



SANTA BARBARA

YACHT CLUB

Stanley M. Darrow, Jr., 1995

Stan Darrow, a Santa Barbara native, grew up in a charming house off the Turnpike exit of the 101 Freeway. His mom, Nelda, still lives there. Stan was always an active child. While attending Cathedral Oaks Elementary School (now the Wake Center), he spent time at the harbor, learning to sail. While in La Colina Junior High, it's been said that his interests expanded to more risky behavior that kept Nelda and Stan Senior (his dad) on their toes. Now, some of you who grew up here in town might have heard the legend of "La Colina Stan." Rumor has it that while Stan was a student there, some strange things happened. It seems that some lockers and bathroom stalls somehow mysteriously exploded, and a classmate somehow came into possession of Mexican fireworks that coincidentally appeared after Stan competed in the Ensenada race. I don't think anything was ever proved beyond a reasonable doubt, and Stan insists he was framed. I believe him, too. Really, could such an irresponsible person go on to be one of the first instructors for the Santa Barbara Youth Foundation?

He began boating as a tyke. "My dad was a sailor. My sister and I grew up around Gary 18s and we both crewed for my father." Stan crewed with his father on many boats, in one design and ocean races. He sailed his "first TransPac at age 16 on John Nobel's Columbia 50 *Simoon*. It was a windy year."

Stan headed down to San Diego State College, where he majored in insurance. It was "far enough away from home for my independence." While down there, he worked as a waiter and taught sailing out of Harbor Island. After college, he accepted a position with Home Life of NY in his college town.

When he returned to Santa Barbara, he bought and raced Nacra 5.2s, but "as hard as I tried, I just couldn't beat Larry Harteck!" So, I guess it takes more than having a father who was a fabulous racer and commodore, a big sister who was a national champion crew, and a mom who encouraged them all, to beat a great catamaran sailor. Well, don't feel too bad for Stan. He went on to meet a tall, blonde beauty on a blind date one New Year's Eve. Shortly thereafter, he was hired to captain a C&C 61' boat called *Triumph*. "I thought being paid for doing what one enjoyed was a good opportunity." He and his crew outfitted the boat, practiced in local races, and took *Triumph* to Victoria, BC to prepare for the Victoria to Maui race. "I think Jeff Otis was with us on that race." That's one thing about Stan; he likes to keep it in the family. So, there was the Santa Barbara crew, racing down on *Triumph*, when suddenly their communications system experienced a dead short. The crew was unable to communicate. No one knew who they were, but they were "first to finish. The 'Mystery Boat!' As you can imagine, it was very fun to surf down 20-foot waves at 20 knots and no instruments at night with just a flashlight and compass." Wow. That sounds like such fun! In fact, I think I recently overheard Staff Commodore Bob Magee relating a similar story in which he used a sexton and penlight in a similar situation, but it was raining. He finished first, too! Okay, so that was a joke. But the story about Stan was true.

The adventure continued as they raced the Kenwood Cup in Hawaii, then headed north to compete in the Big Boat Series in San Francisco. After returning to San Diego for roughly a year to refit and campaign, that girl he had met on the blind date began to play a larger role in Stan's life. "She took a bold step, quit her job and joined the [boat] delivery crew as cook." Now that the crew would actually have something more healthful to eat than chips and Twinkies, they headed out to race in Mexico, travel through the Panama Canal and limp into Antigua with a blown engine. But that was okay; the crew was well-fed! They'd follow Kathy anywhere at this point! (Oh, Stan, too!) After the Antigua race week, they headed via Bermuda and the Azores to the Isle of Wight in the English Channel, and finally anchored in Sardinia. By now, Stan and Kathy were ready to be landlubbers for a bit. They toured Europe for a couple of months, flew back to San Diego, "decided to get married and moved back to Santa Barbara." One of Stan's fondest memories of his time on *Triumph* was the joy of being captain

when his dad was around. “Being able to turn it around from him introducing me to the joys of yachting to being able to bring him on some major races that he would never have been able to do. It was fun to see him back there with a smile on his face, smoking his pipe.”

Stan and Kathy joined SBYC, “I would say it was 1982-83. I couldn’t ride on my daddy’s coattails anymore.” Besides, “it was like home, growing up here. It was just a natural thing to do, with my father a member [and Commodore, 1973] and my love of racing. I think it’s always important to give back to something you’ve gotten a lot out of. I thought that if my father was still with us, he would be proud to see his son going through the Chairs. I also felt that the club could benefit from the opinions of a younger person.”

Of his contributions to SBYC, several stand out for Stan. “With the help of my RC chairman, I started the Hot Rum Series, brought back the short-handed/single-handed race, started the kids’ menu (thanks to daughter, Chelsey) and got bylaws changed to make membership more attractive and affordable to younger members. I also pushed the elevator project through (to the anger of many) and brought up the potential problems of life membership. This eventually led to changes years later.”

During our conversation, though, it became clear that one contribution stands out above and beyond the rest. “The most important was getting the elevator project going forward. Seeing Staff Commodore Bill Wilson (1965), who I respected greatly and sailed with, having to be carried upstairs by friends and staff; I just felt it was such an inequity for someone who had given so much to the club unable to get up the stairs with dignity. It hurt me emotionally to see members being carried up into the club.”

It is apparent that SBYC has given this staff commodore, “a second home, good friends and a sense of pride knowing that I had an impact in some areas.” So, how can we all experience this sense of pride in SBYC that Stan has? “This is our club; it is only as good as what each member puts in.” So far, I’d say it’s been good for most of us!