

# THE



# PILOT

*The Monthly Newsletter of the Inverness Yacht Club*

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## COMMODORE'S COLUMN

March 2008

Here I thought it was the slow winter season and all of a sudden busy broke out. So this month's column will be a bit of a grab bag and is not only longer than usual but contains reader participation opportunities scattered through out. Onward.

The club's circular driveway is raising a great crop of potholes. The primary cause of pothole expansion is driving too fast. So to quote Toby, "S L O W D O W N". The yard speed limit is five (5) miles an hour and in addition to contributing to the pothole problem, driving other than "really slowly" raises dust which is bad for clean boats and wet paint.

This spring Staff Commodore Phelan will revive the facilities planning committee. We know we have significant work to do on our docks and pier. John's group will try to envision the future of the club and all that might entail. We don't know what they are going to come up with but we do know it will probably have a significant cost. Although most quarters the club is currently able to add something to our rebuilding reserves, adding more would be better.

The board approved a photo shoot for late February. During the discussion it was estimated that if we tried we could possibly rent the club for ten or twelve days a year and generate up to about twenty thousand dollars in annual income. This would be the equivalent of an 18.5 % increase in dues and thus substantially delay the day when we have to raise dues. The down side is that during a photo or film shoot, unlike normal rentals, the club would not be available for members. It sounds like a decent trade off to me and I believe the board is leaning toward the idea but has given itself a month to survey the membership as to their opinions. So let me or some other board member know what you think. E-mail to IYC@svn.net is a good way to get on record.

The April 26th party will be a night at the Grand Ole Opry brought to you by Doug Johnson and KWMR, our local listener supported radio station. The radio station is providing the DJ and appropriate music. The event will be recorded for possible future broadcast on good old 90.5 FM. The evening will be patterned after the Nashville institution of the same name. To that end Doug is looking for some local talent to add to the mix. So all you talented folks please get in touch with Doug at Doug0001@aol.com. ....cont.page 2

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**I**

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IYC@svn.net**COMMODORE'S COLUMN** continued:

For at least the last ten years our membership has hovered around the three hundred mark. Traditionally the club has grown by word of mouth. The association with KWMR has opened up the possibility of increasing the club's profile in West Marin. Envision whole radio shows explaining who we are and what we do. The board is currently debating whether this is a good idea or not. On the pro side more members would mean more hands to help. We have a wonderful resource in our facility here and could make more use of it in a lot of ways. On the other hand more members would mean more people trying to sail in limited tide windows and parties selling out sooner. Of course we can always have more parties. The board would like to hear what you think about the club making a deliberate effort to increase membership.

Speaking of member feed back several folks have wondered about the possibility of removing the drop ceiling in the ballroom. In fact at least one was enthusiastic enough to offer a contribution to the project. Please let me us know what you think. I would especially be interested in hearing from members with memories that predate the installation of the current ceiling.

I would like to expand the "about us" section of the Web site. I would like to do this by adding contributions from members. The idea would be to add short explanations of what the Inverness Yacht Club means to individual members. So what does the club mean to you? How do you benefit from belonging? Please unleash you literary skills and send the Great American Paragraph to IYC@svn.net

We have upgraded the Pilot online flexibility. We now post the Pilot in both a high resolution (large file) and lesser resolution (small file) versions. Remember when you get your Pilot from the Web you not only get it faster but it can't be misplaced, the club saves some money and the forest some tree. Sign up for the Web only Pilot and we will notify you by e-mail when it is up on the site. E-mail your request to IYC@svn.net.

Forward,  
JohnS

**PARTY NOTICE FROM YOUR COMMODORE:**

Hosts needed for July 4th and AGM parties.

Reward! If you host a party you get an invitation to the annual Commodore's Lunch.

## NOTICES

### CLUB RENTALS

Unspecified weekday between February 22 and 27th			Photography shoot on docks.
Sunday	March 2nd	10am to Noon	IPUD: Disaster Preparedness Meeting
Sunday	April 27th	2pm to 7pm	Inverness Garden Club Matthew Baxter Memorial Event

### FUTURE EVENT

Get yur country western duds out and maybe even yur foot stompin' boots. The GRAND OLE OPRY is coming to Inverness April 26th thanks to Doug Johnson. Put it on yur calendar, and watch for more news next month. It'll be a finger lickin' good time.

## MEMBERSHIP

Proposed: Michael and Joanne Dranginis  
Proposer: Mark Ropers  
Seconders: Claudia Ropers and John Chase

Proposed:  
(Dr.) David and Debra Melcon  
Proposer: Katherine Landreth  
Seconders: Carol Skold and Ken Twining

Proposed: Charles Sullivan  
Proposer: Douglas Moore  
Seconders: Margaret Moore and Carrick McLaughlin

Resignations: Alan and Anne Nivens, Dewey and Kerry Livingston, Joe and Harriett Burgess

## M O R E M E M B E R S H I P

A number of members may have spotted a notice in the January issue of The Pilot that announced that Art and Marilyn Simpson were elected to Honorary Membership. The previous month, when their letter of resignation was read to the Board, many current Board Members remembered them fondly for their great contributions to the club and in particular the Junior Sailing Program, and decided that they could not be allowed to resign! What follows is Art's (attempted) resignation letter, and a response in appreciation from John Phelan. The Board thought that both these letters demonstrated so well the particular spirit of the Club that we asked permission to publish them. Here they are:

The Board of Directors  
Inverness Yacht Club  
Mr. John Speh, Commodore

November 7th, 2007

Dear Board Members,

Sooner or later there comes a time for everything, and we have decided that it is now past time for us to admit that we are now contributing anything to the Inverness Yacht Club, nor are we making much use anymore of the many benefits of membership. It has always been our opinion that members should put in more than they get back from any organization such as ours. We certainly hope that we did so through our active years in the club racing our Flying Scot, but it is time now to recognize that such times are not likely to recur.

This letter is, therefore, to inform you of our formal resignation from membership in the Inverness Yacht Club as of the end of this next quarter, or as of Jan. 1, 2008.

It has been a great experience belonging to such a premier organization, and we have only the greatest of memories of our active time there. I have proudly proclaimed my IYC membership whenever I visited other yacht clubs, not only all over the Bay Area, but also in New England, in Seattle, in Texas, and once in St. Petersburg, Russia. IYC is the only yacht club we have belonged to since our arrival here from New England.

I just turned 75 this past month; I do not drive much after dark anymore; nor much happens in Inverness that is finished up in time for the two hour drive back home before dark; as you know, we do not own property in Inverness. And, as some of you may recall, I never was one to leave a party early.

No one could have been more surprised than we at our rather sudden disappearance from club activities starting some 19 years ago (19!?!?) when we sold our Flying Scot to Sam Hinckley et al. At the time, I thought I would surely be back next season looking for a ride with someone each race day, but somehow, without my own boat to race, I just always put off going till next week. And next week became next season, and next season became, well, 19 years. Again no one could be more surprised than I that we have not set foot on the yacht club grounds but twice since we sold the boat, once when we there for a Thanksgiving weekend at the Boatel, and again for Andy Noble's eightieth birthday party. Half the commodores since then, we have never met. We have not seen the new elevator. But whose fault is all that?

I do not even know if my key fits the front gate lock anymore; and surely my old building keys would not let us into the clubhouse by now. I do not even know where the septic tank is that we are not supposed to park over. But, as you can see, we have still enjoyed reading the Pilot and keeping up with the goings on.

When I was on the board, there was much discussion about "boating members" and "social members" (probably still is) and the differences in their needs and desires for the club. Guess I turned out to be more of a boating member than I ever realized at the time. But we certainly do value several life-time friendships, and it is great to see the kids we knew now serving on the board and bringing their kids to the club.

I recall my first race at IYC. It was a Pumpkin or Drumstick race. We had just arrived that Fall (1971) from New England, bringing our Scot with us, and had spent our first night in California at the Boatel so as to make contact with IYC. My brother was here with us from Texas, helping us move in, and he crewed for me that day. At the end of the race, we rounded the leeward mark just behind the "Pink Boat" which sailed into a dead, flat, oil-slick calm between the mark and the line. So I sailed half way to the far shore and back to stay in the light breeze (my crew screaming the whole time "The finish line is over there!") and beat John Phelan over the line by no more than half a boat-length. He was about 13 at the time. (Of course if I had not beaten him, I surely would today have no recollection of the event.) And I thus also one-upped my little brother who had been racing sailboats for some years longer than I had. Hunter Brownback gave me a yellow burgee that day; the first of many I would receive over the years. I got a few orange ones too, but never a blue one.

And John became Summer Director the year I was Commodore, and now he and Sam and Bob Cardwell, and Katherine have all served terms as Commodore. Great club!

So it is with all due regrets that we now recognize somewhat belatedly a departure that has been de-facto for some time. But we are grateful for the enhancement of our lives that membership brought, and we dare hope the club feels the same toward us.

Marilyn and I certainly wish the IYC membership all the very best.

Sincerely,  
F. Arthur Simpson.

Thank you Art,

We can't believe it has been 19 years since you've been to the IYC, though we have missed you! In fact we were so incredulous that you had decided to resign, that we couldn't let that happen. There couldn't be a more deserving honorary member!

I surely don't remember the race you mention in your letter (where you pulled some Texas voodoo and beat me by half a boat length ;-). I will, however, never forget how you could raise the spirits of any group you happened to join. I also want to thank you for being one of my best ever "bosses" when, as Summer Director you were Commodore. With your and the Board's help, I had the privilege of teaching sailing in IYC's first fleet of club Lasers. And there was that summer Saturday, after I had just finished a long work day in the 'crash boat' helping run that weekend's race, when you fended off the party planner who was about to conscript me to work the whole evening too. You understood what it meant to be the only paid employee with many hundreds of members who might consider me their servant.

In my memory, I can still see the camper parked in the lot, a cozy spot for you and Marilyn, but also proof that we would see you and Tejas out on the water the next day. Speaking of Tejas, Hobey, Sam and I have had many great seasons in her and she is still helping teach our kids how to sail. We almost even won the Districts one year, but that's a long story for another time.

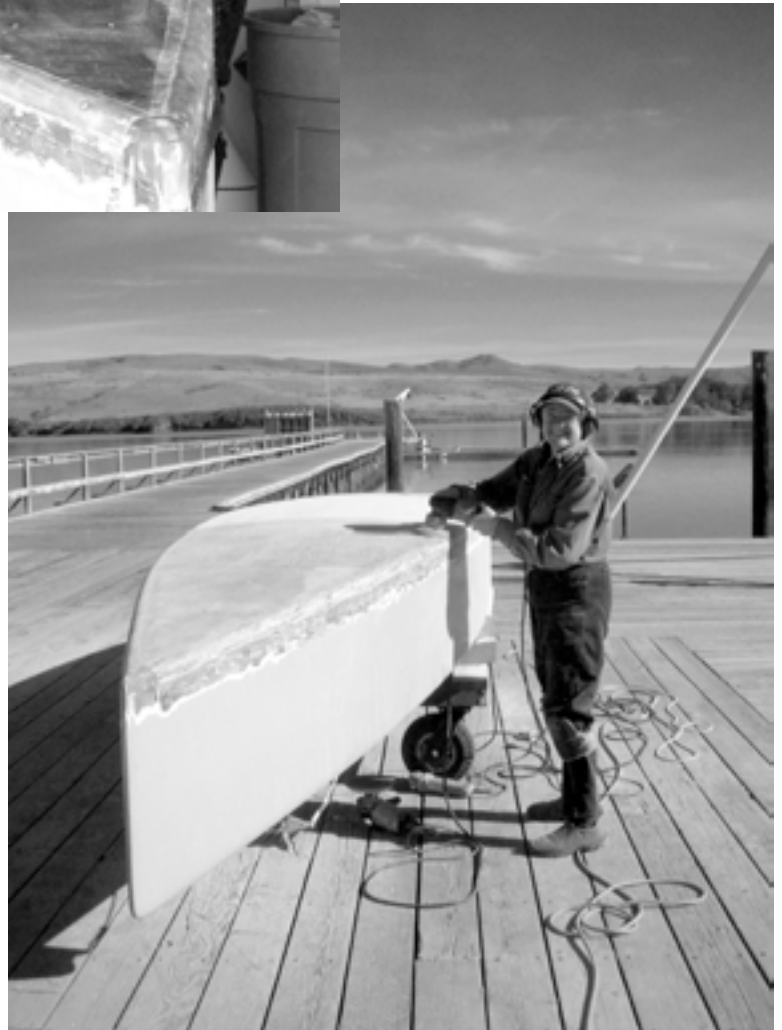
So here's to you Art. Now that you're a lifetime member, maybe we can figure out a way to break that 19 year dry spell. There's a cold beer waiting, and Tejas is rigged and ready.

Cheers, John Phelan

INVERNESS YACHT CLUB  
WINTER BOAT MAINTAINANCE



THE REBUILDING OF  
INTERNATIONAL 110 NUMBER  
445 "VELELLA"  
BY RICHARD AND MILLY  
BILLER.



## **“VELELLA” GETS A NEW BOTTOM AND A FRESH PINK BLUSH.**

By Mark Darley

The IYC has seen a pair of impressive wooden boat renovations the last couple of years. First Mike Meszaros bringing his Flying Dutchman “Saudade” back to spectacular condition and now the Billers at work on their International 110 “Velella” fitting her with a number of new ribs, a substantial piece of new bottom, and reglassing the hull below the waterline. In a world where it is increasingly common to simply “throw away” anything tired or old, it is inspiring to see these boats springing back to life.

Seeing “Velella” upside down in the boathouse these last few weeks prompted me to ask Milly a few questions about this venerable pink 110. (In case you were wondering, she has always been pink). As we all know, wooden boats need a lot of care and attention from devoted owners and “Velella” is particularly lucky in her owners. Richard and Milly are both highly skilled and are willing and able to tackle just about any degree of renovation. In addition, Milly clearly has a deep attachment to her, having sailed her much of her life.

The International 110 was designed by Ray Hunt in Marblehead in 1939. The design was radical at the time with its hard chine, near flat bottom and fin keel and still is. Just how far ahead of its time this design was is suggested by a quote on the class website from John Decknatel, President of C. Raymond Hunt Associates,

“Similar configurations can be seen today (c. 2007) in America’s Cup boats”

Milly tells me that “Velella” #445 was probably built in Long Beach in 1947 and was originally owned by Gordy Rule, the Harbor Master of Richmond Yacht Club who took second place in the Nationals in the late 1940s. (Gordy’s nephew, Rick Warwick, is the current Harbor Master at RYC). From Richmond, Bob Wells, who was also responsible for introducing the Flying Scots to Inverness, brought her to Inverness as “Fun” winning the Bender Trophy in 1959 and 1960.

Milly’s father, Alexander Bratenahl bought “Fun” in 1960. Milly and her sister Laura crewed with their father until Milly finally badgered him into giving her his boat which she renamed “Velella”, after the small purple communal jellyfish that wash up on the open shore in the Spring, and are known as “by-the-wind-sailors”.

Her father challenged her with some tough conditions. Milly had to maintain both boats (each of them would be towed down to Pasadena where they lived for Milly to work on them) and, clearly a competitive father; he had her agree to match any improvements on her boat with the same improvements on his. With this agreement in place he purchased # 418 and named her “Solar Flare” (Alexander was an astrophysicist) and won the season in 1969. With Mike Meszaros aboard as regular crew on “Velella”, Milly would become a competitor in the class both on Tomales Bay and on San Francisco Bay, challenging all comers in the 110 class in the 1971 Nationals.

After many years of racing, Milly’s father retired, and happily “Solar Flare” was sold to Malcolm Fife, so the two sister yachts still race each other at IYC.

Milly is back in the pink lady with whom she started her 110 career, and we expect to see some real speed next season from the renovated ladies! Competition promises to be good in 2008 with the fresh arrival of Robert Cardwell’s fiberglass 110 #635 from the East coast which he is renaming “Fun” (with permission from the Wells family...Fun is back!) I have also heard that 110 # 331 “Javelin” has been sold by Richmond Yacht Club member Gordy Nash to Dudley Miller and Sarah Allen, new members of IYC (and long time residents of Shallow Beach), and is being restored at Marshall Boat Works by Jeremy Fisher-Smith.

So, amazingly, a class that is now 70 years old has a fleet that is growing at the IYC. Perhaps this year we will see seven 110s bobbing at anchor before the races this summer! The 110 sailors will tell you there are very good reasons for this growth in the fleet; Ray Hunt designed an exciting boat to sail. Personally, I plan to take up Milly on her offer of a ride just as soon as “Velella” is back in the water.

Congratulations Milly and Richard!

# EVENTS CALENDAR

Saturday, February 23rd	Crab Feed	Drinks	6.00pm
		Dinner	7.00pm
Saturday, March 8th	Board Meeting		9.30am
	Open House	Drinks	5.30pm
Saturday, March 29th	Spring Lamb Festival with Skipper and Trans-Pacific Adventurer, Michael Reppy	Drinks	6.00pm
		Dinner	7.00pm
Saturday, April 12th	Open House	Drinks	5.30pm

Bring a bib!

Dinner at 7pm

Drinks at 6pm

## “THE CRAB FEED”

Saturday, February 23rd

Inverness Yacht Club  
 P.O. Box 186  
 Inverness, CA 94937  
[invernessyachtclub.org](http://invernessyachtclub.org)



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THE INVERNESS YACHT CLUB PRESENTS:

## SAILING INTO SPRING

MARCH 29, 2008

Bar: 6:00 PM; Dinner 7:00 PM

### Menu

Filet of Salmon with Dill Sauce  
Pilaf  
Syrian Fattoush Salad  
Baklava & Biscotti



### After dinner slide show by Master Skipper Michael Reppy

Michael Reppy of Earth Island Institute will recount the dramatic story of his three attempts to break the existing record for a solo sail from San Francisco to Tokyo. Reppy's trans-Pacific adventures have included a terrifying rescue after his trimaran capsized, a collision with a whale and missing the record by one day. He is presently re-fitting a 43' Grainger Trimaran for another go at the record in spring 2009.

Reppy's efforts are dedicated to exposing and stopping the annual slaughter of dolphins and small whales on Japanese beaches. Ticket price includes a donation to Earth Island Institute.

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Salmon to be donated by David Stern of Monterey Fish Market in Berkeley  
for the benefit of IYC's Youth Sailing program.

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Cost: \$15 per person. Child care provided.

Please RSVP by Monday, March 24

Send check payable to IYC to PO Box 657, Inverness CA 94937

Your cancelled check is your reservation confirmation

Hosts: Longstreths, Cernys, Hetheringtons, Rosenbergs

