

# DELTA R A T

# Scrapbook

## Stephens Yacht Rendezvous

“**T**hree days of Understanding” – reminds me of a song. The owners and management of Village West Marina &

Resort invited Stephens and other classic yacht caretakers to cruise in for a weekend of fellowship and fun to remember the late Dick Stephens and honor his memory.

*Sea Breeze*, a 41-foot 1939 Ste-



BY BILL WELLS

phens cruiser came in on Wednesday Sept. 13. She was piloted by owner David Cobb and longtime local yachtsman Melville Owen. Next Eric Koster arrived with Richard Dunn’s beautiful 1928, 26-foot Siam Teak runabout on Thursday. Friday was a big day with *Triple Crown*, *Catherine E*, *Miss 102*, *The Donella* and *SKAL* arriving.

Rusty and his crew on *Miss 102* made a spectacular entrance as always. She was captained by Pat Carson. Classic Yacht Association members Jim Kroeger and Janet Beggs from Southern California were aboard. Michelle Sekulas, the interior designer that updated the cabins of *Miss 102* and *JOIE de vivre* was stationed as a human fender on the bow. She did a great job and no mishaps were reported. The marina had their dock crew out to assist with making fast to the docks. *Miss 102* came in at low tide and stirred a little mud on Fourteen Mile Slough, but nothing serious.

Later in the afternoon a local TV news crew interviewed a few of us and photographed the boats. The piece aired that evening. At 1700 hours Claude and Arron Pelarin and the resort staff held a



Michelle serving as a human fender.

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cocktail party aboard the marina's yacht. We dined on pork, chicken and beef with plenty of stuffings, refried beans and fresh vegetables. The wine and drinks flowed freely; my favorite part was the margarita machine. The margaritas came out like a smoothie and were delicious. Several of us vowed to drink the machine dry but we did not make it. Besides the boat crews, Fred & Ida Weibel, Randy & Kimberly Miller, Thom and Wendy Foulks, Terry McDonald, local photographer Morris Lum and several other local folks attended. Tim, Jay, David, Ebony and the whole resort crew chipped in to pull this party off. Claude and Arron very generously gave each boat owner a goodie bag with champagne, beautifully engraved glasses with the marina logo on one side and "Stephens Rendezvous 2023" on the other, a hat and a laminated graphic with a photo and details about the boat.

Sue and I spent the weekend in one of the resort's waterfront bungalows; they are close to being on a boat but better. The interiors are beautiful in a Tiki motif with a rattan set in the living room. You can open the door and look out across Fourteen Mile Slough; it is especially delightful early in the morning when you see the mist rising over the waterway. There is a certain amount of boat traffic on the slough, mainly fishermen but also some of the waterfront residents that live slightly upstream pass by from time to time. The only thing missing is the gentle rocking



Claude testing the margarita machine.

motion of your boat while you are sleeping, but that is a small sacrifice I think.

Saturday morning, I was up at the crack of dawn, or at least it seemed like it. I started the day with bacon, eggs, toast, potatoes and coffee at Bob's at the Marina. Later, Morris Lum and I met for coffee at Sunset Sweets and talked to Dennis and Tuyen and later Des-

tiny. I hung around the boats most of the day and Morris took a few hundred photos for posterity.

There were visitors all day long. Many members of the Stephens family were on hand as were many folks who had once worked there. Several people mentioned how they had helped build a particular vessel. James Schmit who I used to work with at 5 Star Marina



Classics in the morning at Village West. Photo courtesy of George Homenko.



came by, I had not seen him for maybe 15 years. He worked at Stephens until they closed the doors and then went to work for the McDonald brothers at 5 Star.

It was a great day with a few hundred visitors to see the boats.

At 1300 hours many of us went over to the VWYC clubhouse to watch Rusty's audio/visual presentation on how he and Ted Harris completed the two-and-a-half-year restoration of *JOIE de vivre* at Delta Marine Services in Stockton and after sea trials and appearing in the Opening Day on the Bay, cruised her down the coast to Newport Beach.

This was followed by Brynn Robito who did a presentation about *Vida Mia*, her 61-foot Stephens charter boat in Honolulu. *Vida Mia* was built in 1929. Brynn says she is busy all the time with passengers for a morning coffee cruise and an afternoon cocktail trip from Ala Wai Yacht Harbor to Diamond Head and back. She told a fascinating tale of how she got into the business and some of the challenges she has faced along the way. She said her boat has to be inspected out of the water by the Coast Guard annually, and that includes pulling and examining fasteners from the planks. *Vida Mia* is Stephens hull number 570, built in downtown Stockton like all the rest. She cruised to Hawaii under her own power (with the addition of another 1,000 gallons of fuel) in 1963. She was used on Maui for dive charters before relocating to Oahu in the late 1960s.

*Vida Mia* is the queen of the fleet in Honolulu nowadays and has carried some noted people including Louis Vuitton, Elizabeth Taylor and John Travolta on her cruises. She is licensed to carry 30 passengers and you can find her at



Fred, Ida, Kimberly and Marilu.

slip 499 at the Ala Wai Yacht Harbor. You can take one of the scheduled cruises down to Diamond Head or charter her for your own custom cruise. Check her out at: [thevidamia.com](http://thevidamia.com)

Stockton's Mayor Lincoln dropped by and was awarded a Classic Yacht Association burgee by International Commodore Gerry

Kamilos for his support of boating and recreation in the Delta. Claude and Arron Pellarin were also awarded a burgee for their ongoing support of classic yachts, and last but not least, the Stephens family was awarded a burgee by Gerry for their creation of some of the world's best yachts.

Later at 1800 hours we re-



Thom and Hillary.

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turned to the clubhouse dressed in our Gatsby garb for cocktails before dinner. Noel Lindsey drove up via automobile from the Bay Area. His Stephens is short one motor at the moment and could not make the trip. He brought a stack of flyers in case he found a prospect to purchase her. Rocci Jackson, the world's greatest bartender was on hand, so no one went thirsty. A few more awards were passed out; *Triple Crown* received the "people's choice" award and *Miss 102* received the "owners' choice" award. Jim Kroeger and Janet Beggs from Southern California and Rick and Cindy Randall from Bainbridge Island tried to claim the award for traveling the longest distance but they were all beat out by Brynn Robito who came all the way from Honolulu. Our resident concourse judge Morris Lum arbitrated the contest.

At 1900 we sat down to a delicious dinner of tri-tip and/or chicken with baked potatoes, garlic bread and vegetables. Oh yes, there were ice cream sundaes for dessert. Randy Miller barbecued the meat and it was delicious. Kimberly Miller planned and executed the fabulous meal that everyone was raving about. Sue and I were both stuffed, and luckily we only had a walk of a couple hundred yards to our bungalow.

I was scheduled for a 0700 interview with channel 31 TV so thought I should get a good night's sleep. I met the cameraman on the dock between *Catherine E* and *Miss 102* not long after sunrise, it was the dawn of a beautiful day.



Tuyen at your service – Sunset Sweets.



Paige and Guy at your service – Bobs at the Marina.



Mayor Lincoln, Gerry Kamilos, Claude Pellarin and Theo Stephens.





Brynn Robito.

I was live for a few minutes and Rusty Areias came on in the 0800 hour and gave a tour of *Miss 102*.

Morris Lum was on hand taking photos in the early morning light. The two of us once again headed up to Bob's for some bacon and eggs. We were joined by Rob Sesar. The weather over the whole weekend was well-nigh perfect with a slight breeze cooling things off.

At 1130 hours *Miss 102*, *SKAL* and *Sea Breeze* left the resort, cruised down Fourteen Mile Slough and up the San Joaquin River to downtown Stockton. They cruised



Rocci Jackson.



Aerial view of *Miss 102*. Photo courtesy of George Homenko.

past their birthplace – 5 Star Marina and up into McLeod Lake before returning downstream. Rob Sesar and Roberta Montero had several members of the Stephens family aboard and they stopped at Donna Stephens' home on the Calaveras River for lunch. *Miss 102* headed back to her home port, and likewise *Sea Breeze* headed back to Fortman Marina in Alameda.

The Stephens family owned *SKAL* during the 1940s and Donna Stephens related the story of how she and Dick Stephens had their last date aboard her the day before Dick shipped off to his Navy duties during World War II. Rob & Roberta have the original China set that came with *SKAL* from the factory.

At every rendezvous we learn new facts and anecdotes about the vessels. Mel Owen, one of the great historians of boating in the Bay and Delta discovered in a recent book by David Bruhn – “War Bound from Stockton” that *Sea Breeze* was awarded a battle star during World War II. She was designated YH-4 and used as a hospital boat during the invasion of Okinawa in June of 1945. Many local yachts were seized by the Navy right after the Pearl Harbor attack. Mel's family's boat *Pat Pending* was seized and designated YP119 and used as a submarine net tender on San Francisco Bay. She still carries the plaque explaining how to arm a depth charge. I think *Sea Breeze* might be the only one of these classics to actually see combat.

Stephens owners have been getting together every few years since about 1932 when they gathered at Grindstone Joe's. For the last 30 plus years we have gathered at several spots around the Bay and Delta. One year we even met in Alameda. George Homenko has spearheaded many rendezvous in Petaluma. They have been held in Rio Vista, Ox Bow Marina and downtown Stockton, and for the last few events Claude and Arron Pellarin have generously allowed the rendezvous to use their guest docks at Village West Resort.

People constantly ask about *JOIE*. Recently, Rusty's partner Ted Harris and his family cruised her to Catalina. She was under the command of Captain Casper Poesz. Then the week after the Stephens Rendezvous Rusty and his business partners cruised her to Catalina for a retreat.

## Classics At The Corinthian

After the Stephens Rendezvous in Stockton, several boats cruised down the San Joaquin River and ended up at the Corinthian Yacht Club in Tiburon for the 12th annual Classics at the Corinthian event. Nine boats were on hand and the public was invited in for viewing on a Saturday afternoon. In the evening the crews enjoyed dinner at the club.

## Rusty Porthole

Jacqueline Philpott, Ty and I

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dropped into the Rusty Porthole for lunch on a recent weekday afternoon. I am happy to report that the food is as great as always (I think we each had a burger) and the drinks, especially the beer is as cold as your ex's heart.

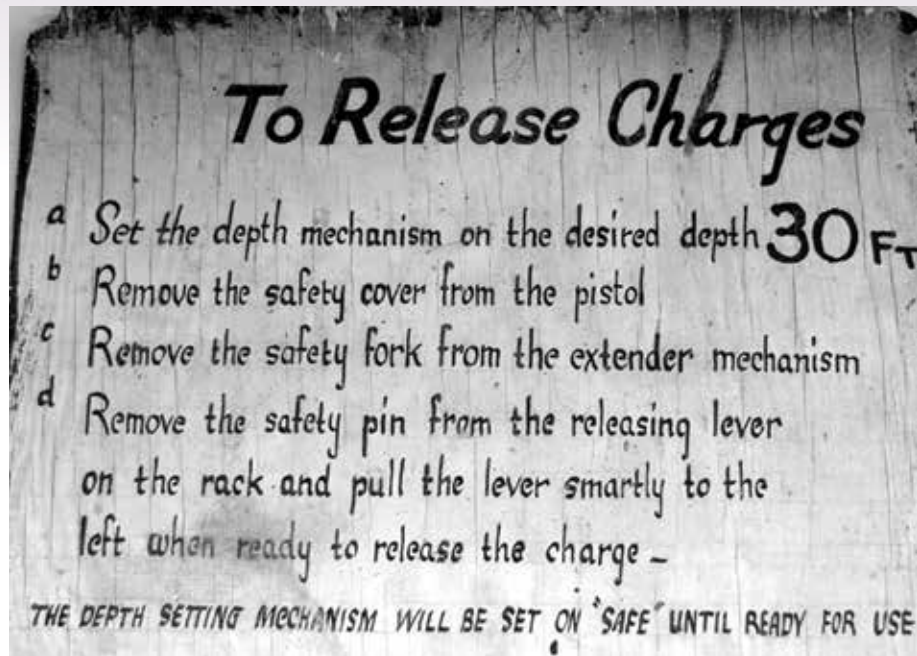
## Korth's Harbor Party

I could not make the harbor party at Ox Bow Marina due to other commitments, but the Korths kindly let me come to the party at Pirate's Lair. They threw a shindig on a Saturday afternoon for their berthers and friends. I estimate there were about 150 folks there. They had a great band playing and a lot of folks were grooving to the music. I dropped by the bar and talked to Steve, Tiki Tom Tate's new assistant at the marina. There was a huge vat of crawdads so I had to try a few; they were shall we say succulent, very good indeed.

A full dinner was scheduled later, but I had to get to another assignment so we were unable to stay and enjoy it. Kande, Kim and Linda Korth, along with other clan members were all on hand. Korth's continues to be absolutely one of the garden spots of the Delta.

## Willow Berm Marina

Willow Berm Marina hosted its fourth Annual Craft Fair on Sept. 23. Twenty local artisans participated and spent the beautiful sunny day selling and enjoying the people. They had a fairly good turnout. Run the Sweets and The Taqueria were here as well serving up their yummy food, from tacos to the famous Delta Donut.



How to arm a depth charge – Pat Pending.



Stephens china aboard SKAL with a bottle of St. Jorge wine. Photo courtesy of Vern Vierra.





**JOIE de vivre** moored at Catalina.

The coordinator of this event, Michelle Bourdo is a crafter herself and enjoys putting on this event and hopes to continue the tradition going forward. She says, “Thank you so much to all the vendors that came out and participated this year. We hope to see you all again next year, and being it will be our 5th Annual Craft Fair, we are hoping it will be bigger than ever. Also, a thank you to all the browsers, shoppers and strollers that supported all of us.”

### Western Flyer

John Garza lets no grass grow under his feet. His latest project is to bring the historic fishing vessel *Western Flyer* to Moss Landing from Seattle. They left the Bal-

lard Locks in Seattle and cruised non-stop to Newport, Oregon in 36 hours. The vessel was under the command of Captain Paul Tate. When the weather clears the voyage will continue south along the coast to Monterey.

If you are a follower of John Steinbeck, you will recognize the name *Western Flyer* from his visit to the Sea of Cortez in 1940 with his friend Edward Ricketts to study marine life and gather specimens. He wrote the book “Sea of Cortez” in collaboration with Ricketts. After Ricketts crossed over the bar Steinbeck re-published the book as “The Log from the Sea of Cortez.” Ricketts was used as a character in a few Steinbeck novels.

*Western Flyer* has had an illus-

trious career since that great adventure. She was built in Tacoma, Washington in 1937. She fished the Monterey area until about 1947 and then she moved to Ketchikan Alaska. She was converted to a trawler in 1952. In the 1960s she was chasing king crab in the Aleutian Islands. By 1990 she had fallen into disrepair and was retired from the fishing industry. She later sank twice, once for six months. John Gregg purchased her in 2015 and has done a keel up restoration on her. He started the Western Flyer Foundation and now the vessel is being moved back to her original home.

There will be a reception for *Western Flyer* at Moss Landing on Nov. 4 from 1100 hours to 1600 hours, try to attend this historic event. This vessel has been on an amazing journey and will finally be home again.

### Waterfraud Update

Representative Barbara Lee of Oakland, Rep. Kate Porter of Irvine and Rep. Adam Schiff of



Classic yachts at the Corinthian Yacht Club. Photo courtesy of George Homenko.



Mel Owen and Steve K's mom at the Corinthian Yacht Club. Photo courtesy of Mel Owen.



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Burbank are all running to replace Diane Feinstein in the senate. Apparently, these candidates either do not know about Governor Gavin Newsom's plan to divert the Sacramento River around the Delta with a giant tunnel or they choose to ignore the elephant in the room. To me this is a microcosm of what is wrong with California, we keep electing people that are too ignorant or too afraid to face the issues. If you are running for office in California and you are not aware of the water war that has been going on for the last 15 years you need to fold your tent and move to the Farallon Islands. Shame on us voters for putting these people in office. A great example is John Laird, one of the most inept public servants I have ever encountered. He was the Secretary of Natural Resources under Governor Jerry Brown from 2011 until 2019. He was a major advocate of building the 100 billion dollar tunnel around the Delta. When he left office many of us were relieved and figured he would not rear his head again in California. But no, the good voters of senate district 17 made him a state senator. The district is on the coast from about Santa Cruz to about Santa Maria. Elections are coming up; I implore you to use care when you decide who to vote for. There is a lot at stake. Ironically there is a big water bruhaha taking place in Monterey at this time. I don't quite understand it. Apparently in Aug 2019, the Marina Coast Water District sued the county for granting Cal Am Water Company a permit to build their desal plant in Ma-



Linda, Lauren & Aaron.



A pile of crawdads.



Handmade crafts at Willow Berm. Photo courtesy of Michelle Bourdo.



rina; in its lawsuit, Marina Coast alleged that the county violated the California Environmental Quality Act in multiple ways. Maybe John Laird could use his expertise to help resolve the situation.

Congressman Josh Harder recently held a fundraiser on the Stockton waterfront. I give him credit; he understands the water situation and is totally opposed to destroying the Delta with Newsom's water tunnel. Harder took over Jerry McNerney's Stockton centered district 9 when McNerney retired. I remember 10 or so years ago when Jerry called me when they were re-gerrymandering his district in 2013 and bringing him more easterly including Stockton. He asked me what the big issue was with Delta voters. I told him it was the water tunnels and to his credit he opposed them throughout his term until he retired.

California's 50th Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis is running for governor. She is the first candidate to announce her intentions. Gavin Newsom is termed out so there will be a replacement. She is currently Lieutenant Governor and I think that would be a good apprenticeship for governor. She has 18 years of experience in the private sector, served as ambassador to Hungary, plus being Lieutenant Governor. The election is not until 2026 so it will be interesting to see who joins the field. I think she stands a good chance of becoming California's first female governor. We just need to make sure we know where she stands on the water issues.

## **Delta Leadership Foundation**

We attended the Delta Champion Awards ceremony at the 100-year-old Grand Island Vine-

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yards. My friend and colleague Rich Turner was receiving the Delta Promoter award and I had been asked to introduce him and present the award. Rich has been chronicling the Delta for the last 30 years or so with his photographs and for the last few years with his online *Soundings Magazine*. Rich started his photography career with a class at San Juan High School in Sacramento. He joined the Navy after graduation and they sent him to photography school.

This is a beautiful venue in the shadow of the Steamboat Slough Bridge. It was a perfect evening and we sat outside and enjoyed a glass or two of Pinot Noir before we sat down to an excellent dinner of tri-tip, sauteed vegetables, salad, coffee and lemon squares for dessert. Jeremy White and his Acoustic Events business catered the affair.

The foundation was started by Moni Kondos in 2015. It is a non-profit "focused on fostering and recognizing outstanding leadership in the Delta region." The ceremony this evening was devoted to the memory of Kathy Hemley; she was a founding member of the foundation who unfortunately crossed over the bar in April of this year. The current board of the foundation including Moni Kondos is: Dr. Barbara Arnold, Mike Campbell, Stach Hamilton, John Hospenthal, Emily Pappalardo and Erik Vink.

After dinner the ceremony was held; Mike Campbell kicked it off. Kathy Leighton received the award for Delta Preserver, I presented Rich with his award for Delta Promoter, retired Sacra-



Italian Ice at Willow Berm. Photo courtesy of Michelle Bourdo.

mento County Supervisor Don Notoli was awarded Delta Improver and Isleton Chamber of Commerce representatives Jean Yokotobi and Suzanne Black received the award for Delta Innovator for producing their excellent magazine *Delta Life*. Suzanne should have received an award for traveling the farthest as she flew in from South Carolina. Last but certainly not least, Dante Nomellini Sr. and Tom Zuckerman were awarded the Delta Lifetime Achievement Award. All winners received a framed Gregory Kondos print with a plaque recognizing them for their achievements. All the recipients are heroes in the Delta and very deserving of these awards.

F&M Bank is a prime supporter of the foundation besides Moni and company. We look forward to them continuing their good work in

the future.

## Eight Bells

It is with a heavy heart that we announce the passing of Ty Silva, past commodore of San Joaquin Yacht Club in 2014 and 2019. He was a longtime resident of Bethel Island and an integral part of the Delta Community. He is well known for his warm smile, unforgettable laugh and incredible generosity. His life has been a blessing to so many and he will be remembered dearly. There was a casual "Delta Style" celebration of life at the San Joaquin Yacht Club on Oct. 15 from 1300 hours to 1500 hours. Thanks to Katie Senior and Debra Silva for this input.

## Irish Pennants

Hydro Dave Hernandez took delivery of his new Corvette. You



The Leadership Award winners.



may remember he ordered it many months ago and had it built in the factory to his specifications. He is still learning some of the systems but is in love with his car. This is a fitting vehicle for a man who drives race boats at 120 MPH plus. I think it will do 0-60 MPH in 2.9 seconds. It is a 2023 Z51 C8 Corvette 6.2 L 495 hp, advertised at 195 MPH top end and quarter-mile times at 122 MPH with an elapsed time of 11.20 seconds. She has an eight-speed automatic transmission with dual clutch. There are many drivers' adjustments, electric power steering and three-way seat adjustments. Oh yes, the convertible top can be opened or closed at speeds up to 25 MPH.

“Scientists” are predicting “A fast-forming and strengthening El Niño climate pattern could peak this winter as one of the most intense ever observed.” New calculations suggest it could reach top-tier “super” El Niño strength, a level that in the past has unleashed deadly fires, drought, heat waves, floods and mudslides around the world.

El Niño is developing alongside a surge in global temperatures that “scientists” say have increased the likelihood of brutal heat waves and terrible floods of the kind seen this last spring and summer. Will that make El Niño’s typical extremes even more dramatic in the winter? “My answer would be – maybe,” said David DeWitt, Director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Climate Prediction Center.

**Fall is here and the weather continues to hold. There is plenty of good boating weather left. Let me know what you are up to by sending an email to [commodorewells@msn.com](mailto:commodorewells@msn.com) or calling 916-869-9141. 📧**



Hydro Dave Hernandez with his new Corvette.