



Sierra Point Yacht Club



Spyglass Newsletter

**Weekly
Summer
Sailing
Races**

**Club
Social
Events**

**Cruise outs
& Cruise ins**

**Monthly
Dinners**

**Club Managed
by Volunteers**



Website: www.sierrapointyc.org

April 2020 Edition

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Club Officers and Board of Directors

Officers

Commodore	Michael Bell
Vice Commodore	Dylan Garrett
Treasurer	lee Panza
Secretary	Jim Lawrie
Rear Commodore	Melissa Vivas
Port Captain	Ed Wilkinson
Fleet Captain	Craig Brackett (Anissa Brackett)

Directors

Nigel Baker	Phil Betney
Kathy McCormac	Terry O'Connell
Jack Ritter	Martin Tali

1. Editor's Update

Never in my whole life have I experienced the degree of global shutdown due to a particularly nasty virus - the COVID19 virus. I have lived through the SARS virus, being stationed in Singapore at the time and so was working from home for several weeks, but not in a total lockdown situation - this one is much, much more serious and deadly. Several countries, including ours, were slow to respond and prepare and the spread infections resulting in the state that we are in now, and it will be several months and many more lives taken before we see the end of it.

Of course our Club operations have been affected and it was decided to take the appropriate actions to adhere to Federal and State guidelines and 'orders'. More on this in Club general updates.

We have several articles in this month's edition which I hope will make good reading for our members whilst we are in lockdown. Captain Jack has submitted 'History of Aids to Sailing part 2' of a series of articles to be published in the next few editions of Spyglass. Dylan has submitted an interesting cruising article with a special member of his crew. And, our Commodore Michael the pipeman has submitted an article on his adventures in southern waters with Monkey.

Pay attention to Club general updates as there is important info relating to the Virus 'shelter in place' conditions that we are all experiencing right now.

There is a COVID19 update from Dylan in the **Beer Can Racing** section this month. I am sure it is going to be a fun season to finally get out there on the water after, hopefully, this terrible Virus pandemic subsides.

Our Cruise Out schedule for 2020 is still firming up under the management of Craig and Anissa, although we have to cancel near term cruise outs due to sailing club lockdowns in the Bay Area. Nonetheless exciting cruise outs are planned for later this year, so check out the schedule regularly and sign up early to ensure a visitor berth at our host Marina/clubs.

I constantly require articles from our members to make our Spyglass a true members input newsletter, any story will do - land or sea - ***so come on members - get those articles to me.***

Onward and upward
Spyglass editor.
nigelbaker10@yahoo.com

2. Commodore's Commentary for March

I had hoped to have so much exciting news to share in this news letter; obviously times are different for now due to COVID19. All events have been suspended until further notice and we are not permitting guests of members for the time being. I look forward to letting you know when we are back in full swing. I've been reflecting on how those of us with boats are in a relatively fortunate position. We have a plethora of beautiful locations to isolate. Visiting clipper cove recently, I was amazed at how many vessels were on the hook. If anyone has an opportunity to make lemonade out of this situation, we're pretty high on the list.

I wish you all as much peace of mind and good health as possible during these trying times. Be well.

Michael Bell
SPYC Commodore

3. Club general Updates

COVID19 Directives

As previously mentioned, All Club general activities are suspended until further notice, this includes our monthly dinners and Sunday breakfasts. This was both a board decision as well as adhering to the Federal and State Shelter in Place, and work from home directives that will remain in place at this time until AT LEAST early May. We will monitor and review the situation and of course once all is safe and restrictions are lifted, we will resume our club activities and events.

The Club does remain open for individual members, but PLEASE adhere to distance rules and where possible make sure surfaces are cleansed with the appropriate 'virus killer' sprays or wipes.

Spyglass Editor

SPYC Bar Tabs

This is a ***second reminder to all SPYC members*** that bar tabs are to be settled on a weekly basis. At a recent board meeting we reaffirmed this policy and resolved to enforce it. Running tabs is a convenience for members to reduce the number of credit card transactions. If possible, it is best to pay as you go, but if you must run a tab, put down your first and last name and the opening date. Then, make sure to pay up within the week. Failure to follow this policy will result in your name going on the "Club Misuse" log and possible suspension of club privileges.

Melissa Vivas
Bar Manager

4. From the Bilges

No smut submitted for this month.

5. Events Calendar

Due to COVID19 restrictions, our monthly dinners and our Sunday breakfasts are postponed until further notice.

6. Cruise-Outs/Ins Update

Craig and Anissa are working on our 2020 year cruise out schedule which is now based on the current COVID19 restrictions and club closedowns - of course the planned future cruise-out destinations are fluid and will be dependent on the outcome of our current COVID19 lockdowns and how soon we can confidentially resume a definite cruise-out program.

Don't forget to check out the club calendar for future cruise outs that become definite: Sign up before they fill up.

Log in to sign up for individual cruise outs at: <http://www.sierrapointyc.org>

Then open the cruising link in the left hand menu

Craig (and Anissa)
Fleet Captains Extroadinaire

2020 Cruise Out Schedule -based on COVID19 status			
Jan No Cruise Outs Planned	Feb No Cruise Outs Planned	Mar 13-15 Aeolian YC Cancelled	Apr 3-5 Oakland YC Cancelled
May 22-25 Vallejo YC Sign Up	Jun TBD	Jul 3-5 St. Francis Sign Up	Aug TBD
Sep 4-7 Encinal YC Sign Up Sep 25-27 Marin YC Sign Up	Oct TBD	Nov No Cruise Outs Planned	Dec No Cruise Outs Planned

7. Beer Can Racing Report

Hello SPYC Racers!

Racing Update

Due to the Covid-19 virus the USCG has cancelled all race permits until the shelter in place order is lifted. I will let you know of anymore updates as they come. Look on the SPYC race page for updates.

Dylan Garrett
805-451-7591
DylanG84@me.com

8. Tech Tips. Items for Sale

No new tech tips or items for sale this month

9. Monthly Articles

9.1 HISTORY OF AIDS TO SAILING 2

9.1.1 Porthole

A porthole as we know it is just a round window in the hull and a closure for the prevention of water entry. But it took thousands of years for it's development. Sailors were always fearful of cutting holes in the hull for fear of leakage and the wood rot associated with the hole. The need to win wars changed that attitude. Ships had been fitted with guns since the 14th Century, but were generally small caliber guns. Fighting strategy was to take the attacking ship alongside the enemy and send boarding parties over for hand to hand combat.

Weaponry for war evolved into general use of larger and larger land canon. Eventually, canon were brought aboard warships and if mounted on deck presented great weight, tending to overturn the ship when sailing. To alter this, the canon were lowered to second or third decks below the top deck, resulting in a lowered center of gravity. This necessitated cutting a hole or port to extend the canon out the hull for firing. The origin of 'port' originated from the French word 'porte', or door.

Various countries claim to be first with gun ports, i.e. the French warship Henry Grace a' Dieu in 1515 or the Portuguese in 1490. Likely several countries developed about the same time. Several major naval warships sunk when a sudden heel of the ship allowed water entry through ports not closed quick enough. Ugh!

9.1.2 Hammock

Hammocks came into being in Europe about 500 years ago, with sailors prior to that sleeping on deck or in wood bunks. Heaving ships sometimes produced broken bones in those circumstances. For many of us catching an off watch snooze , in rough seas we've thanked the "lee cloths" on our bunk for catching our bods on the way.

Central American natives probably produced hammocks some 1000 years ago, constructed of rope made of bark from the 'hamak' tree. Hung from trees, these were well ventilated in the tropical settings and raised the body off the ground and away from insects, snakes and other marauders. The usage spread to the Caribbean. When Columbus returned to Europe from the New World, he did not bring back gold and spices (Queen's hopes) but brought back pineapples, turkeys, tobacco and hammocks. Hammocks acceptance and use quickly spread and by late 1500s European colonisers were using 'hamaca'.

Shipboard hammocks were very practical, requiring little space to store and made an accommodation in any part of the ship. In 1597, the Royal Navy adopted the use of canvas hammocks, slung 14" apart (they all swayed the same way). They were used until the 1950s. In WWII the US Navy still used them for crew complement above planned capacity on the ship. I served on a PC with a normal crew of 60 seaman and two of those swabbies were hung out, when off watch, in a portion of the Galley.

Captain Jack

9.2 Cruising with a Cat

It was the first weekend in a while with decent weather and since we had been “sheltering in place” all week in the city, we decided to shelter on the boat and do some sailing. We packed up all our bags for the weekend, threw the litter box in the bed of the truck, and headed to the marina with our cat (Cleopatra) riding fearlessly in the front. Cleo was ready to get back to the bay since she had been in an apartment for a week. She leaped out of the truck and ran down the dock all the way to our boat.



Cleo has a love/hate relationship with sailing. She loves venturing to new places and exploring different docks, which we let her do pretty freely. Although, she has little interest in the boat when its moving and definitely does not like when the engine is on and roaring. Over time she has become accustom to sailing by finding a nook to wedge her body in and ride it out. Music seems to help a lot and eventually she will come out from her hiding spot to see where we’ve docked. That I think is probably the best I can ask for from a cat.



We cruised out of the marina on fumes and had to make it all the way to Fishermans wharf to fill up since none of the other fuel docks were open due to Covid-19. With the needle in the red and no wind, we left our luck up to the sea gods to determine where we were going to stay for the night, but one thing we did know was that we wanted to get away. Luckily my M25 engine chugged along

burning hardly any diesel and we made it to the fuel dock. I even managed to put 27 gallons in my 25 gallon tank. Wow, was I low on fuel!!!

After leaving the fuel station, we made our way to Berkeley hoping we could get a spot at the Berkeley Yacht Club guest dock. Berkeley has really nice reciprocal services! Their guest dock can be used for two nights free of charge and \$10 a day after that if you call ahead and let them know you're coming. Of course, the yacht club was closed during our stay due to the virus but they were very welcoming and allowed us to stay at the guest dock. I highly recommend this destination to anyone for a cruise.



As soon as we tied up at Berkeley, Cleo launched off the boat, yearning to explore her new surroundings. She decided the racks of personal watercraft to be her own playground while we cooked on the boat and fired up the diesel heater. Most days, she is good about staying around the boat wherever we go but I became a little nervous at this marina because there are no gates to the guest docks. She could explore and wander wherever she wanted. Knowing this, we put her collar on with a bell so we could hear her jingle around and she managed to stay close to the boat. Every so often she would jump back on the stern to check up on us and when the time came we all curled up in bed together snuggling up for the night.

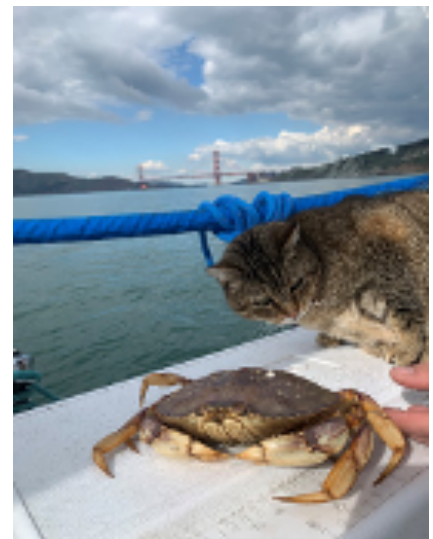
The following day we decided to do a mixture of crabbing and fishing. Vince was nice enough to drop off one of his crab pots and I picked up some anchovies from a nearby bait shop. The sun was out and we were stoked to sail through the Golden Gates and catch our dinner.

As we finished up packing and were ready to go, we realized we were missing one thing. Cleo!

We called out her name which she usually answers to with a mild meow followed by a jingle, but this time there was nothing. No meow and no cat in sight. We shook her treat bag (which usually does the trick) and walked around the kayaks on the dock. In our search for her, nearby people who had boats at the marina stopped to help and were kind enough to let us know they would keep an eye out for her. I started to get concerned she might have wandered far, even though that was not like her. Right as we were about to give up, I opened a cockpit locker and found her sleeping inside. Embarrassed by the fact that I couldn't find my cat on my own boat, we quickly left the dock and headed for the Golden Gates.



It was a gorgeous day on the bay - no wind and mostly sunny. We made our way to Baker Beach and dropped our crab trap. While letting it soak, we fished for halibut but lost a lure and entangled a surfer on an electric hydrofoil board in the process. As luck would have it, we managed to pull up our pot and find two keepers. We dropped the pot down again in our hotspot, anchored, and cut the engine to watch other boats and surfers cruise around from a safe social distance. Cleo came out of her shelter to see what all the fuss was about and we showed her our proud catch of the day, but she was very unimpressed by the crab.



After anchoring for a while and pulling up some more crab too small to keep we decided to head back. The trip back was beautiful with the sun at our back and calm water we made our way to Berkeley to cook up the catch.

The next day we were determined to catch halibut- we planned a whole day of fishing and then heading back home so I could go to work the next day. Again, we packed up, ready to go and again Cleo was nowhere to be found. This time we checked all the lockers in the boat but to no avail. I decided to look under



the kayaks and found her under one. Right as I bent down to pick her up, she ran as fast as she could up the dock ramp and under the Berkeley yacht club building. She was not ready to get back on the boat. Knowing that we could not get her out from under the building with all the other cats hiding out watching birds nearby, we knew she would eventually come back on her own for dinner, so we decided to go out and do our own hunting for prey.

After catching nothing and getting soaked in the rain, sailed back to the marina expecting to see a hungry cat. Upon docking and checking in with our new marina friends – I realized I would have to stay another night at the guest dock and call in to work because of Cleo. We made the best of the situation, and decided to watch the sun set behind the Golden Gate bridge. As we sat watching the sun go down, Cleo quietly came out from under the yacht club and jumped on my lap to join us and finally we were all together again. We walked back to the boat at Cleo's pace because now we obviously were on her time.

It was nice to stay another night but I also knew that I would have to fight wind, rain, and waves the next morning to get back.

The next morning I got up early making sure to keep Cleo inside this time. I fired up the engine and motored out. Fighting the elements we made it to Clipper Cove so Emily could take a conference call. Before heading back, we said hello to our fellow SPYC friend Tall Terry who was anchored out in the cove leisurely drinking his coffee with his crew. The three of us finally made it back to



Brisbane. A day late but I realized that with sailing and cats the plans always change.

Dylan Garrett assisted by Emily and Ship's cat Cleo

9.3 When it Rains it Pours- and Other Mishaps Within 24 Hours

Monkey [Diana] and I just made a 3.5 day passage from Chiapas, Mexico, through Guatemala, and are now in Bahia Del Sol, halfway along El Salvador's coast. Our departure from Chiapas began a little rushed. We planned on



staying in the marina most of the day to rest, then leave that night. Plans changed when our neighbor told us they were shutting down the channel for dredging and that it will be closed for the next 48 hours. "When are they closing it!?", we asked. "Should be any minute now", was the vague response. CRAP! I yell down the hatch to Monkey that we've got to go...NOW! She had planned on having several hours to prepare our meals for the trip, as well as a laundry list of other things; I was bracing myself for the ensuing protests. She paused for a second, said, "OK" and flew into 'Batten Down the Hatches' mode. I was impressed.

We make the dog-leg into the channel and see the huge dredger already blocking most of the exit. A large vessel which left 10 minutes before us was already on the other side, so there MUST still be a way through. We eventually find a small channel still open and breathe a sigh of relief as we wind our way to the open seas and freedom.

The next day and a half was periodically intense (mainly at night), but nothing unusual: the unlit flag marking a fishing net you narrowly miss, the tree trunk you narrowly miss, the unlit panga you narrowly miss (till they open their cell phone / navigation light and wave it toward you). We had daily/nightly lightning storms, I'm still a little unnerved by these things. You see them building over land during the day like giants, craning their necks to see exactly where your boat is. Around

4 pm, they begin their leisurely march to open water, kettle-drum thunder setting their pace; an army of violent vapor coming out to say hello. You start making note of the individual cells while the sunlight is still there: which ones are bigger, how fast is each moving... basically making a mental map of when to “zig”, and where to “zag”. Then the battle begins; you're running a maze of cannon fire, trying to pick the lesser of two evils when boat speed and wind direction permit. The battle runs all night and only ends with the next rising sun.

Our first night was good, thanks to the assistance of our buddy boat's radar. He was calling out cell size and speed on the radio; helping us determine the best course. Their boat, being larger and faster than us left me radar-less on night two, but I was beginning to get a feel for the cell's behavior. The lightning



also gives you enough brief light for judging cloud density, thereby showing you where NOT to go. We made it through night 2 with luck and coffee. Night 3 was the beginning of one of the longest 24 hours in my life and, just like the Fox series, the twists and turns were many and entertaining. The biggest difference is that it's less exhausting watching Keifer Sutherland go through all this crap. We crossed the Guatemalan border around 1300 and, as the sun was setting, we had just passed a treacherous rock strewn point of El Salvador. Conflicting currents brought a lot of debris here and I was happy we passed during daylight as there were many large objects (entire palm trees for example) in the water. Cells were building and started their march early; I could tell we were going to hit some of them. With wind building, I put a second reef in the sail, drank instant coffee with cognac and prepared for a long night.

Around 1800, the cells joined forces and merged into one LARGE cell. Lightning was going off everywhere and our tiny boat was moving along at 4 knots. Normally four knots is fine for a cruising boat, but it felt like an eternity while we were sitting under this tempest. An hour later, a downpour hit blocking out all visibility. It hit the water so hard that it bounced back up as a mist / fog and flattened the seas to a calm lake. All that was visible was the lightning dancing

directly over our heads. We could only sit and wait, praying that we wouldn't hit debris, fishing nets or another boat.

Having nothing better to do, we started discussing what we knew about lightning. We decided to put our rubber flip-flops on and try to stay low (in the cabin) with as few trips as possible to the outside world. Naturally, I had to peek outside every few minutes to look for oncoming lights and upcoming lightning. Every once in a while I would run out to the auto-pilot and helm us away from a particularly nasty looking lightning zone.

After what felt like three lifetimes, the rain stopped. I thought we must have made it through this huge cell and I went out to set a more appropriate course for our anchorage. The new course set, I turned around to head back to the cabin. A blast of light hit my eyes at the same moment that a



cannon shot left my ears ringing. The air became hot and the smell of ozone and singed hair filled my nose. It DIDN'T hit the mast, but the bolt hit what looked to be 1/2 mile or less right in front of us. I ran back to the auto-pilot and quickly changed our heading once more, 90 degrees from this cell, praying that a second bolt would not come down while my fingers were pushing the buttons on this electric gizmo.

We were low on fuel. The lightning had slowed and the rain was more of a drizzle, I decide to add more now, as the weather could be worse any second. I put our last 5 gallons in. We had sailed much of the trip (no engine) and it looked like there would be enough to get us to Bahia Del Sol.

Sunrise seems to kill lightning, but it brought it's friend Mr. Squall along this morning (thank God I hadn't taken out the double reef yet). Wind and seas were building and I could make no headway under sail alone. It was crucial that we arrive at the anchorage entrance at 1300 (high tide) in order to surf in safely (don't worry, that parts coming later). Thankfully, wind speed seemed to max at 30, but the swells were steep and the wind was coming from the exact place we needed to go. I had no choice but to use our precious fuel reserves to plow through the waves and wind. Most times, we were doing a paltry 1 knot or less, and burning a lot of gas in the process. I anxiously waited for the new friend to

leave, a few hours later he did and we were back up to 3.5 knots. 10 miles from the bay entrance and low on gas, I had my doubts if we would make our window. Long story short, we made the meeting point on fumes and in time. We did NOT have enough gas to get into the Bay.

[Monkey side-note --- Monkey's description of the events Turtle has written thus far: "It was a raining, hailing, lightning and thunder shit-storm from the seventh ring of hell." Monkey wants to be curled up in bed, hiding under the covers with her mama.]

No wind and safely on anchor at our meeting point with an hour to spare; we have the nerve to try and relax. Sipping a rum and coke, I notice that the auxiliary rudder is banging against the stern...Hmmm. I investigate. The lower pintle is gone and the entire rudder is supported by one pin. I had checked it the evening before and everything was fine! It must have happened during the squall. I'm glad the rudder is still there and wasn't ripped out. (I would later realize that if I surfed in with this problem, we would have broached and possibly gotten rolled by waves on entry to the bay – this hadn't crossed my addled mind yet). WHAT ELSE IS GOING TO HAPPEN TODAY!! I ask the universe in a mildly frustrated tone and without the use of any swear words.

Aftermath of the storm: Buddha statue imbedded in the teak and holly floor by it's top-point.

Monkey and I wrestle the single pin out, lift the rudder and lash it to the stern pulpit. As Monkey turns to go back to the cabin she yells..."SHIT! We got bees coming." I look, and see a SWARM of bees crossing the water and heading right to our boat. We high tail it for the cabin and seal the hatch. We have mosquito nets covering our hatches and are able to watch them. They swarm the jib first. Monkey uses scorpion spray from the safety of the net and the wind helps it drift towards them. The bees don't like it and start looking for any opening to enter the cabin. We tape and stuff rags everywhere, then collapse in exhaustion.

How am I supposed to surf the boat in with hundreds of bee stowaways??!! I radio the fleet, about our scenario and the general consensus is wait and see if they pass...And welcome to the neighborhood. "The last lady this



happened to was trained in bee keeping, she smoked them out and removed the queen.” That's all well and good, but I'm not trained in bee keeping, and have a date with some large waves in half an hour! We eat and I take a cat-nap, hoping that the bees were gone when I awoke.

I opened my eyes and peeked outside... DAMN! Still there and nesting around the mast. I like bees, but I'm not going to risk being stung during a crucial maneuver. I grab the scorpion spray, put on a long sleeve shirt and run outside spraying.

Let me shorten this blog and hit the cliff-notes: A wave-runner came out with 2 gallons of gas.

They were a little behind schedule and the tide had already started running (resulting in larger waves).

They said they would guide us, but we had to leave NOW.

There was NO WAY I was spending a 4th night in these elements. Monkey added gas while I pulled the anchor and we were away.



We hit three good size waves coming in. It's pretty exhilarating. I found myself more fascinated than nervous. Lifting high on a swell and then shooting down the face and riding it for 10 seconds or so.

We made the marina, my hands shaking from an adrenaline high. BTW... Bees can still sting after death. I found out many times over the next few days.

From The Turtle and Monkey Blog By Michael Bell &
Diana Bortolussi
Surfing into the estuary at Bahia Del Sol, El Salvadore



That's all for this month folks.

Nigel the Spyglass Man

nigelbaker10@yahoo.com

