



SANTA BARBARA YACHT CLUB

Staff Commodore Douglas B. Ewins, 2000

Doug Ewins grew up east of LA in the San Gabriel Valley. At the time, Monterey Park was a small, quiet suburb, which worked out well for him, as he still gets together with his childhood buddies twice a year, every year. Doug went to work for IBM in Los Angeles when he was 21 years old. As a technician, he started out fixing items like typewriters and copiers. He was soon promoted to management and transferred to a company plant that made copy machines in Boulder, CO. There, as a technical writer, he wrote training manuals and technical release bulletins.

During his time in Boulder, he interviewed a woman named Sharon, who he “didn’t hire, but I ended up dating her.” They were together for almost 6 months when Doug was offered a promotion to service branch manager – in Santa Barbara. Not one to be toyed with, Sharon’s comment regarding the prospect of going with her new beau to California was simple. “If I’m going to follow you around the country, I’m going to need a commitment.” They saw a particular house in Santa Barbara with an ocean view. “It was one of those November days when you could count the sheep on the island.” They were sold, both on the town and the house. Six weeks later, they were married at their new home overlooking the Pacific.

Taking advantage of their new hometown, the couple started exploring the Channel Islands on a 65’ charter boat called King Neptune, owned by some friends of Sharon’s. Doug “fell in love with the ocean”. During the same time, a fellow employee noticed a sailing calendar on Doug’s office wall. He crewed for Jim Rudy on Celerity and invited Doug to sail in a Wet Wednesday race. “I said ‘yes,’ and the rest is history.”

My next question for this commodore was, logically, his preference regarding boats – power or sail? His naturally witty reply: “A friend of mine once said that when you get on a power boat, you go somewhere to have fun. When you get on a sailboat, you are already there. I love sailing first and foremost. However, for cruising, a power boat is the way to go.” (That saying is reflected in the sequence of boats the couple have owned, beginning with a Cal 25 named Quicksilver, followed by a Catalina 30, their first Necessity, and roughly 10 years later, a Luhrs 32, their final Necessity.)

Doug and Sharon crewed for Stan Darrow, Sr. on Adios and spent more and more time around the yacht club. After a particular Wet Wednesday race, members Kay and Roger Walorinta asked them if they planned to attend a club party that coming Saturday evening. They replied that no, they weren’t members. At that moment, they realized that they needed to join this welcoming and fun group, collectively known as SBYC members. Speaking of fun, once they joined the club, they served as entertainment and race committee chairs. Doug’s progression to the board of directors was a natural one, and when asked, he considered it an honor.

Lest anyone think that being commodore is all work and no play, Doug shared a few tidbits from the year 2000. During a port visit from the USS Abraham Lincoln, 1 of 6 Navy ships to visit that year, our commodore and his wife were among only 26 Santa Barbarans invited to be flown out to spend the night on the ship 200 miles off Ensenada. “You have no idea. These people are kids who look like your son Michael, and they’re flying these multimillion dollar machines. It’s just the most amazing thing I’ve ever seen.” When it was time to leave, they shot him off the deck in a catapult. Just kidding. As part of the VIP experience, he was a passenger in a Civilian Onboard Delivery turbojet (COD), with a qualified pilot, that was actually catapulted off the ship, accelerating

from 0 – 125 mph in 3 seconds. “It’s everything you could imagine it would be. Sharon and I still talk about it to this day.”

Other vivid memories from that year include: having lunch with Lois Capps when she spoke at a Monday luncheon, introducing her as “the only woman who has spent more of my money than my wife”; the dinghy parade in Avalon during the annual cruise, “It was the first year it got out of hand. It went from water guns to buckets!”; also, “standing on the bow of Necessity on Opening Day”; and, finally, “saying thank you to everyone at my Commodore’s Ball”.

“I had an awesome bridge with Vice Commodore Kent Pierce and Rear Commodore Ken Clements. We got along so well with everything. They really made my year. We’ve remained close friends since that time. Those guys and their families just made it so special. My motto was to surround myself with competence.” Doug was a leader in that competence. During his tenure as vice commodore, he created the House and Grounds Committee, comprised of a contractor, landscaper, city planner and architect, all of whom were also club members. He started the Finance Committee in his commodore year in order to determine how best to invest some of the profits realized by raising the new member initiation fees.

Doug has given much of himself to the club, and has received much in return, “besides a treasure trove of wonderful experiences, countless hours of enjoyment on the water, and a family of friends that I can’t even begin to count, it has without a doubt been one of the highlights of my life.” So, it came as no surprise when I asked him for a comment to the membership. “I love you, man—and women, too!” We love you, too, Commodore!