



SANTA BARBARA

YACHT CLUB

Eugene G. Glover, 1999

When Tony and I joined SBYC, there was a member named Gene Glover. He had a beautiful sailboat and an even more beautiful wife, Esther. The Glovers were very involved in the Club; attending functions, hosting pre-party planning evenings at their home, and sailing Lina Marta to the islands with the cruising fleet. They were very easy going and always had smiles for fellow members. When Gene went through the chairs and became commodore in 1999, everyone was glad. It was just another happy moment in our little corner of the world. Five years later, this lovely couple left us and moved to Texas. That's where Gene was when I interviewed him on the telephone for this article, so no Chef Russel lunch for me this month – well, for Gene, either.

Gene grew up in Minneapolis, the City of Lakes, tooling around on cabin cruisers and fishing from friends' boats. But although he can't even remember a time when he wasn't boating, he wasn't introduced to sailing until after college. His first sailboat was on Lake Minnetonka, and it traveled with him to Santa Barbara in 1984 when the company he co-founded, Mentor Corporation, bought Heyer-Schulte from American Hospital Supply and moved Mentor's headquarters to town.

During the next several years, Gene tried to get his family involved in the local sailing scene. But that first sailboat was really not appropriate for Channel Island sailing. As Gene tells it, "It was a 27-foot Hunter cruiser called Narnia, but it had no radar and just enough anchor rode for a casual lunch hook in about 20 feet of water. Worst of all, the Pacific was cold, and my kids didn't like swimming in it. We took several trips around the oil rigs and my family lost interest. So, in 1988, they sold that unsuitable vessel and bought Lina Marta, and to quote Katharine Hepburn in "The Philadelphia Story," I must say, "My, she was yar!" Apparently, Gene's family agreed. They joined the yacht club and immediately became popular in the cruising fleet. "After the first cruise, we had more friends at the yacht club than any other single source in Santa Barbara." That led to more involvement in other areas of the club. Soon after, Gene bought a J24, Mixed Nuts, and raced Wet Wednesdays in the J24 fleet beginning in 1997. "Santa Barbara had a very active J24 fleet. It still does." But how did he fare against the SBYC racers? "With a lot of help from my crew, I became 'a marvelously adequate skipper' and placed consistently above average in the fleet."

It was during this time of cruising and racing that Gene was nominated to join the Board of Directors. "I just loved the Club so much. I was honored to be asked." He served on the board and worked his way through the chairs.

In those years, SBYC was receiving additional income from having licensed our burgee to a firm in Japan, which marketed our logo. Gene, and several commodores before him, "had the income, and we dedicated it to capital improvements like adding the elevator and refurbishing the deck. I remodeled the bathrooms and added new chairs and chargers in the dining room." The best part about being commodore, though, and "what pleased me, was being able to entertain the Navy when the ships came to town. That year we had several, including the Abraham Lincoln; AJ Quinn was captain. We flew down to the Lincoln while it was doing flight qualifications off the coast of Mexico. We spent two days on board and flew back home." What made it even more memorable was that the next time the ship called in Santa Barbara, it coincided with the Commodore's Ball. "We made room and the officers joined us. It was a lot of fun. As I introduced the officers at the dinner, I

remember ribbing the nuclear officer, claiming he had a “glowing” personality. I think they called him Spark.” Too much fun!

But there were some serious moments, too, when Gene pushed up his shirtsleeves and made his own groundbreaking contributions to our club. For example, he built the first SBYC web site, which survived until Bud Toye (2008) took over. “It’s still much the same, and it’s still the home page of my browser, after all these years!” He also purchased the original rooftop cameras and installed the weather system that we still use at the Club.

Gene and Esther moved to Texas in 2004, but they still spend time in Santa Barbara and still appreciate being members of our Club. “Since joining, we’ve enjoyed the camaraderie, the sailing, the diversity of people in the Club. It’s not some stuffy, formal setting. It’s like a big family. It was a foundation in my life, and I love it.”

Before finishing our chat, I asked Gene if there were any long-distance comments for his fellow members. He replied, “Carry on the traditions. Sorry I can’t be there more.” So are we, Gene. We’ll do our best, and we’ll expect you to swing by and check on us from time to time.