



SANTA BARBARA

YACHT CLUB

William H. Lenvik, 1992

Bill Lenvik spent his early years in a small town in Minnesota. At the time, Hendricks had a total population of about 900. This translated into fewer than 300 school-aged children, so he spent his years there attending the only school in the area, which accommodated grades 1 through 12 in one building. Lake Hendricks was one block away from Bill's house, and this was where he learned to swim and boat on small fishing boats and canoes.

When he was 15 years old, his parents decided they had had enough of those harsh Minnesota winters and moved the family to Goleta, where Bill "was introduced to the Pacific". He enjoyed riding his bike to Goleta beach, especially during the winter months, which had previously been filled with shoveling driveways and bundling up in layers to face frigid temperatures. Yes, Santa Barbara winters are quite pleasant as compared to the Midwest. Bill attended San Marcos High School, spending his first 2 years at the campus on the Riviera while the current campus was being completed. After high school, he joined the Marine Corps. He was stationed on an aircraft carrier and "saw most of the Pacific."

Back in Santa Barbara after the Marine Corps, Bill owned several small, trailerable ski boats. "After Karen and I got married in 1969, we bought a Boston Whaler. Then I took sailing lessons in the early '70s and bought our first sailboat, a 26' Pearson in 1974." He started sailing on SBYC member Dick Compton's boats and bought an Erickson 35 that was previously owned by Don and Lee McFarland. "I was a member of the SB Sailing Club back then." He joined SBYC in 1980 after becoming very active in racing with Dick. He still races on his friend's boats and "really enjoy(s) the competition of it." How much? Well, he has raced in Masters Regattas in J24s in San Francisco, as well as in the 1993 TransPac race. There have been more than 30 Newport to Ensenada races and 17+ Mackinac Island races on Lake Michigan. In 2003, he was a contender in the 1,700-mile-long San Diego to Manzanillo, Mexico race. Bill has had numerous opportunities to deliver boats to and from Washington and Mexico. Personally, that would be just a bit too long of a trip for me. If I can't be home by dinnertime, I get cranky.

He and Karen also enjoy spending leisurely weeks on power boats. The fulfillment they experienced spending time on power boats led them to buy a trawler. That was followed by "a Grand Banks 32, *Segue*, which I had during my commodore years." That was followed by "a Grand Banks 42, *Legend*; our last powerboat."

Although this interview mostly focused on his involvement in boating and his years as an SBYC member and esteemed commodore, we did discuss Bill's career. His 33 years with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department were very rewarding. "In the Marine Corps, I enjoyed the regimentation. The sheriff's department was based on military aspects. I just took the test and got hired." His first job was in Lompoc, followed by transfers to Santa Barbara and Carpinteria. He later became a burglary and narcotics detective before being promoted to a supervisory role. He also worked in the jail and administration and retired as Undersheriff overseeing about 700 employees. "I really enjoyed it out there."

Through the years, enjoying life has been high on Bill's list of priorities. He became very active on many committees at SBYC, from social to racing, when he took a moment and thought "it would be fun to be involved in the board of directors. After three years, Dexter Goodell, Bill Deardorff and Ed Attlesley pretty much convinced me...to get involved." And so, he went through the ranks to fill that most esteemed and selfless volunteer role of commodore. So, how about a few memories of those "giving years"? One that stands out prominently for Bill occurred during his commodore year. "The America's Cup was in San Diego. We made several trips to SDYC to watch and be involved. One of our local jewelers presented an America's Cup (wrist)watch to commemorate our involvement in the races. This presentation was made to me at (our own) Opening Day." He had many opportunities to wear the unique gift to the remaining southern California yacht club opening days that season. "Patti and Peder were grown by that time. Karen came to all the opening days

with me. We took the train down to the San Diego Yacht Club opening day and also spent several days in Marina del Rey...”

Since the three years prior to Bill’s commodore year were filled with major renovations to our clubhouse, “my goal for the year was to make it fun for the members. Projects would be set aside. I encouraged volunteerism: use the Club. It’s a family, volunteering, being on committees, making it an enjoyable place to be.”

Well, Bill certainly gave of his heart during his commodore year; that’s apparent. But were all those years of volunteering appreciated? He has no doubt. Bill clearly treasures his experiences at the Club, particularly his “lifelong friends. Dick Compton and I met over boating 35 years ago and we’re best friends. We’ve watched kids come and go. Now our kids are flag members. It’s a wonderful extension to our home.” It is “hard to put into words what it’s like...hard to explain.” As for his yacht club cruising experiences, he says, “It’s such a magical place - to go to Catalina on your boat. People who haven’t done it just don’t understand it.”

Fortunately, there are many of us who know just what he means by the magic of cruising with friends and family, and feel blessed to have had the experiences.

In closing our interview, Bill had some wise and heartfelt thoughts to share with fellow SBYC members. “Use the Club. Volunteer with the Club. Try to get all the enjoyment of it you can. This Club has only this building to offer its members. Its members have to provide everything else - memories that you’ll carry forever.”