

MONTECITO MAGAZINE



Gail McBride Kenny



*“Who does not love the sea? The beach is a place of healing and joy.
The salt cleanses us and the sun embraces us in its warmth.
The ocean heals the heart, mind, and soul.”*

- Rainer Maria Rilke



Santa Barbara Youth Sailing Foundation

Learning to Sail

By Cheryl Crabtree • Art by Gail McBride Kenny & Christine Flannery

If you walk along the breakwater in the Santa Barbara Harbor, you’re likely to view not just the city’s legendary waterfront scenery, but young sailors in small sailboats plying the waters a short distance offshore. These perky pint-sized pilots, participants in Santa Barbara Youth Sailing Foundation (SBYSF) programs, rig and launch their boats, tack and gybe, and practice skills to stay safe on the ocean. Their nautical abilities at a tender age are impressive: they single-handedly harness the wind and power their dinghies along maritime courses in a fleet of white sails. Equally impressive is their experience of the pure joy of interactive “play” with natural elements in a maritime environment, evident in their broad smiles when talking about the sport of sailing.

Kyle Rivas and James Glanville, both age 12, say they had great fun last summer in the foundation’s two-week Learn to Sail class. “It’s kind of easy to learn because of the way they teach you,” says Kyle. His friend James says “sailing is fun, especially when you go fast when there’s lots of wind.” Ethan Rivas, age 14, says he was surprised to discover the athleticism involved in the sport, noting that his muscles were gaining strength. He also enjoys the independence and the pride that comes with learning how to control a moving “vehicle,” several years before he’ll be able to get a driver’s license. “I’ve never sailed a boat by myself, so it feels good to be in control of my own boat,” he explains. James’s parents, Christie and John Glanville, are yacht club members and youth foundation scholarship supporters. Th Rivas family, however, is new to sailing. Kyle and Ethan’s mother,

Left – Local high school sailors in a CFJ class boat head out from the harbor to their offshore practice area.

Above – Oliver Stokke sailing an Optimist dinghy during the SBYSF Goblin Optimist Regatta.

In April 2018 Oliver and four other SBYSF teammates—Blake Behrens, Ryan Satterberg, John Seawards and Aston Smith—qualified for the US Optimist Class National Team and will participate in upcoming international competitions.

Gail McBride Kenny



Chris Plummer



Lisa Rivas, says that the experience has been eye-opening for the family. “I didn’t realize sailing was a real sport. This has given us a really good perspective, especially since we’re not sailors and don’t have a boat.”

Teaching local residents to sail at a young age is a longstanding community tradition, fostered by Santa Barbara Yacht Club (SBYC) members for nearly a century. In the 1920s to 1940s, local boys learned boating and nautical skills through the Sea Scouts, an international organization similar to the Boy Scouts, but centered on maritime skill-building. SBYC member Thomas Crawford, one of the most accomplished sailors in California at the time, led the local Sea Scouts during much of this era. Through his tutelage, teenage boys learned to tie knots, handle and maintain boats, row and how to navigate with a compass.

Starting in 1931, girls could join the Girl Mariners, a pioneering program modeled after the Sea Scouts. Tom Crawford and other yacht club members, female and male, played pivotal roles in training and educating the Girl Mariners.

In 1948 Ray Kieding, a Santa Barbara Yacht Club member with two sons, age 11 and 14, ordered a DIY kit to make an 8-foot wooden boat called a Sea Shell. When other parents and kids saw the Sea Shell plying the waters around the harbor, they decided to order their own kits. Soon a fleet of little Sea Shells was racing around the harbor every Sunday, helmed by young boys and girls except on the last race of the day, when parents sailed the boat.

Local sailors eventually started building the Sea Shells using local lumber, and the fleet grew to about 40 boats. Many yacht club members and their offspring—including future musician David Crosby—participated in the Sea Shells club over the years, and the Sea Shells program continues to provide an excellent community-based foundation for young mariners.

In 1967, inspired by a visiting sailor who spoke about the success of the youth sailing program in Southern California’s Newport Beach, yacht club member Carl Robinette decided to lead the charge to start a similar program here in Santa Barbara. That spring, Robinette and a group of SBYC members established the nonprofit Santa Barbara Yacht Club Youth Foundation to support the new program. (The name was changed in 2006 to

Left – The low-key Wet Wednesday yacht races take place weekly from April to October on courses in front of the Santa Barbara Yacht Club. Youth sailors join in the races in various boats.

Above – Girl Mariners with Tom Crawford at Santa Cruz Island. In the 1920s to 1940s, local boys learned boating and nautical skills through the Sea Scouts. Santa Barbara Yacht Club member Thomas Crawford—one of the most accomplished sailors in California—led the local Sea Scouts during much of this era. The Carpinteria Girl Mariners, a program modeled after the Sea Scouts, was founded in 1931. This program became the flagship for other such programs later established across the nation. Tom Crawford and other yacht club members, female and male, played pivotal roles in training and educating the local Girl Mariners.



Painting © Gail McBride Kenny

the Santa Barbara Youth Sailing Foundation to better reflect its community-based services.)

Santa Barbara business owner Hugh Hayward, who grew up sailing with his family and with the Youth Sailing Foundation, participated in Sea Shells with his twin sons for several years. He says that introducing children to sailing at an early age has many benefits.

“You learn a lot of independence because it’s you alone or with a crew member. But with young kids, it’s even more special—you can’t drive a car, you can kind of ride a bike around, but on a boat you’re just totally free, and you do have to take care of yourself and be smart.” Hugh adds that while there’s a serious aspect to the sport, he recalls that he and his friends welcomed the challenge. “The adults all took it very seriously. But as kids, we were just having fun!”

Junior Program Director Nick Kaschak states that the current program is multifaceted with classes and events throughout the year. “We have something for all levels. We have kids who have never sailed at all, plus active members who travel in California and around the US and the world to compete.” He says about 120 to 130 total sailors participated in programs last summer, mostly at the Learn to Sail level. “We have about 40 to 50 active racers who sail year-round,” he adds. “We accept sailors as young as 7, and our oldest are in high school, 16 or 17 years old.”

From the get-go, the Youth Sailing Foundation program has incorporated sailing competition, believing that maritime skills are best acquired through racing, when the bar is raised to a high level. Many local kids start sailing with the Sea Shells, then move on to SBYSF Learn to

Local youth Liam Andresen sailing an Optimist boat during one of the SBYSF classes. The Optimist Class is the largest youth sailing/racing class in the world. Optimists are used for beginners but most young sailors continue to race them up to the age limit of 15.



Race and Racing classes, sailing in a multitude of different classes or fleets of boats, depending on their ages, such as Optimists (for ages up to 15), CFJs (high school) and Lasers.

Jeanene Pierce, who has served on the Youth Sailing Foundation board of directors for 19 years, says, “Young people can learn the essentials from racing and take it to whatever lengths they want to.” Santa Barbara, as a sailing community, has offered opportunities for local youth to achieve the highest ranks in the sport. Since 1968, a number of Youth Sailing Foundation sailors have qualified for and competed in many national and international competitions, including the Olympic games. Alumnus Willie McBride is currently employed as a coach for the US Sailing team and coached a US team at the recent Olympic games in Rio de Janeiro. By fall 2017 the SBYSF team had already qualified eight young sailors for the 2018 Optimist Team Trials in Key Biscayne, Florida in April 2018. Success at Team Trials leads to selection to various international teams that represent the USA at regattas all over the world.

Whether sailing to compete or for the joy of yachting, the programs do require funding.

The Santa Barbara Yacht Club hosts an annual fundraiser to benefit the Youth Sailing Foundation—one of the club’s three major community-based projects. The club also supports The Flag

Project, which displays flags of local nonprofit organizations and the city, state and nation along the breakwater, and holds an annual Charity Regatta, which to date has garnered over \$1.3 million for Visiting Nurse and Hospice Care of Santa Barbara.

Apart from the annual fundraiser, the Santa Barbara Yacht Club Women’s group raises money to provide scholarships for Youth Sailing Foundation participants, mostly in the Learn to Sail classes. “The whole intent is to get young kids involved in sailing, especially if their families need financial assistance,” explains committee liaison Anne-Marie Castleberg. Anne-Marie adds that exposure to sailing can change lives. “You put an 8-year-old kid on a boat on their own—what it does for their own self-esteem is just astounding. There’s a lot of excitement and I’m sure it keeps them out of trouble. They get this interest, and it becomes a lifelong passion.”

Jeanene Pierce says the foundation also holds outreach clinics several times a year to bring in people from the community who might not know much about sailing or just might want to give it a shot. “We try to make it super fun and not intimidating,” she explains. “Some families might be scared off, thinking the parents have to be in the boat themselves or provide their own boats. The clinics show them that sailing can be fun and accessible as well as challenging.”

The Santa Barbara Youth Sailing Foundation’s home base on Marina One in the Santa Barbara Harbor. In 2003, the SBYSF board named the floating facility the “Turner Youth Sailing Dock” to honor Guy and Catharine Turner. Guy served as SBYSF president for 25 years.

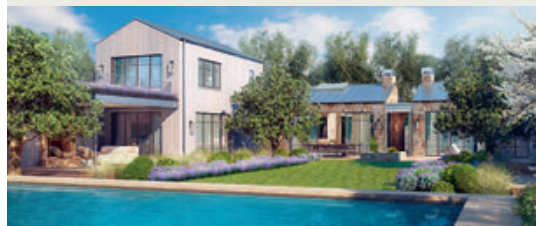


M C G U I R E & WESTLOTORN

FINE HOMES • ESTATES
RANCHES • LAND



MONTECITO CLASSIC PIEDRASDR.COM



WILLIAM HEFNER MASTERPIECE 819ASHLEY.COM



GLOBAL
LUXURY.



MAURIE MCGUIRE 805.403.8816
SCOTT WESTLOTORN 805.403.4313
www.MontecitoLand.com

©2018 Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act. Owned by a subsidiary of NRI LLC. Coldwell Banker, the Coldwell Banker logo, Coldwell Banker Global Luxury and the Coldwell Banker Global Luxury logo services marks are registered or pending registrations owned by Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. The property information herein is derived from various sources that may include, but not be limited to, county records and the Multiple Listing Service, and it may include approximations. Although the information is believed to be accurate, it is not warranted and you should not rely upon it without personal verification. CalBRE# 01061042 CalBRE# 01875690

Many SBYSF sailors currently race in venues around the world. Th Pierce’s son, Lucas, placed high enough at the Optimist Team Trials to qualify to represent the USA at the European Championships at Lake Garda, Italy. “I raced in a regatta with 1,400 kids from around the world. It was incredible,” Lucas recalls.

Zoey Ziskind, age 12, first learned to sail with the Sea Shells when she was 7 years old. Bit by the sailing bug, she moved on to the SBYSF program. Since then, she has earned numerous awards and has qualified to sail in national regattas. At the moment, she is one of the top girl Optimist sailors in California.

When asked what she tells her friends who inquire about the sport, Zoey tells them “it’s a lot of fun, especially if you like being on the ocean. It’s physical AND it’s mental. You have to adapt to the conditions, and conditions are diffe nt every day.” Regarding competition, she adds that she really likes “the travel and the cultures and the competitiveness. I really like to compete. I’m focused, always thinking about what my next move will be.”

Zoey’s teammate, Ryan Satterberg, age 12, started sailing when he was 5 years old. In 2017 Ryan placed among the top four boys in the Team Trials in Brant Beach, New Jersey, which qualified him for the European Optimist Championships in Bulgaria.

Regarding training, Ryan says, “I sank a boat once!” Luckily his SBYSF coaches had drilled him, along with all other program participants, about



PHOTO BY ERIC ANDRES. COURTESY SANTA BARBARA YOUTH SAILING.

how to right a capsized boat and how to be rescued if you can't—all part of the maritime safety training that goes hand in hand with racing techniques. "Without our coaches, we wouldn't be where we are," states Ryan.

Ryan and Zoey plan to sail for their local high schools when they are older. The Youth Sailing Foundation facilitates the high school sailing teams for Santa Barbara, which currently include 15 to 20 high school boys and girls. "We compete with kids all the way from San Francisco to San Diego," says Jeanene Pierce. Nick Kaschak adds, "The high school teams are very fortunate to practice in tandem with the UCSB Sailing Team, which often ranks among the top 20 varsity sailing teams in the nation."

Whether Santa Barbara's local pint-sized sailors go on to compete at high levels or sail for fun to the Channel Islands and beyond, "in the end, most of them end up sailing here in Santa Barbara," says Anne-Marie Castleberg.

Many join the fun low-key Wet Wednesday yacht races, held weekly from April through October. If you happen to stroll along the breakwater in Santa Barbara Harbor on a Wednesday

during the season, you'll certainly spot the fleets of boats charging up and down the race courses, many crewed by sailors who developed their passion for sailing at the foundation's facility on Marina One, across from the Santa Barbara Yacht Club in Santa Barbara Harbor.

One of those sailors is Francie Lufkin, who served as the yacht club's first female commodore in 2013. Her parents, Llew and Marilyn Goodfield, are longtime yacht club members—Llew was commodore in 1996 and Marilyn serves on the scholarship committee.

"Sailing has always been a part of my family's life, both as a child and today," says Francie. "Youth sailing is a very special activity in Santa Barbara. Many of us live within minutes of the harbor, and our sheltered waters and fresh breezes provide the perfect ocean classroom. Once you're comfortable on a sailboat, a new offshore world opens up. Learning to sail at an early age is an opportunity that should be available to all our children. SBYSF is the perfect place to begin!" ♦

For information on the Santa Barbara Youth Sailing Foundation, visit sbysf.com. For details on summer programs (five sessions from June 11 to August 17) visit sbysf.com/summer

In October 2017 young sailors from all over California charged up and down the race course during the SBYSF Goblin Optimist Regatta, the first of six regattas in the Carrie Series. More children learn to sail in an Optimist than any other boat. Its weight, sail size and stability allow it to be sailed in all wind conditions.