



CONNECTIONS

June 2007

www.pryc.us

PORT ROYAL YACHT CLUB Redondo Beach, CA

A Friendly, Casual, Fun-loving Group Devoted to Social and Boating Activities

**Port Royal
Yacht Club**
555 N. Harbor Drive
Redondo Beach
CA 90277
310-372-3960

PRYC OFFICERS
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Vice Commodore
Pat Paxson

Rear Commodore
Shawn Milligan

Secretary
Jan Pokk

Fleet Captain
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Junior Staff Commodore
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Historian
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COMMODORE'S COMMENTS

The summer is definitely here...and we're enjoying beautiful weather in our marina, on our boats, and the Yacht Club is buzzing with activity. It appears that we are going to have a great summer. With so many new members, we have the opportunity to meet new people, forge new friendships, and share our Corinthian spirit!

The Officer of the Day program is in full swing and the sign up sheet is almost full. So far we've had mimosas, lobster benedict, tasty sweets, and good company! If you haven't signed up, it's your duty to participate in this Club activity.

July 4 will be an open day at the Club—there are no planned events. BYOB BBQ and side dish...hang out at the club and watch the Redondo Beach fireworks at 9 p.m. A great view for a great show celebrating our country.

Next up is the **777@7 Rat Pack Party**.....July 7 @ 7 p.m. We'll have dinner, dancing, and a martini slide. Bring your favorite 60's appetizer or dessert and let's have a swingin' cool time!!

On August 18, we will have our **End-Of-Summer Bash and Home Port Regatta**. This will be our 2nd race of the year. Plan on honing your racing skills. In addition, we will have our charity silent auction which benefits the Top Sail program. The Top Sail program provides an opportunity for underprivileged kids to participate in learning team work and responsibility by training on the Tall Ships that sail out of the Maritime Museum in San Pedro. We depend on membership donations for the Silent Auction. We hope you plan on participating. Details will follow.

There are a few new things going on at the Club.

First, we have a new **website!** Cathy Mueller has done a great job of updating our website. Get on line and check it out!!

Second of all, we've got a **new TV** and new satellite system. As promised, we have upgraded the TV.....great viewing for the America's Cup, Monday night football, and anything else we can think of....

Third, we have a new **cash register**. It operates the same way..just punch in your drink selection and hit the blue cash button.

See you at Port Royal.....

Coming Events!!

Don't forget the **Big 7-7-7 Gala** this upcoming weekend. Have a Fabulous time at the Port Royal Lounge. Enjoy fine dining for \$15.00. Make a toast to the Rat Pack with a Martini from the Slide. Remember 7-7-7 only comes once a century, get out there and SWING!



In August, **End of Summer Bash** and Fundraiser to benefit Operation Topsail.... Watch for details

Get to Know Your Rear Commodore



Coming in the next issue. Get all the "411" on Rear Commodore Shawn Milligan. He's going to have a column here and it should be very informative as well as entertaining. Our Pez-collecting, Ding Dong eating, Cuban cigar-smoking officer is truly unique..... and a great representative for PRYC. If you have questions for Shawn, submit them by email to Shawn or Amy for the next issue.
shawn85292@aol.com
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Top Chef Recipes From the PRYC Galley



Wish you could repeat at home some of those yummy dishes you've tasted at the club from the Officer of the Day? Ask here or submit a recipe. First up...**Jack's Famous Filipino Pork**
Coming next issue!

PLASTIC CLASSIC & FATHER'S DAY RACE

Our 3rd annual Plastic Classic was a great success. We added the Father's Day Race to this event to allow any boat to enter—no matter what make, model, or year!! The result is that we had 12 boats enter the race and everyone enjoyed the competition. We had boats from King Harbor YC and Redondo Beach YC...and from Port Royal. This is becoming quite the tradition and we hope that more members become interested in racing or learning how to race. If you're interested, contact our Race Captain, Dave Coleman and he will point you in the right direction. And, the winners are.....

PHRF Spinnaker Class— Plastic Classic

- 1st Place** Hot Rum
Al Castillon
Redondo Beach YC
- 2nd Place** Flying Dutchman
Van Krennen
King Harbor YC
- 3rd Place** Voice of Reason
Jim McCone/MikeVerla
Redondo Beach YC



Mariner Class —Plastic Classic

- 1st Place** Banana Wind
Kyle Wilfong
Redondo Beach YC
- 2nd Place** Memei II
Mike Devine
Redondo Beach YC
- 3rd Place** Behemoth
Kevin Conway



Mariner Class—Father's Day Race

- 1st Place** Banana Wind
Kyle Wilfong
Redondo Beach YC
- 2nd Place** Poco Loco
Carl Chiverton
Port Royal YC
- 3rd Place** Knotty Girl
Pat Paxson/Jack Laisure
Port Royal YC



One dubious honor goes to Knotty Girl which wins the perpetual SPITTOON for the third year in a row!!

On another note, Hot Rum has won the Plastic Classic for the third year in a row!!

Congratulations to all.

...And, the party afterwards was great. The band, Room 172, was fabulous! It was a great time!!



Cruise to Cal Yacht Club

On June 22 and 23, we had our annual cruise to California Yacht Club in Marina del Rey. *Last Resort, Knotty Girl, Poco Loco, Cosmic Wind, and Voyager* all made the trip up. It was a beautiful day and we had a great time. In addition, a lot of members made it up by car and we had a great dock party.



Captain Woody and Dena Want to Share the Ultimate Boating Safety Course

Dena and Woody have opened four USCG Captain's License schools in California. Now they're offering members of Port Royal Yacht Club an opportunity to take this course at a special offer of \$645—a \$150 savings!!

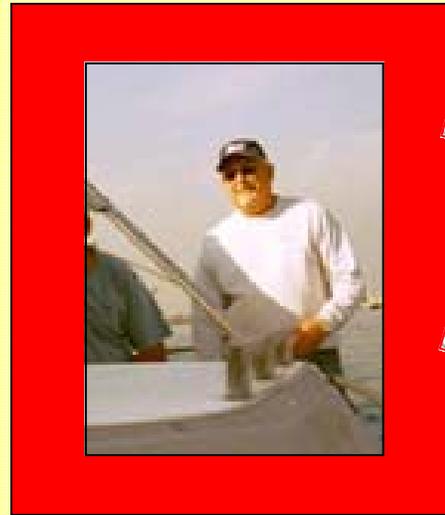
This course covers navigation, charts and plotting, tides and currents, electronics, right of way, collision avoidance, markers, lights and dayshapes, sound signals, radio etiquette, fire fighting, marine engines, lifesaving equipment, weather, boat handling, and maritime law.

Originally, the Coast Guard set up the licensing system to ensure that skippers taking out paying passengers had the knowledge and skills to bring their passengers back to the dock safely. Now people are taking the courses just for the knowledge and safety that it brings to their personal boating experience.

The next class will be in Long Beach, July 6–8, July 13-15, July 20–22—Nine sessions over three weekends!. They also have classes in Marina del Rey, Ventura, and Oakland.

Their website is www.MarinersSchool.com. You can get the schedules from that website. Or, you can reach them at 310.606.2001.

This is a great opportunity for our members...take advantage of it!!



It's with great sadness that we tell you about the passing of Dave Hunt. Dave was a Charter member along with Norma Medina. Dave enjoyed many hours and cruises on his beautiful catamaran—the *Jane 'O*. We will miss him.

Dave's Memorial Service will be held at the Club on July 14 starting at noon.



**House Keeping at the Club -
It's Not Only the Board's Responsibility
Just a reminder, this is your club. It's your duty to clean up after yourself plus making sure the club is in top condition.. That means washing your glasses , wiping down the bar, taking out the trash. Whatever is required to keep the Club looking good.**



We've all heard stories about the ill fated Dominator, wrecked off the Palos Verdes coast. Don Mueller submitted this fascinating account of the ship by J..F. Hardison, who was one of the salvage operators. It's a lengthy but gripping tale, so it will be printed in the newsletter in serial form, so stay tuned for the next episode.

Thanks, ed

THE LAST VOYAGE OF THE S.S. DOMINATOR

BY J. F. HARDISON

On March 13, 1961, the Greek owned Liberty ship "S. S. Dominator", carrying ten thousand two hundred tons of wheat from Portland, Oregon en route to Algiers, was on a heading to Long Beach, California, to take on fuel. At 5:30 PM, she was proceeding through a dense fog at reduced speed, searching for the entrance to the harbor. Captain Papanicolopoulos (this is his real name), was on the bridge directing his thirty-man crew and his old and tired World War II freighter, without modern navigation equipment, not even radar, but the Dominator was doomed. Suddenly, without warning, the fourteen thousand tons of ship and cargo came to an earth-shaking, grinding, sudden stop, one hundred yards off Rocky Point on a rock reef. The residents living on the point rushed from their homes fearing an earthquake or explosion from the nearby oil refineries, only to find a huge ship practically on their beach.

Immediately, the Captain radioed his agent in nearby Los Angeles that he was aground somewhere near the entrance to Long Beach Harbor. According to the ship's radio log, he refused Coast Guard or tugboat assistance, even over advice from his agent. He said later, he was afraid of costly salvage charges that could be made, not knowing that our Coast Guard always renders aid to vessels in distress without charge. He reported water coming in number three cargo hold forward of the engine room and all bilge pumps in operation, keeping ahead of the incoming water. He advised an attempt to re-float the ship would be made at the next high tide under her own power; unfortunately, he had gone aground at high tide and with a bad leak in number three hold, there was little hope of her coming off without assistance. For two days at every high tide, the Captain made every effort possible to re-float his ship, but she would not budge. On the third night, the Captain reported a terrific noise came from the bottom of the ship, like the ship's beams breaking, and then the ship seemed to settle even harder on the ocean bottom. He then requested assistance from tugs and a derrick barge, but a twenty-four hour attempt by them was futile, and the Dominator remained hard aground.

Late on the third day of her grounding, a heavy sea and winds up to seventy miles an hour came up, bringing with it huge swells. The ship had gone aground straight onto the beach but the heavy seas carried her broadside to the beach and further up on it. The Captain ordered abandon ship, and the Coast Guard took the thirty-man crew and the Captain off during the height of the storm. It was with a great deal of regret that the Captain gave up his ship, his first trip as a Captain, and undoubtedly, his last by the rules of the sea. He was sixty-four years old, had been to sea all his life, working up to this command from a deck hand. His career ended, aground, eight miles from the safety of Long Beach Harbor. On the following day, the Captain and his crew were flown back to their home port and the ship was put up for bid. A tug stood by the grounded ship with a line attached to it, keeping off the thousands of sightseers and protecting the ship from being claimed as abandoned.

Dominator cont.

When the ship went aground, I immediately made calls to the Coast Guard and tug boat owners trying to find out if the ship would be abandoned or put up for sale. Information was hard to get but I was finally directed to call Trans Marine Company in Los Angeles, they were the agents for the ships owner. I was told the ship and cargo would be sold to the highest bidder but since the insurance company for the hull and the cargo were different companies, the bids would have to be separate on the hull and the cargo, with a combination bid if desired. The ship was insured for four hundred forty thousand dollars and the wheat for six hundred and sixty thousand dollars, making a total value of well over one million dollars.

Here was my chance, a guy forty years old, in the automotive field all his life, with a burning desire to try and salvage a wrecked ship and the Dominator was practically in my backyard and up for sale. I did not have the slightest idea of the value of a four hundred and sixteen-foot Liberty ship, let alone one on a rock reef. If I did get it would it stay intact long enough to get the wheat off and be re-floated? These were the big questions running through my mind. After making literally hundreds of telephone calls, I had determined a Liberty ship in good condition, carrying a foreign flag as this did, would be worth around three hundred thousand dollars, but if I did get her off, what would it cost to repair her damage? If the ship wouldn't come off and I scrapped her where she was, I figured the three thousand eight hundred tons of steel and brass she weighed would at least allow me to break even, if things went well.

With all the information I had gathered, I decided on a bid of eighty seven hundred and one dollars for the ship. The wheat seemed like a great risk, since if it got wet it would be worthless and the cost of barging it off would be terrific. So, I decided to let someone else gamble on it. After sending in my bid for the ship, I had a very strong feeling it would not be high enough and asked to be allowed to submit a higher bid. I finally bid sixteen thousand one hundred ninety-nine dollars and ninety-nine cents and said a prayer, in fact for the next seventy-two hours, until the bids would be opened, I did a lot of praying. On the twenty-eighth day of March, the bids were opened, and I was high bidder by less than two hundred dollars. I had five hours to get a cashiers check for the amount of my bid to the Trans Marine office. I begged and borrowed every dollar I could get and on short notice this was very difficult to say the least, but finally by taking in a silent partner, I had the money.

At the Trans Marine office, I met the four men that had won the bid on the wheat for seventy-five thousand dollars cash. Two of them were auctioneers, one had a used machinery business and the other a motor scooter store. The five of us undoubtedly made up the most unlikely group of men to salvage a million-dollar ship and cargo in maritime history but we had all the confidence in the world that we would be successful. As owner of the ship, I had control of the cargo and we agreed between us that they would have thirty days to remove all the wheat and could use the machinery and quarters at no charge during that time. We were to meet the following morning at Redondo Beach, where a small boat would take us to our prize.

On the five-mile trip from Redondo Beach to the Dominator, I could hardly control my anxiety. I had not seen the ship other than pictures on TV and in the paper. With me was Mason Gert, an employee of mine from my body shop who had volunteered to work with me on the salvage. We had with us food for several days, and a portable gas generator to provide lights. Soon, I saw the ship and as we came along side of her, she looked as big as the Queen Mary. We went aboard and spent the rest of the day looking her over. She seemed to be about as I had expected. The deck machinery was in poor condition and the quarters were dirty, old clothing was scattered all around, food was still on the plates and a big pot of stew was spoiling on the stove. She was a dead ship, very quiet except for an occasional creaking and moaning that came up from the bottom of the ship as the eight to ten foot swells hit her broadside.

That night, Mason and I were on her alone and it was the weirdest night I ever spend in my life. We started up the gas generator and I hooked it up direct to the cabin lights. With lights in some of the cabins, it gave us a more secure feeling. The cargo buyers had taken the only boat we had ashore with them and we were left with no means of communication. The ships emergency radio was the Morse code key type and we did not know

Dominator, cont.

how to operate it. However, we did get the emergency receiver working and listened to music from a local radio station during the evening. The music helped our loneliness. All during the night the ship shuddered and loud banging noises came up from her hull but she stayed put. To add to the weird feeling, the ship had a fifteen-degree list to starboard, which gave us the continual feeling she wanted to roll over on her side. In the morning, we took soundings and found she was aground in about twenty feet of water.

The ship loaded, without hull damage required twenty-seven feet of water to float, and when empty required about eleven feet, this was very encouraging to us and I was sure we could float her off when the wheat was removed.

The ship had five cargo holds, three forward of the engine room and two aft. We found number one and two holds dry and number three full of water to tide level and all the wheat wet. The engine room had twenty feet of water at high tide and its water level changed rapidly with the tide, indicating a large hole or hatch open. The aft cargo holds number four and five were dry. There was about two thousand tons of grain in each compartment so the cargo buyers had about eight thousand tons of dry wheat to unload. They had sold the wheat subject to delivery to the Long Beach Grain Terminal for forty-five dollars a ton, so if they successfully removed all the dry wheat, they would realize a gross of over three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The cargo buyers were selling the wheat back to the same company that had originally sold the wheat to the Algiers buyer.

We spent the next few days checking the movement of the ship and taking soundings, and found the ship was staying in the same place but moving around quite a lot. We moved some tools and equipment from the lower decks to the cabins for safekeeping. Although the ship needed paint almost everywhere, we found over five hundred gallons of paint stored in the paint locker. Almost all of the food stores on board were from Japan, and the ship's log indicated the ship recently left Japan for Portland. The cargo buyers had not returned since we first boarded the ship, so I decided to go ashore and find out what the delay was as valuable time was getting away. I hitched a ride from a passing boat to Redondo Beach. On shore, I got the bad news. Insurance for the men that would be working on the ship removing the wheat could not be obtained in the U.S. and they were trying Lloyds of London. Finally, three weeks from the day we purchased the ship, the insurance came through from Lloyds at the high cost of \$5,800. for sixty days coverage.

To be continued



Rig/Type: WWII Liberty Ship (Freighter)

Cause of Sinking: Stranding

Length: 441' **Breadth:** 57' **Tons:** 7,176

Cargo: Wheat and beef

Built: 1944 by Walsh Kaiser Company of Providence, Rhode Island **Location:** Rocky Point, Palos Verdes

Hull Construction: Steel

To view video of the Dominator, immediately after the wreck, and from 1962-1969, go to www.cawreckdivers.org/Wrecks/Dominator.htm (photos from website)

