



## SANTA BARBARA YACHT CLUB

### **Dexter Goodell, 1989**

Our fearless SBYC leader in 1989 was Dexter Goodell. Although he was born in Harbor City, near San Pedro, he seemed destined to live in Santa Barbara. At the same time that Dexter graduated high school, his older brother graduated from UCSB. Dexter was offered his brother's job with Safeway supermarkets on De La Vina Street here in town in the space currently occupied by Trader Joe's. Dexter started as a clerk the day after high school graduation. He began his co-ed career at our city college by the ocean and finished with a degree in economics at our university by the ocean (UCSB). After serving 6 months in the Coast Guard, Dexter married his sweetheart, Erline. The couple moved to Arcadia because his bride had been offered a teaching position there. Two years later they moved to Pasadena. Dexter was working at the regional Allstate office when he and Erline decided it was time to move back to SB. He requested a transfer with the company, which was highly unusual. What was even more unusual was that the transfer was granted. He and Erline were back in paradise.

While Dexter was still in college, he had started crewing on sailboats and found that he enjoyed the thrill of racing. So upon his return, he picked up where he had left off. In the early 1970s, he bought a boat with a partner. The Columbia 26 was called *Dulcinea*, the name of Don Quixote's sweetheart. The partnership lasted roughly 4 years, and when *Dulcinea* was sold, Dexter remained boatless until he again went into a partnership, this time with Ed Marini and Andy Brownwood, on a Ranger 33 called *Wings*.

As time went on, he bought a J24, had it painted orange and called it OJ, an appropriate name since by that time, Dexter was in the citrus business. He raced OJ for years with his son, Peter. (The boat is now being used by the SBYSF.) In 1987, he bought his last boat, *Clockwork*, which also happened to have been orange in color, this time partnering with longtime friend Bill Deardorff. The 2 raced together, "but there was a lot of rivalry also, which was fun," he remembers. *Clockwork* was Dexter's last boat and he sold it in 1995.

When I asked Dexter what had lured him to become an SBYC member, he told me that when he had *Dulcinea* in the early to mid-1970s, he was "just basically hanging around the harbor and it seemed like the right thing to do. It wasn't so expensive in those days!" After several years, he was "asked to be on the Board of Directors, and then asked to be rear commodore." The timing worked well, as his children were graduating from college. "It's good to give back to an organization that you participate in. You get a lot of enjoyment being there, but you need to get involved."

Dexter relayed to me several fond memories from his commodore year, some of which actually caused me to choke on my lunch from the laughter. As his year began, he decided that opening days had become too stuffy, and it might be fun to surprise people a bit. He and his bridge showed up at the SBYC Opening Day 1989 dressed in the typical white shirt, SBYC tie and blue blazer. But this rogue decided that instead of the typical grey slacks, his entourage would wear red slacks, leaving all the guests wondering if they'd missed a memo. Now, I must say that I have seen these slacks. Fortunately, they were not a candy apple red color, more of a muted shade. I bet the gentlemen actually looked quite sharp on the receiving line! [The following year's commodore, Bill Deardorff, decided to pay homage to his friend and repeat the idea.] Dexter's commodore year continued smoothly enough. The front lawn of the Club became home to 2 coral trees and underwent

additional landscaping under the creative eye of Grant Castleberg. The SBYCW was formed that year, too. “Erline was one of the founding members.”

As the year was drawing to a close, and Dexter decided to have his Commodore’s Ball at the Biltmore Hotel in December, the jovial pranks were inevitable. The commodore and his wife decided it would be a lovely idea to spend the night in the grand hotel. When the ball was in full swing, some mischievous revelers decided to ensure that the end of the commodore’s memorable evening would not coincide with the end of the ball. Stealthily, these particular partygoers slipped out of the ballroom, stole down to the Andre Clark Bird Refuge and did the unthinkable; perhaps worse than kidnapping, they committed ducknapping! When Dexter and Erline returned to their room, they followed an odd quacking sound into the bathroom, where they found three ducks bathing in the tub and leaving webbed footprints (and more) on the white carpeting. The villains? Dexter’s buddy Bill Deardorff and his sons, of course!

Alas, Dexter is not the type of person who can just let these things go. Each New Year’s Eve, SBYC celebrates with an elegant evening for members and guests, and a special ritual dedicated to the incoming commodore. As many SBYC members are aware, after the stroke of midnight and the requisite sip of champagne, all in attendance move out to the parking lot. Amid much teasing and cheering, the outgoing commodore removes his car from the most coveted spot in the lot in order to respectfully make way for the incoming commodore’s vehicle. Dexter’s retaliation of the duck incident was about to be witnessed by the membership at large. When VC Deardorff opened the door to his Lincoln Continental, popcorn flowed from every nook and cranny. Earlier in the evening, Dexter had filled the car with the aromatic treat! For as long as Bill owned the car afterwards, each time he turned on the car’s air conditioner, popcorn would blow out of the vents. Revenge can be so sweet – or stinky!

It is obvious that our Club has given Dexter many friendships and cheery memories. He enjoys the “at-home feeling I get when I’m down there. I think that’s what people who come to our opening days say. We’re a friendly club and not stuffy.” He would like to see the membership “continue the ambiance and friendliness of the Club as it’s been. The kind of tradition we have is worth keeping – both racing and cruising. It offers a lot.”