



# SANTA BARBARA

YACHT CLUB

## **Dennis Friederich, 2004**

Staff Commodore Dennis “Denny” Friederich is a man who can truly call the world his home. Having grown up in an Air Force family, he never lived in one place for more than two years, though he spent much of his formative years in California and Colorado. After earning a BS degree in physical science from Colorado State University in 1965, he received his commission as a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant in the Air Force. He was sent to Texas A&M to earn a graduate degree in meteorology, then on to Hamilton AFB in California for 2 years. In 1969, now-Captain Friederich, was assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division in Vietnam as a staff meteorologist for the commanding general.

Upon returning home, Denny gathered his family and moved to Santa Barbara. He had passed through the town several years earlier and decided it would be the right place for settling down. For the next 37 years, he worked at Merrill Lynch as financial advisor, complex sales manager, and vice president, before retiring in 2007.

Several years later, Denny was preparing to present a speech at a local forum, and realized he needed a haircut. (Do we all know where this is leading?) A friend recommended a stylist named Anna. After a rough start (he was late to the appointment, and she made him come back later in the day) the two began dating and married in 1986. She wasn’t a sailor at the time, but, “she’s just great. She would get sick but stuck it out!” She’s now quite comfortable on the water.

Before moving to Santa Barbara, Denny had had on-the-water experiences on small ski boats but hadn’t sailed. After spending time in our waterfront city, he began lessons at the SB Sailing Center.

The couple purchased a Hunter Vision 36, Bullish, in December 1992, and joined SBYC the following year, embracing the opportunity to associate with others interested in sailing. “It looked like they were having fun up there [in the clubhouse], watching races, enjoying music.”

Having enjoyed and appreciated SBYC for several years, Denny “felt that it was my duty to take my turn and help my club,” when asked to go through the chairs. “It was a sacrifice of personal time, but I was rewarded over and over with the pleasure I got from working with wonderful people.”

During Denny’s early years of membership, the club was quiet on Sundays. One afternoon, Denny lamented to fellow club member Wayne Harris about the weight of their boats and the fact that they would never be competitive in PHRF. “Why can’t we have handicaps based upon past performance, as in the game of golf? That way, every boat could participate and have a chance at winning.” Wayne was familiar with just such a handicapping system, used at Southwestern YC. “We sent for the formula, and after some fine tuning, and the support and guidance of Jim Rudy and John Erdahl, we had our new Club Handicap Fleet, later renamed Club Handicap Racing Fleet (CHRF).

CHRF racing is still one of the highlights of the week for many club members. But it was not the only legacy this commodore has left. In 2004 he formed a committee to raise money for a SB Youth Sailing Foundation Endowment. The goal of \$1,000,000 was reached, with a significant effort by many SBYC members, in just three years. But wait—there’s more! Denny felt that SBYC was in a unique position to give back to our

community through some type of charity event that would involve our membership and their love of sailing. Denny's biggest accomplishment has been the annual charity regatta, which benefits Visiting Nurse and Hospice Care of Santa Barbara. In its fifth year, the event has contributed almost \$400,000 to our community, while not just changing the face of the yacht club in the community, but also uniting members—sailors, power boaters, the SBYC Women's Group, and even casual social members. "I think people look at the yacht club differently than they did years ago. They knew about our parties, but not about the character of the members."

Dennis also played a key role in the recently-released SBYC history book, a lengthy labor of love for all involved.

But anything worth doing, anything worth being involved in, can only satisfy a person when they are willing to open their hearts and minds to it. Denny and Anna have enjoyed SBYC so very much through the years partly because of all the time and effort they have invested in cultivating friendships and helping out in the areas their particular talents have called for. Our clubhouse provides a comfortable respite from life's little stresses for them, a place where they can visit with friends and enjoy the ocean. They've gained "a whole new family of friends. For me, with my background of moving continually in my formative years, it's helped fulfill something – a need that was important to me – to have friends I've known for a long, long time. To work with people for a common cause, whether CHRF, the charity regatta, the history book, or youth foundation fundraising, it's pretty special."

After retirement, Denny worked toward, and received, his US Coast Guard 50-Ton Master Mariner License. Recently he started taking guitar lessons and is currently serving on the board of directors at La Cumbre Country Club, where he, no doubt, shares his talents on the golf course as the opportunities arise! No matter where he may be, he encourages people to get involved and to enjoy all that we have here in Santa Barbara. We are fortunate that much of that enjoyment is to be found at our yacht club, where we can savor our friendships, our accomplishments, and, indeed, quite a bit of our lives. Commodore, we're glad that, way back when, you decided to stay.