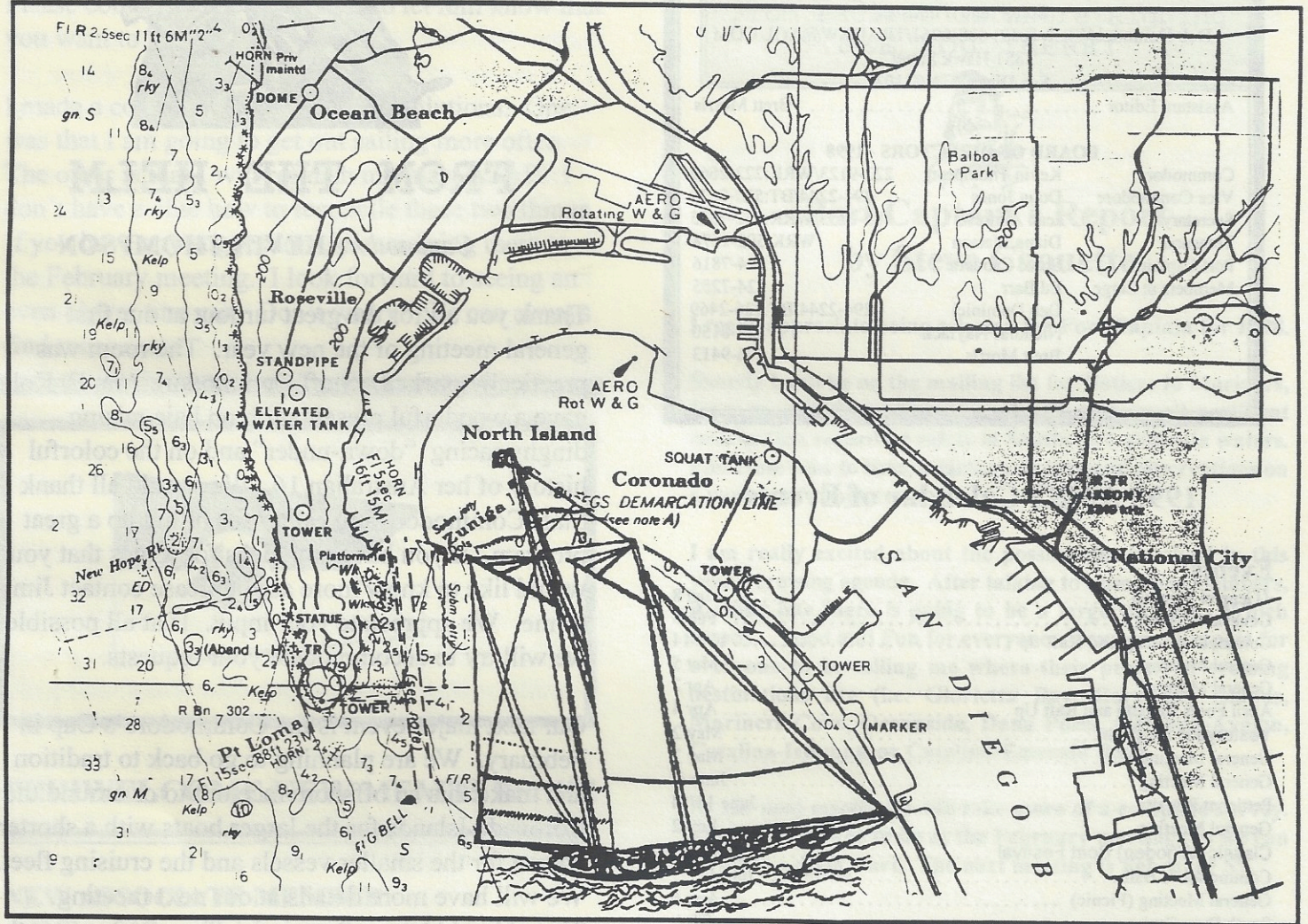


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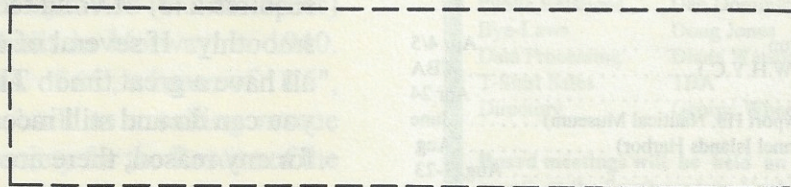
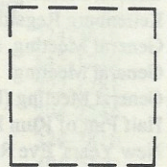
ANCIENT MARINERS SAILING SOCIETY Volume 24, Number 2

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ANCIENT MARINERS SAILING SOCIETY

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FROM THE HELM

Commodore KEVIN THOMPSON

Thank you all for the great turnout at our first general meeting of the new year. The room was practically packed! Staff Commodore Ann E. Kolls gave a wonderful presentation on hair-raising dinghy racing "down-under" and on the colorful history of her Australian 16. We should all thank Staff Commodore Jim Sutter for lining up a great program. If you have any ideas for topics that you would like to know more about please contact Jim or me. We appreciate your input. If at all possible we will try to accommodate your requests.

Our next major event is the Commodore's Cup in February. We are planning to go back to tradition and make this an offshore race out to or around the Coronado Islands for the larger boats with a shorter course for the smaller vessels and the cruising fleet. We will have more details at our next meeting. There should be a raft-up in La Playa cove after the race Saturday night so even if you don't like to race please cruise on over, spend the night and join in the fun!

The Yesteryear Regatta will be coming up before you know it. This is a major undertaking and requires a lot of volunteers in order to come off smoothly. If several of us just do a little bit, we can all have a great time! There are plenty of things that you can do and still race. If you are not able to sail for any reason, there are other things that need to be accomplished. Southwestern Yacht Club will be performing the actual Race Committee work but

1998 AMSS Calendar of Events

Events

√General Meeting	Jan 8
General Meeting	Feb 5
Commodores Cup and Raft-up	Feb 14
General Meeting	Mar 5
General Meeting	Apr 2
April Fools Regatta and Raft Up	Apr 4
Yesteryear Regatta	May 2
General Meeting	May 7
General Meeting	June 4
Petticoat Regatta	June 13/14
General Meeting	July 2
Classic (Wooden) Boat Festival	July 11/12
Commodore's Ball	July 11???
General Meeting (Picnic)	Aug 6
South Bay Cruise	TBA
General Meeting	Sept 3
Kettenburg Regatta	Sept. 19
General Meeting (2nd Thurs) NOMINATIONS	Oct 8
General Meeting	Nov 5
General Meeting (ELECTIONS)	Dec 3
Half Pint of Rum Race	Dec 5
New Years' Eve Raft Up - La Playa	Dec 31

OTHER ORGANIZATION'S EVENTS

Kona Kai's American Schooner Cup	Apr 4/5
ONE MORE TIME REGATTA (W.H.Y.C.)	TBA
Newport - Ensenada Race	Apr 24
Heritage Regatta (Balboa YC/Newport Hb. Nautical Museum)	June
McNish Classic Yacht Race (Channel Islands Harbor)	Aug
Bishop Rock Race (SDYC)	Aug21-23
Nautical Heritage Society - Long Beach Schooner Race	Aug
W.H.Y.C. vs AMSS	Sept 26-27 (?)
S.W.Y.C. Ensenada Race	Oct 2

DENNIE BARR O'BRYAN
DYNAMITE YACHTSWOMAN

by Edward S. Barr

On March 26, 1951, my father, Larry Barr suffered a major heart attack and died on April 2. I was 17; he was 45 - the first of the schooner VARUNA crew to depart.

Twenty seven years later, in 1978, my mother, Dennie Barr O'Bryan, 68, was featured in the September issue of Sea Magazine in the following article by Bill Center. Here it is:

During a rare moment of inactivity, Dennie Barr O'Bryan was sitting on San Diego YC's front deck, discussing her "last boat."

"I enjoy sailing now just as much as I ever have," she said. "I can't say more because I have some great memories. But this type of racing I'm doing now is just as much fun as anything I've tried."

Too soon, she departed for the starting line. At this point several facts must be set down. Dennie Barr O'Bryan is a vibrant 68 years old. The boat she is sailing is a 7'11" Naples Sabot, which weighs less than 100 pounds.

"Dennie is an exceptional person," noted one of her Sabot competitors, Monica Manzer. "She is a natural; so very relaxed in a sailboat."

It was not always this way. "To this day, I can remember clearly how I got hooked," recalled O'Bryan. "My stepfather wanted to get acquainted with me. The judge (William P. Cary) had a 32-foot yawl named WAVE and he thought it would be great fun for us to get together on the boat. In 1916, he bribed me with a half-gallon of vanilla ice cream. There wasn't a greener, sicker child in Coronado," said O'Bryan. But she was coming around to her fate, even if it would take a while. Without knowing it, she had. "I guess at that point my fate was sealed."

At that time women crews were few and far

between, but Dennie soon hitched a ride on the famed Transpac racer, TEVA. "I have a favorite picture taken of me eating lunch while sitting up on TEVA's spreaders," Dennie said.

But her lifestyle changed. She went away to New York's Sara Lawrence College and moved to the city. "New York was my apple. I lived there five years and loved every minute of it." But when the Depression hit, Dennie and her husband, Larry Barr, moved back to the West Coast, first to San Francisco and then to San Diego.

She also claimed a promise when she returned. "At age 13, my stepfather had promised me a boat as soon as I was old enough to take care of it." The Barrs quickly rounded up a 12-foot clinker-built, cat rigged skiff. They would load the boat with two kids, two dogs, a picnic lunch and sail off into San Diego Bay.

"The boat and the load we carried was such that we couldn't sail her home," she recalled. "I think everyone in the club towed us home at one time or another."

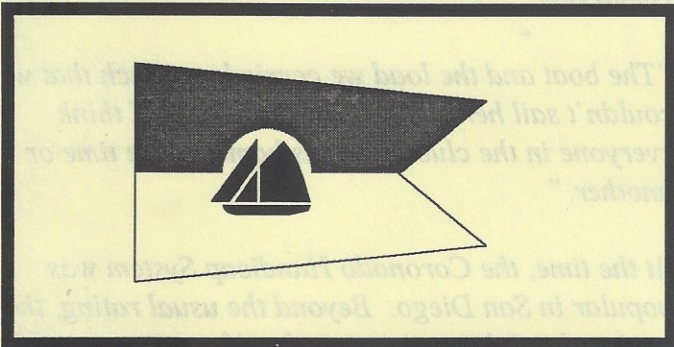
At the time, the Coronado Handicap System was popular in San Diego. Beyond the usual rating, the basic rule of the system was that if you won, your rating rose two minutes for the next race. "Everyone always raced for second," she recalled. This type of racing launched her career, still active four decades later.

In 1937, The Barrs bought the 22-foot sloop DEE DEE. "We were towed to Newport Beach and sailed her to Catalina. It was wonderful."

But she felt she really didn't know much about the love of a boat until they went shopping for their third boat. It was the family's first MICKEY, a 32-foot Ashbridge yawl. "Up to MICKEY, I didn't understand the love a person could have for a boat. It was the Depression and her owners had to give her up. They cried when they lost her. Years later, I cried too. Those poor people."

I'm sure that they will want to have at least a couple of our people on board the committee boat to help out, especially for identifying vessels. We must drive their score-keepers nuts. They are used to dealing with boats that all have numbers on their sails. Some of our boats have numbers on their sails. A few even have numbers that all match! Please contact Doug Jones *now* to let him know that you want to help!

I made a couple of New Year's Resolutions. One was that I am going to get out sailing more often. The other is that I will refinish my mast ASAP! I don't have a clue how to reconcile these two things. If you have any suggestions, please bring them to the February meeting. I look forward to seeing an even bigger turnout. Don't worry. We can always find more seats!



!!!!!!!WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!!!!!!

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER

☛Kathy O'Connor is a new associate member who works in yacht sales. She hopes to own a wooden boat some day.

NEW PROSPECTIVE MEMBER

☛Patrick Langley, who has been around the San Diego Wooden Boat scene for many years, is bringing his boat OSLOSKDYTA, a Bjar Aas (Colin Archer) 1939 design which was built in Norway in 1940. OSLOSKDYTA has a LOA of 65', a beam of 18'6", and draft of 11' and was built as a sailing rescue vessel for the Norwegian Society for the Rescue of the Shipwrecked.

NEXT MEETING
FEBRUARY 5, 1998
 7:30 P.M.
 Southwestern Yacht Club
RIGGING PRESENTATION
 by **FRITZ RICHARDSON**
 From Pacific Offshore Rigging
SEE YOU THERE!



Port Captain's Report
 by **Steve Caouette**

I really appreciate being selected for Port Captain for 1998.

Shortly I will be on the mailing list for Notices to Mariners, from the US Coast Guard, and will pass on all pertinent information regarding safety in Southern California waters. Plus from time to time, a cartoon or two, and observations on a variety of subjects.

I am really excited about the possibilities involved in this year's cruising agenda. After talking to numerous members, it looks like there is going to be a large turnout. Which means... Food and Fun for everyone. However, I expect for everyone to be telling me where their preferred cruising destinations are (i.e. Glorietta Bay, Coronado Islands, Mariners Cove, Oceanside, Dana Point, Catalina-Avalon, Catalina-Isthmus, or Catalina-Emerald Bay).

At the next meeting, I will take more of a complete survey. I expect everyone to be at the February meetings so we can be off to a good start. The next meeting is February 5th.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS		
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Board meetings will be held on the second Monday of each month at the Southwestern Yacht Club at 7:00 PM. Members are welcome to attend.

World War II was just around the corner. After one trip to Catalina on MICKEY, Avalon harbor was closed; Larry Barr was called into the Coast Guard and off to the war "There were no men around during the war," Dennie said. "As he left Larry told me to sail MICKEY, sink her, or sell her."

Dennie taught herself all the things that men had done up until the war. She moored MICKEY, raised the anchor, hoisted the sails and skippered her in races whenever a fleet could be mustered. "Larry and I had taken navigation classes together prior to the war so I was doing much of the work already," she said. Her friends would give her saved gas ration coupons so she could get MICKEY back and forth from Coronado Yacht Club for those weekly races which she sailed. She handled all the maintenance on MICKEY, all the way down to airing the cotton sails to prevent them from mildewing after a rain.

"Most of the racing during the war was done at the armchair. We planned for those long cruises everyone was going to take after the war was over."

The Barrs formulated their plan and wasted no time putting it into action in 1945. They went to the East Coast, bought the 80-foot Alden Schooner VARUNA and sailed her home, a voyage of 6,490 miles.

"We flipped a coin on VJ day and it came up VARUNA," said Dennie. "We wanted to sail her around the world but there was so much work to do and materials were in such short supply." The vessel had bunks for 18!

They could find no winches for the sails and no braid line to replace worn sheets. Linked chain and wire replaced rope.

"When we tacked, sparks would fly - really!" she said. "The biggest thrill was being the first private yacht to go through the Panama Canal after the war and passing the battleship USS MISSOURI."

The upkeep on VARUNA and the urge to return to racing soon led the Barrs to look for another boat. Enter new PCC #4 MICKEY (46'), which Dennie

would sail for the next 21 years in the San Diego Ocean Racing Fleet.

(Ed Barr continues)

Teaming with the PCC Designer, the late George Kettenburg, Mom raced MICKEY at every possible opportunity, which was about every week.

The list included;

- 16 Newport-Ensenada races (She won the 1948 inaugural)
- 5 Lipton Cups
- Every ocean race held in San Diego at least once
- Almost every race in San Francisco
- Taking the boat to Seattle via flatcar so Kettenburg and Gene Trepte could help her sail MICKEY in the PCYA Regattas
- Placing third in the San Diego-Acapulco race
- Winning the 'overall' trophy in the first Ensenada race.

Dennie even made the Encyclopedia Britannica for being the winner of the largest international yacht race in history, the Newport-Ensenada Race! In winds between 20 and 35 knots, Dennie drove MICKEY along a rhumb line course and surfed the boat into Mexico.

I was a student at Stanford University, so Mom sailed MICKEY to San Francisco Bay (Sausalito). With a Stanford crew, she won 14 of 16 regattas. This prompted the late Harold Keen of San Diego's TV-8 to dub Mom the "Pirate Lady." In fact, she cleaned out the trophy case at the St. Francis Yacht Club. This caused such a stir that she was the first woman to be asked to join the club as a full flag member, on the condition that she would leave her winnings in their trophy case!

She was the first woman ever allowed in the "Men's Bar" at the St. Francis Yacht Club. The Yachting community in San Francisco was aghast at how a woman could skipper a 46-foot, a Southern California built boat, in their boisterous waters and in races beat them all consistently. I would hear

them say, "Doesn't that woman know her place? Why doesn't she just go home and leave us alone?"

From 1953 to 1968, Dennie was back in San Diego where she continued ocean racing - including three more Acapulco races plus every other race on the calendar.

In March 1968, during MICKEY's 21st birthday party, Mom shocked everyone by selling the boat. She said, "I just do not believe that anyone deserves to own a lovely sailing yacht if they do not use it often. It's time for MICKEY to serve a new family." Bob Phillips was the new owner.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Mom said, "No more big boats for me, but maybe I can learn to race little ones." The SSSS (Sexy Sabot Sailing Set) was then born with Dennie as a charter member. For the next 17 years, she sailed and raced Sabots against others one-third her age, collecting trophies along the way.

"The kids are getting so good. It is much easier for a girl to start sailing these days. It's been accepted as a perfect co-ed sport. It wasn't that way long ago. Now I don't know who the next junior champ will be, just that she will be good."

When asked about the future, she said "It's bright! I will do this until the day I die - if I can physically." No one doubted her.

When mom did die in September 1986 at 75, I inherited all her yachting memorabilia. I gave all her scrapbooks featuring the activities of the PCC Kettenburg class to Debbie Dominici of the Ancient Mariners Sailing Society.

Along with Peggy Slater, Dennie Barr O'Bryan was a pioneer big boat female racing skipper. They were both trail blazers in their own unique ways.

Inside her last racing trophy, Mom's ashes were buried. She won 4th place in the 1986 Sabot Nationals, only three months before her death. She made a special doughnut cushion so that she could endure the pain of her cancer that plagued her on that last occasion.

Mom conceived and adopted the three cupped brassiere as her battle flag to signify that MICKEY had more than any racing yacht! To the shock of some traditional yachtsmen, she fashioned and sewed a real three cupped white brassiere and proudly flew it at the starboard spreader at the San Diego Yacht Club!

Being the son of Dennie Barr O'Bryan involved experiences of never ending variety. Over 50 percent of everything I have ever learned about sailing and boats, I learned from my mother - Dennie Barr.



At 75, just months before her death, Dennie Barr O'Bryan - stopwatch in hand - takes a break between races. San Diego Yacht Club (SSSS) Sexy Sabot Sailing Set.