



SANTA BARBARA

YACHT CLUB

Guy C. Turner, 1998

Anyone who has run into Staff Commodore Guy Turner through the years and discussed sailing, particularly youth sailing, might think he was born and raised here in Santa Barbara. Actually, he was born in a small (pop. 10,000) town called Sturgis, MI, three miles from the Indiana border. Although he calls Sturgis his hometown, he actually grew up in Lansing, two miles from Michigan State University. If you are at all familiar with Michigan, you might know that there are many lakes in the area. But Guy “never saw a sailboat there; only aluminum fishing boats.”

As Guy had not yet discovered his passion for sailing, he delved into other sports in high school, including football, basketball and track. In fact, he and his teammates would run 120 miles per week each fall in preparation for track competitions. His coach would drive the team roughly 25 miles out into the middle of nowhere after school and pretty much tell them, “Hey, see you back in town!” Despite the great cardio workouts, he experienced in high school, Guy eventually tired of the extreme weather conditions in Michigan, and decided to try a warmer climate. He was accepted at University of Arizona, Tucson, where he continued track. He recalled having had a meet at La Playa Stadium (SBCC). “Our coach drove us into town along Cabrillo,” and he was hooked on SB. After marrying college sweetheart, Cathy, Guy chose UCSB for graduate school in 1966, and the two have been here ever since. As might be expected, they began sailing shortly after moving here.

Although Guy had planned to become a teacher in order to have 3 months off per year, fate chose for him a different path. He took a job with Raytheon, which “kinda killed my plan.” Roughly 6 months later, in 1969, the couple bought their first boat, a Columbia 26 called Cloudburst, from then-Club-member Harry Chanson. Just for cruising, they had no intention of racing. They learned how to sail on Cloudburst and “were content just to sail it around.” After learning the basics, however, they discovered how to make the boat go faster, and that was when SBYC racing got into their blood. They joined the Club in 1972, started racing in Salty Saturdays, participated in the very first SB-King Harbor race in 1973, and chaired the race in 1974.

But let me back up for a moment. When I asked Guy what prompted him to join SBYC, he grinned as he told me that at the time, two friends of his, Norm Thompson and Bruce Conroy, “talked me into joining the Club” for a \$100 bar credit for bringing in a new member. But that’s another story in itself!

At this point, I thought it a good idea to fast forward to his reasons for becoming commodore. “Just to promote youth activities a little bit more.” Involved with junior sailors since 1992, it gave Guy a “chance to help out and add to the Club. I wanted to bring teenagers and their parents in.” Although the SBYSF was started in 1968, it only had a summer program. Succeeding yacht club members Carl Robinette, Bob Kieding and Fred Rice as president of the organization, Guy started the year-round program. “Our first sailing team was San Marcos [High School], then Bishop, Carp, SB, and DP. I wanted to include Ventura, but it never got that far.” He went on to support his belief that, “sailing is one of the few sports in which boys can compete against girls on an equal basis. They sail against each other and with each other. There are very few sports where a high schooler can compete for a national championship. A freshman or sophomore can actually win a national championship in high school sailing.”

When conducting an interview, it sometimes takes a while for the interviewee to become comfortable enough to really open up and realize that the interviewer just wants to relate his story and won't try to twist his words. Roughly an hour into our interview, Guy opened up about the youth sailing program. So here's the dirt: "My motivation was to develop our [SB] kids so they could beat Newport Harbor. I got so tired of going down to some of these events and getting the media barrage about these kids down south." Mission accomplished, Guy! Our junior sailors have earned much respect not only along our coastline, but nationally and globally.

I asked Guy if he had a particular memory from his commodore year that he'd like to share. He responded with 3 or 4. Unfortunately, due to space constraints, only one is mentioned here. "We held our first Junior Olympics in Santa Barbara in 1998. It was first held in California in 1997. It was so nice to bring those people up from San Diego and Newport Beach and have them enjoy the weather and the sailing here."

Guy still enjoys visiting our Club regularly and enjoys seeing new faces when he does. He gets particular satisfaction when meeting those new members who are interested in the ocean and boating.

In return for all he has given SBYC, and our youth sailing program, in particular, Guy has gained, "a lot of stability, a lot of friends. Our kids, my wife and I feel very comfortable here. That's the nice thing, is that SBYC caters to older people who want to come down for dinner, active young people, middle income, wealthy... That's really cool. I think a lot of other clubs aren't like that. We're all here together." And our local youth sailors have earned great media coverage!