



# Marina del Rey Historical Society



Volume 1, Issue 3 ~ July, August, September 2012

## Racing Through History

### Part 2

By Tim Tunks

The story of women's roles in Marina del Rey history continues with more and more accomplished female skippers developing their skills, preparing their own boats, and organizing their own racing campaigns.

#### The Olson 30'

One boat, the George Olson designed O-30 lightweight sloop, played a major role as women joined the racing fleets with skills frequently equal and sometimes superior to their male competition. As there were many of these same boats, they could sail in what is called a "One-Design Class" where there are no handicap adjustments and all boats are nearly identical.

The existence of this well populated class meant it was possible for crew to move from one boat's campaign to another, experiencing different teams with different skippers directing activities aboard. This variety of experience hugely accelerated the learning curve for these sailors and their fleet in general. [The author of this story raced in five different O-30's while learning the yacht racing art.]

As this class also had top notch experienced men sailors, the women had excellent competition against whom to measure and hone their skills.

One team of accomplished women



Women on Water (WOW) Racers Starting Lineup

Photo Courtesy of WSA

organized a nearly successful effort to fly an O-30 donated by the manufacturer to England for the World famous "Cowes Race Week." Getting that level of support is testimony to the skills they mastered racing in this fleet.

#### Women Sailors Honored

There are two important perpetual trophies that are awarded annually to recognize outstanding female sailors, and the history of women's racing is written large on their bases where the lists of awardees are engraved.

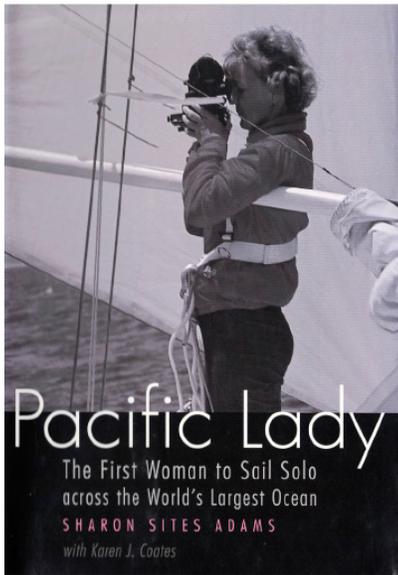
The "Marilyn Butefish Award" has been given annually by the Women's Sailing Association (WSA) for a quarter century to the WSA member who made exceptional contributions to the organization. In the 1990's, we see the transition from mostly racing yachswomen being granted this honor to women with a broader interest in promoting sailing as a more general activity.

In 1991, the Southern California Yachting Association dedicated its "Peggy Slater Memorial Trophy" to be awarded

*Continued on Page 2*

### Inside...

Pacific Lady . . . . .	2	About Our Collections . . . . .	4
The Dream Continues . . . . .	2	View Our Exhibits . . . . .	4
Oil Wells at the Beach . . . . .	3	Volunteer Staff . . . . .	4
Presenting Marina History . . . . .	3	Volunteers Needed . . . . .	4
Become a Member . . . . .	3	Thank You Mdr Sheriff's Dept . . . . .	4



Sharon Sites Adams recently wrote to the Marina del Rey Historical Society:

"I am the first woman in the world to sail alone across the Pacific Ocean, Yokohama, Japan to San Diego, California, May-July 1969." Sharon emailed us that she sailed her 25' Folkboat "Sea Sharp" from Marina del Rey on June 12, 1965 to Hawaii. She continued in her note, "Because of sailing I have been on 71 islands in the South Pacific, visited two cannibal tribes, climbed an erupting volcano, rounded Cape Horn, sailed across Lake Titicaca (the highest navigatable lake in the world) and much more."

Sharon Sites Adams shares these adventures with civic and children's groups in Oregon. Her book, "Pacific Lady," is available at the Lloyd Taber Marina del Rey Library. //

## Racing Through History

(Continued from cover)

annually to a female sailor who best demonstrates outstanding contributions or individual achievement in the sport of sailing. We recall that beloved Peggy, from Part 1 of this story in our previous issue, was one of the pioneer women in Marina del Rey sailing, and the sport of racing was one of her greatest passions.

### Women Racers Listed

As we read the list of women honored on Peggy's trophy, we see a consistent sampling of the best in women's racing from the broader Southern California area, yet still the majority are competitors from our fertile Santa Monica bay.

Two quick Google searches will give you the lists of all these fine women honored --Peggy Slater Memorial Award + SCYA will get you to more information for that award, and Marilyn Butefish Award + WSA to find <wsasmb.com> where there

is a huge lot of information to be gleaned about important women in sailing.

This history reveals our harbor and society as a breeding ground for the highest level of yachtsmen. Just as a lush coral reef is the birthing place, nursery, playground, and cafeteria that supports a whole ecosystem, our 50 year-old Marina has been its own nurturing birthing ground for world renown sailors.

### Skills and Seamanship

Yacht racing is the activity that hones the sailor's skills--efficiently capturing nature's energy to propel his craft. Seamanship is a companion skill set that comes from many sources--study, tradition, experience, and, most importantly, a community where seamanship is practiced, mentors are found, and champion level sailors are made. Marina del Rey is such a place. //



Marilyn Butefish Award



Peggy Slater Award

## The Dream Continues

By Howard Wenger

Moyes L. Wicks' dream of a marina would fade at the turn of the century, but it would be brought back to life in 1916 by the Army Corp. of Engineers. They would submit a new proposal to develop a harbor in the Playa del Rey marshland, but Congress would find it impractical and, once again, it looked as if a marina would never happen.

Twenty years would pass until Congress would reconsider the previous negative report. In 1937, the L.A. County Board of Supervisors would order, yet, another study. However, the marina harbor would lose out in a competitive bid to San Pedro to create the Los Angeles Harbor. There were no hard

feelings harbored toward San Pedro and the dream now focused toward becoming a small boat recreational harbor.

During all this time, oil wells were springing up and pumping for black gold. Howard Hughes would build a facility and a runway where the Spruce Goose would be created, and World War II would delay the project further.

On September 7th, 1949, the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers would submit a new report on the feasibility of constructing a pleasure craft harbor for 8,000 boats. The Marina would finally be on its way to becoming a reality. //

(To be continued)

# Oil Wells at the Beach



Venice Del Rey Oil Field, from 58th Avenue North, August 1930

Courtesy of the MdR Historical Society

By Willie Hjorth

Discovery of oil, by the Ohio Oil Company in the Del Rey field county property east of the Grand Canal at Avenue 35 in December, 1929, created a rush for land and mineral rights in the area.

Citizens with dreams of great wealth demanded rezoning to allow oil drilling "in their backyards." Concern for destroying the recreational value of the beaches emerged when many landholders sought a zoning variance to create an industrial zone bounded by the ocean, eastern city limits, Mildred Avenue to Culver Boulevard.

## **Ban Lifted**

The ban on drilling was lifted for parts of Venice in 1930 and new permits were granted to residents on the peninsula, beach areas, southern canal district and what is currently the "Silver Triangle" with a limit of two wells in each city block.

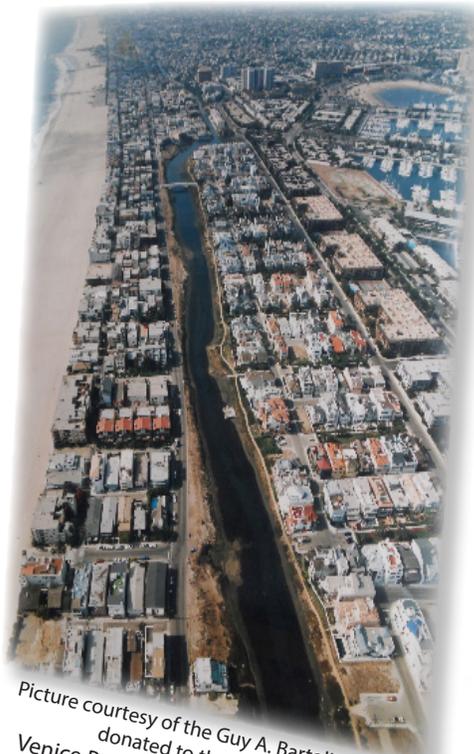
Within two years there were almost 150 oil wells producing, creating pollution,

noise and odors. By 1932 many fields were almost depleted. Oil continued to be pumped through the 1960s. However, in 1966 the Los Angeles City Council passed an ordinance requiring closure of the last 19 active wells with the exception of wells owned by the Southern California Gas Co.

## **Oil Wells Capped**

To allow dredging for the entrance channel planned for the Marina del Rey Harbor, in 1953, the County of Los Angeles purchased and capped three wells. More were purchased and capped to make way for creating the Marina.

At the end of 2011, Southern California Gas Company decommissioned well site Del Rey No. 10, located in Mariners Village Apartments. It was no longer needed for the operation of their natural gas storage facilities (underground). Perhaps this will be the end of the pollution, noise and odors at the beach. //



Picture courtesy of the Guy A. Bartoli Collection, donated to the MdR Historical Society Venice Peninsula development, early 1970s, by Guy A Bartoli, Architect.

## **Presenting Marina History**

A presentation about the history of Marina del Rey was given to the The Los Angeles County Beaches and Harbors Small Craft Harbor Commission on April 11th and, on May 8th, to The Women's Sailing Association of Santa Monica Bay at Santa Monica Windjammers Yacht Club. The presenters, Debbie Talbot, Greg Wenger, and Willie Hjorth are with the MdR Historical Society.

To schedule your group to see this presentation, please contact Debbie Talbot, 310-305-9548.



## **BECOME A MEMBER**

of the  
Marina del Rey  
Historical Society.  
For Information  
call Greg Wenger,  
310-578-1001.

**Marina del Rey  
Historical Society  
Newsletter  
Volunteer Staff**

**Willie Hjorth**

*Publisher, 310-822-9344*

**Tim Tunks**

*Boating Correspondent, 310-396-1400*

**Greg Wenger**

*Photographer, 310-578-1001*

**Debbie Talbot**

*Public Relations, 310-305-9548*

**Howard Wenger**

*Event Coordinator, 310-822-1307*

**Barbara Slavin**

*Graphic Design,*

*BSlavinGRAPHICS@aol.com*

≈≈≈

**For Information & Contributions:**

Call: 310-578-1001

Email: gwenger@verizon.net

Address: P.O. Box 9550

Marina del Rey, CA 90295-1950

Published Quarterly

Printed by: **Sievers/Burnett Press**

## About Our Collections

The Marina del Rey Historical Society database is used to identify privately and publicly held archives. The collections that document aspects of Marina del Rey life and history are recognized by community historians. Since our collections are scanned and electronically filed, all original contributions will be returned to donors. This online directory provides a unique resource of cultural materials that will be retrievable and accessible to the public.

To learn how you can donate, contact Greg Wenger (310-578-1001). ✍

~~~~~

## View Our Exhibits

- ◀ **Community Building** in **Burton Chace Park**, on Mindanao Way
- ◀ **Lloyd Taber Marina del Rey Library**, on Admiralty Way  
(Please call 310-821-3415 for library hours.)
- ◀ The **Marina del Rey Hotel**, on Bali Way
- ◀ **Tony P's Dockside Grill**, on Admiralty Way

~~~~~

## Volunteers Needed

Playa Vista Farmers Market

MdR Historical Society Exhibits

Contact Howard Wenger (310-822-1307)



Once again, our thanks to Captain Oceal Victory and her Marina operations staff for donating their time to the MDR Historical Society.

of the Sheriff's boats.  
around the harbor to the breakwater aboard one  
This was followed by an informative cruise  
tour of the Marina del Rey Sheriff's facility.  
Historical Society participated in an informational  
Recently, several members of the Marina del Rey

**& MDR Sheriff's Dept.  
Capt. Oceal Victory**

**THANK YOU**

**Marina del Rey Historical Society  
P.O. Box 9550  
Marina del Rey, CA 90295-1950**

