

# P<sup>ORTHOLE</sup>

Presidio Yacht Club / Travis Marina



First Quarter 2017

Cover: The "Sea of Reeds" [Pete Petersen]. The results of the series of storms that rolled through the Bay Area is this huge collection of reeds that were trapped in Horseshoe Cove. Driving a boat through them is like swimming through molasses!

## **Club News**

A lot of stuff going on!

Jazz by the Bay starts June 2nd and this year PYC has table #3. A link will be sent out in May for members to sign up as "Table Captain". Responsibilities include arriving around 5:30 to secure blanket space in front of our table for extra seating, bringing snacks to share, and decorating the table which comes with 6 chairs.

New for 2017, the PYC now has a Bocce team! Play will start March 16 or 17 (we will have our time slot after the lottery on March 9). We need a team of 8 players signed up, 4 must be there each week in order to play. Everyone is welcome to come watch and have a cocktail during play.

The PYC is now has Club boats. Our new Club boats should be ready to rent in mid-April! The PYC will have 2 sailboats available for members to rent at Travis Marina. Roadrunner, our Ranger 23 donated by Steve Hocking, is already in her slip and we will have a Ranger 32, donated by Alan Johnson, with inboard diesel and wheel helm soon. Member Nancy Bockelman has volunteered to act as program coordinator for the project.

Both boats will be available at a low daily rental rate to current PYC members who have shown proficiency and been checked out on them. We will also have a few "learn to sail" clinics and refresher clinics this Spring. Steve Hocking will be racing Roadrunner in our Sunday series and we will be looking for a captain and crew to race the 32'.

- Lisa Theodoratus

## **PICYA News**

News from the Pacific Inter-Club Yacht Association:

April 6-9, 2017 is the Pacific Sail & Power Boat Show. This year the PICYA will be hosting a hospitality suite at the show. Please stop by and see them when you visit the show. You can also use this space as a meeting place. If you would like to help them staff the suite or any other questions please contact PICYA Director Robert Willis.

Opening Day on the Bay is on April 23, 2017. For 100 years, according to the Yachting Registry, PICYA has opened the yachting season with a parade of boats large and small. Join the Officers and Directors of PICYA for the 100th Annual Opening Day Cruise on the Hornblower. She provides spectacular views of the parade and beautiful San Francisco Bay. During our cruise we will enjoy a fabulous served sit-down lunch with a no host bar and a front row view of the parade. You do not have to be a yacht club member to attend.

Also, all are welcome to attend the PICYA's monthly dinner meetings which are held at a different

### CALENDAR

March		August	
11	TRAVIS MARINA WORKDAY. 9 AM - 1 PM. ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER. 6 PM.	12	TRAVIS MARINA WORKDAY. 9 AM - 1 PM. CLUB DINNER. 6 PM.
19	BAXTER-JUDSON FIRST RACE. 11 AM.	20	BAXTER-JUDSON SIXTH RACE. 11 AM
April		September	
8	TRAVIS MARINA WORKDAY. 9 AM - 1 PM. CLUB DINNER. 6 PM.	9	TRAVIS MARINA WORKDAY. 9 AM - 1 PM. CLUB DINNER. 6 PM.
9	BAXTER-JUDSON SECOND RACE. 11 AM.	17	BAXTER-JUDSON SEVENTH RACE. 11 AM.
23	OPENING DAY ON THE BAY.		
May		October	
13	TRAVIS MARINA WORKDAY. 9 AM - 1 PM. CLUB DINNER. 6 PM.	14	TRAVIS MARINA WORKDAY. 9 AM - 1 PM. CLUB DINNER. 6 PM.
21	BAXTER-JUDSON THIRD RACE. 11 AM.	15	WOMAN SKIPPERS' RACE. 11 AM.
June		November	
10	TRAVIS MARINA WORKDAY. 9 AM - 1 PM. CHICKEN PICCATA CLUB DINNER. 6 PM.	12	TRAVIS MARINA WORKDAY. 9 AM - 1 PM. AWARDS AND CHANGE OF WATCH. 6 PM. CLUB DINNER. 7 PM.
18	BAXTER-JUDSON FOUR RACE. 11 AM.		
23-25	SF GIANTS GAME / SBYC CRUISE-OUT.	December	
July		10	WORKDAY. 9 AM - 1 PM. TRAVIS MARINA WORKDAY. 9 AM - 1 PM. CHRISTMAS CLUB DINNER. 6 PM.
4	FOURTH OF JULY BBQ. 11 AM	31	NEW YEAR'S EVE.
8	TRAVIS MARINA WORKDAY. 9 AM - 1 PM. CLUB DINNER. 6 PM.		
16	BAXTER-JUDSON FIFTH RACE. 11 AM.		This is what we have planned, but the calendar is always subject to change. Visit the web site for the most current calendar.

yacht club each month. A great way to visit some clubs!

Visit the PICYA web site at "[www.picya.org](http://www.picya.org)" for more information!

-Manny Mier

### Eight Bells

It is with great regret we announce the passing of Donald Girkout. He died at the age of 86. He was born in Panama and spent his first ten years there before his family moved to Boston. Then he, his mother, and his sister took a 17 day voyage on a troop ship to join his dad stationed in Germany. After graduating high school in Frankfurt and traveling Europe, he joined the United States Air Force. He spent twenty years in the Air Force - most of it overseas. After retiring from the military he went to work in San Francisco with a brief three year stint in Saudi Arabia. Never too old to learn new tricks, he graduated from the University of San Francisco Cum Laude 33 years after high school. He lived in Novato for fifty years and one of his many hobbies was sailing. He was the PYC Commodore in 1983. He is survived by his five children.

- Manny Mier

## **Crusin' the Bay**

In December, my crew and I continued on our quest to explore lunch spots in the Bay. This time we sailed down to Ballena Bay on the south side of Alameda. It is quite a ways from our marina, but we had the current going with us both ways this day which helped make it a quicker journey than it might have been. Getting into Ballena Bay involved navigating a narrow channel, but it was well marked. The guest dock is the fuel dock which is quite long so there was plenty of room. Going up the ramp takes you right into the Pier 29 Restaurant, which looks good. But, on this trip we walked a little bit down the road and ate at Abigail's Moroccan Cuisine. That was a real treat. I have never been to Morocco, but the food seemed pretty authentic as did the people who were running the place. The food was very good and the price was very reasonable. I recommend it. Getting back we found ourselves tacking through the anchorages. You don't often think about how many oil tankers are typically parked down there south of the Bay Bridge.

-Jason Funk

## **Racing**

I just finished the PacCup and was looking forward to a new adventure. Last year we heard about the Conch Republic Regatta from Key West to Cuba and back. We could not rent a boat before due to the then political atmosphere, but just last summer all restrictions on travel to Cuba were lessened and now it became a reality. We could rent a boat with insurance.

We had a large crew and there was great enthusiasm to participate in the Conch Regatta. Lisa Theodoratus is one of the regular crew members. She is the owner of The Cruise Experience and as such volunteered to do all the logistics to make this race happen for all of us. In the end we had too many people and decided on also renting a cat by the name of "Quince Amor". The cat was comfortable enough for all the spouses and partners who also wanted to come along. "Second Wind", a 54 Jeanneau, had a crew of 8, five women and three men, and "Quince Amore" had a total contingent of 11. Both boats were rented from Harmony Yachts in Key West.

When you arrive in Miami you can feel that the air is different and the vibe is to have a fun time. When you arrive everything is different - architecture, the smells, the vegetation, and the people. After a few days in Key West we picked up our boat and after doing a test sail, were ready to go. The Key West to Varadero race started at 5:00 pm and was to be an overnight trip. There were about twenty-five boats in the race divided into four classes: spinnaker, non-spinnaker, schooner, and multi-hull. We were non-spinnaker and at start time the winds were lightish, ten knots and less from the northwest. Our course was to the southeast - not a good sailing combination. We were just trying to keep some air in the sails and our speed up. As night was coming on we were doing tactical battles with fellow competitors but when darkness set in this became not a good idea! We had a wonderful night with a warm light breeze, bright stars, and a gentle stern wake full of luminescence. I have rarely experienced such idyllic night sailing. We were really close and were sailing the last nine miles to Varadero nearing the twenty-two hour time limit, so we used all the charms we knew to bring on the wind: whistling, acting like we were going to quit, and the always sure to work charm of opening a bottle of wine while Marika worked the gypsy chants. You know what? It worked and at the finish line we were sailing at nine knots using the emergency tiller because the cables had come off the quadrant of the helm. If you are dyslexic, steering with a steel pipe tiller facing backwards makes for an unsteady track. We finished with a flourish, but however were nine minutes late. But we were the only non-spinaker boat

to sail the whole course.

Varadero has a new modern marina and hotel complex with nice docks, lots of room and the Cuban equivalent of bathroom facilities. There is a spectacular beach - miles long white sand. There was food and a band and burgees were exchanged. The next day was spent on the beach, resting up for the overnight race to Havana.

On the start of the night sail from Varadero to Havana, our crew - me (captain), Don, Sherrie, Shannon, Mike, Michelle, Tasha, and Marika - sat back on the ultra comfortable seats of "Second Wind". The sea was flat, the sun was still up, and a good warm breeze filled our sails giving us a great ride towards Marina Hemingway. Tasha made another great dinner for us and we all settled in for our three hour watches, alternately napping or watching the sparkling stars. I had fixed the steering mechanism and the generator. We arrived at Hemingway the following morning, again having sailed the entire day.

The Hemingway Yacht Club consist of 4 canal-like long fingers leading to the clubhouse and a few stores. There we saw the fabled old cars slowly moving up and down the road between the canals, looking for fares. The choices ran from Oldsmobiles, Desotos, Chevies, Bel-Aires, Chryslers, et cetera and, of course, we eagerly rode in them to the city of Havana, not too far away. It took a little to get used to the smog output of those vehicles as, of course, they don't have catalytic converters and probably run on leaded gas. The entrance to Havana's main harbor is flanked by two forts. One is called Il Morro, a very impressive edifice. From that viewpoint you look over the Malecon with its many stately, albeit mostly crumbling old buildings. Much rehab of those buildings in under way. Food was great and the music everywhere was even better. At the Hotel Nacionale, perched on a hilltop overlooking the harbor and sea, we heard and enjoyed the Buena Vista Social Club ensemble. Omara, in her nineties, still sang and took a few dance steps. Our own Tasha, a dancer, did a hot salsa with one of the professional dancers there. It was a fun night.

All in all, a great sailing vacation and we would highly recommend all you adventurous sailors to go and do the next Conch Republic Regatta.

- Steve Hocking

## History

Prior histories detailed how Bldg. 679 (the Travis Marina and the PYC) and Fort Baker Hospital (now the Bay Area Discovery Museum) came to service the Coast Artillery defending the Golden Gate. Next to be examined is the Cold War history of Fort Baker and environs.

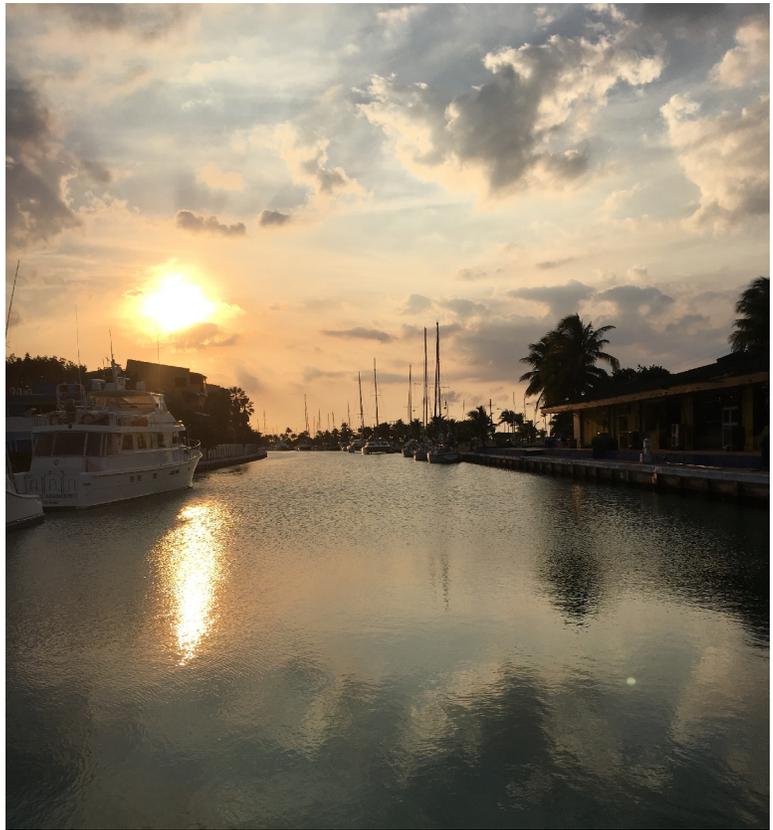
After the end of World War II, the Coast Artillery languished - made completely obsolete by the aircraft



*Our fearless Commodore in Cuba. [Marika Edler]*

carrier and the B-29. It's headquarters and school were at Fort Scott on the Presidio - not bad duty. The reorganization of the armed forces, resulting in the Defense Department in 1947, was the death knell of the Coast Artillery. In 1948, its gun emplacements were dismantled and the big guns cut up for salvage.

Concurrently, the Soviet Union blockaded Berlin, took over Czechoslovakia, and sealed the Iron Curtain. The U.S. reaction was the establishment of North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the strategy of "Containment." The fall of the Kuomintang government of China the following year (1949) presaged the outbreak of the Korean "police action" in June of 1950. Suddenly the Cold War threatened to become hot and the defense of American cities against air attack became politically - if not militarily - necessary.



*Sunset over the Hemingway Yacht Club. [Markia Edler]*

The response of the Defense Department was to establish the Army's Air Defense Artillery Branch, identified by placing a rocket on top of the crossed cannons of the field artillery. The Coast Artillery was resurrected!

The defense of coastal cities was based upon emplacements of air-defense rockets (Nike) on the seaward approaches to the cities. Thus, for example, there came a Nike battery to Fort Cronkhite, west of Fort Baker, as well as other locations around the Bay Area.

However, the Defense Department, in its infinite wisdom, gave the job of detecting incoming enemy aircraft to the Air Force, which would then hand off the interception of the aircraft to the Army, assuming the Air Force had not destroyed the incoming enemy planes with shore-based fighter aircraft.

Fortunately for San Francisco, this system never got put to test - only practice. The system did produce some interesting outcomes. A former commodore of the PYC, Dan Mahoney, served as a liaison officer between the Army and the Air Force, stationed at Air Force Station Mount Tamalpais, location of the Air Force's early warning radar.

With the draw-down of the armed forces following the Korean conflict, most of the Air Defense Artillery mission was given over to the National Guard. ("We guard America while you sleep!") In the case of Fort Cronkhite, the battery was kept as part of the regular army and its garrison was at Fort Baker. That battery, updated with newer rockets, remained active until 1969, when it too was dis-established. The "hardened" Nike sites - presumably against nuclear events - still survive around coastal cities. Removing them would be prohibitively expensive just as removing the concrete gun

emplacements of the Coast Artillery would be.

- James W. Earhart

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