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16 at 6:30 pm in the Upper Boat

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The South Ender is the newsletter of the South End Rowing Club, published three times per year. We publish material by our members that reflects the ideals, purposes and accomplishments of the South End. We reserve the right to edit all submitted material. Articles, suggestions, inquiries and photos may be submitted electronically to: newsletter@serc.com. 900 word maximum for articles and minimum of 300 pixels per inch for photos. Please send articles as a text file, not as a PDF. Thank you in advance for your contribution!

Cover photo of Brenda Austin at the start of the Tahoe Regatta taken by Jessica Gammell.

General Membership Meeting, September 16th

A little over two years ago a group of South Enders began making plans for a re-visioning of our clubhouse. They selected a world-class architectural firm who gave us a design that will give us new needed space in the women’s locker room, more space in a larger, light-filled boathouse, and a larger gym. It is a design that should serve us well for many years to come. The total cost for the construction will end up being just under $2.4 million. We are a 1,000-member club, and one way of looking at it might be that each member would be assessed $2,400 and construction would begin. There may even be some clubs that would operate that way.

However, another group of South Enders took up the challenge of raising the funds for the project. They had a formidable task because this a large amount for a club of our size to raise. The amount of fundraising needed was so large that it virtually required personal direct appeal to club members who held the club in high enough regard to gift $5,000 and up to get to the needed funding in place to start the project.

We have been spectacularly successful at obtaining member support. There have been gifts from people’s successful lives and good fortune and one out of a tragedy that affected us all. By our own efforts we have raised $2,250,000, which includes $500,000 in member loans that will be repaid over a 15-year period. We are able to use a 15-year loan period because Park and Rec, our landlord, will be extending our lease at our current lease rate for an additional nine years based on our completing our construction project. The extension pushes our lease out to 19 years more than covering our loan period.

By our collective efforts we have reduced the amount needed to begin construction at the end of September to less than $150,000. A general membership meeting will be held on September 16th at 6:30 pm in the lower boathouse. We encourage everyone to attend. We’ll provide a final update on our project and a schedule for how the construction will take place in the coming months. In the last several days we have received additional donations that will help us reach our goal. If your personal situation is such that you can help us fund the project with a donation I would appreciate hearing from you. But by September 16th when we come before you at the membership meeting, if we have been unable to identify the $2.4 million in funds that is necessary to complete our project, we may have to ask you to approve a small, one-time member assessment in order to begin our project on time. A delay will increase our costs, but that would perhaps be preferable than not
Building Expansion Project
By Dan McLaughlin

I’m excited to announce the commencement of the new building project. We have navigated through design, engineering, city planning, the building department, the fire department, and our neighbors to get to this point. It’s been a grueling process, but it’s over and we’re looking forward to construction.

Here’s what will be happening in the coming months:

Sept. 7–11: We will be constructing a temporary women’s locker room in the upper boathouse and relocating many of the lockers that will be affected by demolition. We will also move the day use lockers into that space to give the women more storage options.

Sept. 21–25: Demolition begins. No, there won’t be a wrecking ball swinging around the club, more like carpenters, electricians, plumbers, and sprinkler fitters disconnecting utilities, building barricades, and setting up staging areas.


Oct. 5–Nov. 6: Excavation, building foundation forms, installing rebar, pouring foundations and slab, installing structural steel.


Mid-Feb.–Mid-March: Installation of exterior siding, decks, railings, interior finishes, fixtures, elevator, lockers, etc.

Mid-March: Final cleanup, punch list, certificate of occupancy.

FINISHED!!!

What can we expect:

Q: Will the club be closed during construction?
A: No! The club will remain open during the project.

Q: Will we be able to get back and forth to the beach?
A: Yes. There will be a “path of travel” to the beach every day. It will change occasionally during construction, but the route will be posted with signs.

Q: Will the day room and cook shack be open during construction?
A: Yes.

Q: Will I be able to row during construction?
A: Yes. Boats will be available throughout construction.

Q: Will it affect the handball courts?
A: No. The handball courts will not be affected.

Q: I like to do Sunriser swims, will we have Zodiacs available?
A: Yes. There will be Zodiacs available.

Q: They will be tearing out the women’s shower room and sauna—where can we shower and sauna?
A: The Dolphin Club has made their women’s shower room available to our female members. However, remember, the DC is closed between 11:00pm and 5:00am daily. The ADA-accessible shower and sauna in the upper boathouse will also be available.

Q: So they’re closing the shower room—what about the women’s bathroom?
A: The women’s bathroom will remain open during construction.

Q: I use the gym, will construction affect me?
A: The gym will remain open, but the deck will be closed.

Q: What about the elevator?
A: Unfortunately we have to take out the existing elevator, but we will be installing a new, larger, and more dependable elevator.
Q: I’m very interested in the construction, can I go into the construction site and look around?
A: NO! Only people involved with the construction are allowed in the site.

Q: What about in the evening after the workers go home?
A: NO!

Q: What about in the morning before they arrive for the day?
A: NO!

Q: Weekends?
A: NO! Not on a train, not on a plane, not in a boat, not with a goat, you cannot enter, Sam I Am!

Q: I have a lot of ideas about what should be done; whom can I talk to?
A: You are welcome to contact the Project Team via email; they will not be able to give your questions/comments their full attention while at the club, so email is best. Don’t bother explaining it to the contractor, he can’t make changes without authorization from the project manager.

Q: Who is the Project Team and how do I get ahold of them?
A: Kim Pross, team leader: kimrows@gmail.com
Dan McLaughlin, project manager: s_c42@hotmail.com
Ray Zahnd, associate project manager: rdz1945@gmail.com

Dear South Ender,

We have made spectacular progress on the South End Renovation Project since the “Love the South End Party” in February. We are on the verge of being able to start construction on September 21st—the Monday after the Alcatraz Invitational—IF we can fundraise the remaining $300,000 for this Project before then.

To recap, the Project addresses the critical needs of the club—a new women’s locker room, an expanded gym, a more spacious lower boathouse and, potentially, a larger men’s locker room. Every member benefits from this Project.

We have obtained all planning approvals and have entered into a guaranteed maximum price contract with Bellcore Construction, the contractor for the cook shack/day room project. Our Project budget, which has been vetted to the line item by the former principal of a major construction firm in San Francisco, is $2.4 million. This total includes a 10% contingency.

The club has identified aggregate funding sources of $2.1 million. Funding sources include: (1) moneys that the South End has saved for this Project; (2) a modest amount of member loans; and (3) approximately $1.2 million in donations from South End members.

The generosity of our members to date has been extraordinary. For context, member donations exceed the total amount donated to the cook shack/day room project by four times.

As remarkable as this fundraising result has been, we still need to raise an additional $300,000 in donations before we can start construction. With your help, we can do this.

Consider the following.

- The $1.2 million of donations (80% of our fundraising goal) comes from 181 members (less than 20% of our membership). The larger South End community has not yet contributed. In a club as egalitarian and inclusive as ours, it simply is not the South End way to have the burden of this Project, which benefits all, fall on the backs of a relatively few members.

- The club is important to each of us. Many of us could not consider life without the South End. This Project will help secure the future...
of the South End for years to come.

☐ Apart from annual dues, the club seldom asks for additional financial support from its members. This is one time where we need everyone to help.

☐ Your gift will have measurable impact. Each dollar donated brings us that much closer to a start date. If we can start on September 21st, we should be completed by spring 2016.

You can contribute to this Project in several ways. You can buy a brick for $500. You can write a check directly to the South End Rowing Club. Or, you can make a tax-deductible donation on behalf of the South End to our fiscal sponsor, SF Parks Alliance. Go to www.serc.com for more information or to donate online.

Someone from the fundraising committee will be following up with you soon. In the meantime, as the last three multi-term South End presidents, we ask you to consider how much the club means to you and the difference your gift will make to this Project and the entire South End community.

Yours truly,

Bill Wygant
President

Kim Howard Peinado
Past President

Peter Ross
Past President

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Message from the Swim Commissioner

Tom Linthicum aka Reptile

Summer 2015 is going to be one to remember for South Enders and open water!

We had Jeff Everett’s English Channel, Kim Chambers’s Farrallons, Simon Dominguez’s reverse Farrallon swim with a visit by the great white near the buoy, Ranie swimming in the icebergs again! Suzie Dods’s Triple Crown, the Nadadores Locos’s (all South Enders!) first-ever double Farrallon relay, the Golden Gate and an Alcatraz in the same weekend with the ‘Bergs!

And more record swims in Lake Tahoe: Amy Gubser, Vanessa Miller-Sims, and Asha Allen doing the length of Tahoe, and Karah Nazor, Dusty Nicol, Robin Rose, John Walker, and David Cannington doing the new Trans-Tahoe route (Viking Cave Rock to Emerald Bay).

Paddy Payton and Susan Petro swam a double Donner. The South End was represented on the “Old Men and the Sea” Catalina relay team by 85-year-old Bob Beach. Seven guys all over 80, in approx. 12h 15m! Bob Beach also swam the Donner Lake swim this year—he was the oldest swimmer and came in at 1h 42m!

Let’s do some more Nutcracker training swims soon!
Am I the First?
by Mina Rhoden

In a country where race, unfortunately, matters, I sometimes ask myself the question, “Am I the first African American to accomplish…?” I recently stumbled across an old SERC newsletter that published the demographics of the club and noted that less than 1% of the club is African American. Unlike the recently exposed, now former head of the Spokane chapter of the NAACP, I am African American thanks to the old “one drop rule,” even though in our more enlightened age I’m technically biracial with my Japanese heritage (there, I’ve answered the question some of you may have had but didn’t ask out of politeness). And so it is that I recently found myself asking, “Am I the first African American to complete the Bay to Breakers swim?”

In 2012, I failed to finish the Five Coves in three hours, swimming it in about 3:30. The race director at the time graciously allowed me to swim the B2B if I wore a swim aid. In my mind I didn’t qualify, so swimming it in fins was essentially swimming it for fun. Ah, the lies we tell ourselves sometimes...

It didn’t really count, and yet I continued to train at the Y in its masters’ program while also lifting weights for strength training. I felt ready. That day in 2012, at Seal Rocks I saw the huge waves breaking at Ocean Beach and I asked my amazing kayaker, Bryce, how long to the beach? He estimated 40 minutes in that washing machine. I was already feeling drained, having fed on gels only and having been stung repeatedly by sea nettles. At that defining moment, I gave up; I knew I’d reached my limit. It was the safe thing to do and the right decision, and a few minutes later the lead Zodiac picked me up and called the swim. After the seemingly interminable, harrowing return ride on the Lovely Martha complete with nausea and severe hypothermia, I promised myself never again.

Never again, unless… I could increase my chances of landing on the beach. But how? I’d need to shave an enormous amount of time off my qualifying swim, for starters. In late December 2014 I decided to join North Bay Aquatics where I later learned other South Enders train. I also had some informal coaching from the incomparable Suzie Dods, who checked in with me via email on my interval times and distances in the pool.

As I improved, I started to nurse the hope that maybe this might be possible. I lost precious minutes behind two Dolphin Club swimmers behind the Balclutha (they were so skittish they were practically dog paddling; I was less than genteel with my strongly worded request that they move over or swim faster, but they did neither, provoking a verbal tongue-lashing in South End fashion). The cheers on the dock when I completed lap five were unexpected and amazing. I’d done it, I’d qualified with a time of 2:57. Now there was no turning back.

In the weeks leading up to the B2B I realized that I needed to practice “sticking the landing” at the beach. Sharko, Randy Brown, and Joe Butler graciously hosted Ocean Beach practices, sharing their knowledge, wisdom, and words of encouragement. On my first attempt to get past the surf line, I literally thought I was going to drown. I kept getting pounded by waves, mis-timing the duck; panic started to set in but Randy in particular kept encouraging me to swim out. I did make it, obviously, but the attempt to swim out unnerved me more than anything. I practiced it again that day and again on another to lock in a successful beach landing. The one saving grace in my mind was that at least on event day I wouldn’t be swimming out but rather coming in.

So to return to the question, “Am I the first African American?” The answer, I suspect, is yes. My 3:50 time in the B2B is probably the longest time in the water for this event, so that might be a first, too. The great thing about SERC is most of the people here encourage swimmers of all abilities to get out of their comfort zones. The support I received from some of the elite swimmers was inspiring. Yes, there are always those naysayers who seek to diminish those of us who are slower. I am proud to say I qualified under the same conditions as everyone else, I jumped in at the same Bay Bridge, and exited at the same Ocean Beach, toes in the sand, baby! So it was MY first B2B.
I know that I never could have done this without the support and warm encouragement of so many South Enders! It is an experience I will always cherish, that no one can take away from me. I love the way everyone supported me in getting to the beach, from Joe Butler to the sweetest kayakers (Cy Lo and Niland Mortimer who willingly volunteered to kayak the slowest qualifying swimmer), to all the day-of-event volunteers, to my fellow beach practice mates and especially to the volunteers in Zodiacs and on the beach who were keeping an eye on me in the surf and cheering me on when I got swept backwards to Seal Rocks twice! This is a great club!

**Things to Know for a Gibraltar Swim**

by Steve Walker and Amy Gubser

Gibraltar is a beautiful swim. We saw whales, dolphins, and just had an incredible time. It is cool to say, “I swam to Africa.” People there are great, too! The swim is within reach for many people, and is an Ocean’s Seven swim. Below are a few tips.

**Before you go:**

1. Five times more people apply to the swim than can be accommodated. To maximize your chances, send an email to the Gibraltar Strait Swimming Association (www.acneg.com) at least a year before, including your qualifications (cold water temps/time, previous events). The early end of the typical open water swimming season will have the fewest applications, and the head of the association, Raphael, wants successful swims, so don’t hesitate to let him know that you can make it and back it up. Also, he likes people who are doing it for a charitable cause.

2. Know how fast you swim in km/hr.

3. A recommendation from a previous successful swimmer carries a lot of weight—personal relationships count a lot with Raphael. He’s a very nice guy, and extremely skilled at what he does.

4. Raphael is not good with email, and also uses non-responsiveness to weed out those who are not serious. Just keep emailing him.

5. There is a registration cost advantage to podding; however, you and the other swimmer(s) must stay 15m or closer, or they will call the swim. They are very strict about this.

6. Stay in Tarifa. An Airbnb place for $50/night will get you a small but clean apartment five to six blocks from the water. Book early for anything during the summer.

7. Plan on being in Tarifa at least a week. The weather is capricious, and Raphael is pretty conservative. Conditions that many bay swimmers could handle are not acceptable to him. He also has to deal with shipping traffic (long visibility is important) and African/Spanish Coast Guards (who are quite concerned with smuggling, both drugs and human cargo). You’re looking for the day that wind is below five knots, and when the mist is light enough that it will burn off for good visibility (four to five miles)—there are big boats.

8. Prepare for a six-hour swim. It will probably only take four to five (a little less than nine miles), but conditions can change quickly, and you don’t want to be caught short.

9. Make sure your phone is unlocked before you go. The Orange Store on the main street has cheap SIMs.

10. Fly into Jerez or Malaga. Rent a car.

11. Bring some SERC or SF swag.

12. Arrive 1–3 days before. Likewise, plan leeway at the end of the window; weather is not in your control.

13. April is a good month—the water is 61–64 degrees.

14. There are some jellyfish, but we only saw smaller ones (none on the actual swim).

**When you get there:**

1. Raphael’s place is hard to find. People in town know him (especially older people). Having the address and his name written down helps. When you get in, go talk to him first. Let him know when you will be there, and he’ll tell you
what time to come.

2. Raphael will not be on the boats. However, his pilots are very good and they have local knowledge that is invaluable...they are excellent guys.

3. Do your training swims at Playa Los Lantos. It is the nice, long beach on the Atlantic side of Tarifa. Stay within about 50m of the shore, and avoid the windsurfers.

4. The pilots don’t handle feeds—you need to bring both your own stuff (bottles, mix, food), and also someone on the boat to feed you.

5. Visit Gibraltar—it is an easy day trip. Go to the top of the rock and see the monkeys and the view. Be sure to park in Spain—don’t drive all the way in—and walk across the border (don’t forget to get a stamp).

6. If you have a day off, go to Vejer de la Frontera (about 45 minutes away).

7. A little further away (1.5 hours) is Cadiz. It is a neat place...have a coffee on the waterfront. Could be combined with Vejer in a day.

Eating (as important as swimming):

1. Note that some restaurants are only open for dinner (opening around 7:30–8pm). Lunch is a 2pm kind of deal in Spain.

2. Tips at restaurants in Spain are easy—1 euro per person for lunch or dinner.

3. A couple recommended restaurants: Ancla, in Tarifa near the beach, and El Tesora, about 20 minutes north of town. You need reservations for El Tesora, and it’s only open for lunch.

4. Two dishes to have if you like fish: Galician octopus and tuna tartare. The tuna is fresh and like nowhere else on earth.

5. There are two supermarkets in Tarifa—not hard to find.

After the swim:

1. We tipped the pilots each 50 euros.

2. Raphael expects cash after the swim (no credit card, and he prefers cash over a wire). Be sure to get your ATM limit raised to $1,000/day before you leave the US.

3. Visit Morocco (Tangiers) the next day by ferry. It’s kind of like Mexico (TJ), but worth going. Don’t bother staying overnight, though.

2015 Bondi Icebergs Visit the South End Rowing Club
by Joe Butler

As Pacific Rim cities, San Francisco and Sydney (New South Wales, Australia) are linked historically, geographically, ethnically, and by age. We have been sister cities for nearly five decades, and over time there have been cultural exchanges.

Ken Maley is a neighbor who works in the Mayor’s Office of Protocol. He went to Sydney on an official sister city exchange in 2011, and he and his partner, Firat, a Dolphin Club member, sought out Aussie swim
clubs. Though snubbed in Manly, they were invited in and offered drinks in Bondi (buhn-DYE) by the Icebergs.

Ken thought, and Firat agreed, this club is Sydney’s South End! From that first and favorable impression an idea was born to make a sporting exchange between our swim clubs, adding to the sister city relationship with Sydney. It took a bit of time to establish contact, but many ‘Bergs had already been here to swim, and many South Enders had swum there.

It was not until Simon Dominguez walked out of our boathouse wearing his Bondi Icebergs speedo that the ball got rolling. Simon is a member of both clubs, and he sold the idea to the ‘Bergs to come visit. In July 2013, then–Swimming Commissioner Dianna Shuster welcomed seven ‘Bergs who traveled to San Francisco for an Alcatraz crossing, barbecue, and the first of our three total visits to date.

Mayor Ed Lee declared July 28th of that year “San Francisco-Sydney Swimmers Sister City Exchange Day” in San Francisco, in a proclamation presented by Ken to then–SERC President Kim Peinado Howard. The ‘Bergs’s Alan Gow, a second-generation Iceberg and past president, invited us to return the visit in 2014!

And so, in May of last year, Tony Lillios, his daughter Iva, and myself traveled to Sydney to swim with the ‘Bergs from Bronte Beach to Bondi Beach on the southeast coast of Australia. We were given red-carpet treatment and high tea at the Sydney Town Hall and made repeat swims across the bay and back over the week leading up to their winter swimming season’s opening day. We marveled at the crescent of white sand that is Bondi Beach, the clear blue Pacific water, and their “bogey hole”—a seawater-filled, 50-meter pool!

As if to cement this budding relationship, this year the ‘Bergs sent two dozen members—including 15 swimmers, spouses, and children—who swam both an Alcatraz as well as joining us for the 86th Annual South End Golden Gate Bridge Swim. Having upped the ante, we hope to send a larger number for their next opening day on May 4th, 2016!

Airfare and accommodations make this an expensive trip, but it is truly a memorable life experience, especially if you have never been down under.

Andy Field’s Pier 7 Swim

Creative Jane’s Pinata’s for Andy’s Swim, all Wearing Andy’s Swim Shirts
Going Both Ways
by Joe Boone

Going both ways doubles your fun!

For years as a rower at the South End Rowing Club, various swimmers asked the question “when are you going to start swimming?” I always responded with “does it count when I fall out of my boat?” Sometimes I would say to stumbling and speechless swimmers crawling into the shower “you guys must be recovering crack-heads, coming down here day after day to jolt your mind and body senseless in that cold water.” Well my suspicions have now been confirmed that some swimmers at the South End are recovering crack heads, but by far the majority of cold-water swimmers simply find joy and challenge and bliss in the ocean and bay waters of San Francisco. Wonder of wonders, I am one of them!

Last August I began to wade in the water to cool down my hot, aching, knees and feet after a row. Each wading episode lasted longer and longer until a fellow rower, Nancy Sorrell, suggested we go swimming for real, and we tried it. This was last August and the water was probably 65 degrees and not too challenging. I have always considered myself a water person, surfing, sailing and rowing. However when Nancy and I jumped into the water, and as I did my imitation of a wounded bullfrog, pushing myself out between the docks, panic hit me as I realized that I was in over my head. I peered out to the first buoy, the one leaning on its side and decided that was just too far.

Well, here it is almost a year since that first tentative swim/splash panic attack, and Nancy and I are confirmed swimmers, and still rowing. In fact, we both swam through the winter, doing 20 minutes in the 53 degree water, and we are now luxuriating in the warming waters as our swims become longer and longer. I never imagined I would say this, but I love swimming! I love wading into the water and taking those first few strokes and feeling that the water is welcoming me and that I belong in the water. I am surprised as I go about my day and catch myself thinking about my last swim, wishing I was back in the water, and anticipating tomorrow’s swim. I don’t row every day I am at the club, but I do swim each time I am there.

Had I not been a member of the South End, and watched swimmers go into the water day after day, I would have never conceived the idea of swimming in the Bay without a wetsuit. Now, when I come to the Club I know I will have something fun to do, row or swim, or both. So I am now bi-sport and by going both ways I know I will have a fun and satisfying experience each time I come to the mighty South End.
This July, the South End rowers were joined again by a member of our British sister rowing club, the Dittons Skiff and Punting Club. Jasmina Rahman and her traveling companion joined the mighty South Enders for a marvelous row to the Golden Gate Bridge. Jasmina joyfully rowed in one of our Viking-class boats with our esteemed rowing commissioner, Tony Gilbert, while other South Enders—including Rosanna Lerman, Janie Bryant, Allan “Alpo” Calder, Capt. Taylor Standlee (USMC Ret.), Steve Cvitanovic, Cy Lo, and Oliver Gajda—rowed a handful of our other wooden boats.

Being river rowers at heart, South Enders took the opportunity to exaggerate the impact of the approaching wakes from vessel traffic … no, we were never in jeopardy of flipping!

Founded in 1923, the Dittons Skiff and Punting Club (DSPC) is based on the River Thames with a club and boathouse at Thames Ditton on the reach above Teddington Lock. As well as taking part in regular skiff and punt racing competitions, crews from the club have established several rowing world records.

Post row, we were joined by many more South Enders for what turned out to be about two dozen Irish coffees, generously provided by the Dittons! For the uninitiated, the Buena Vista Cafe is our longtime neighbor (Hyde and Powell), credited with introducing Irish coffee to the United States in 1952.

A great time was had by all at this welcomed and international gathering of like-minded rowing souls. All South Enders are invited and encouraged to drop in for a visit next time you are in the London vicinity.

The Craftsbury Sculling Center, part of the Craftsbury Outdoor Center in northern Vermont, hosts numerous sculling camps every year and is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. In May, sculling camp helped me move from my self-imposed designation of “fake rower” to the category of novice. Over the years many of our best scullers have participated either as campers or coaches, and all of them had been telling me, “You’ve got to go.”

The camp is located on a beautiful, serene pond called Big Hosmer Pond. Masters, recreational, and elite rowers share the premises with elite biathlon and Nordic skiers pursuing summer training programs.

If the world were a bit different I could have spent the entire summer there. We rowed three times each day, the coaching was fabulous, the food was truly fantastic, the other rowers were friendly and supportive, and there was yoga too! All that good stuff and the improvement in my sculling skills almost erase the plague of black flies from my memory.

New mantras are buzzing in my head, and I hope a few
of them may help you: “Lay back into the arms of the wind,” “Come up to the catch with a Broadway-here-I-am attitude,” “Row to your bow,” “Gumby, sink the muscles between the shoulder blades at the catch,” and “Be patient at the catch.” There are more, but I suggest you go to Craftsbury to develop your own.

Handball Update
Submitted by The Scoop

Cinco de Mayo: This holiday has become more “Drinko de Mayo” to some, so a quick history lesson on why we remember this date:

This holiday, which is 152 years old now, commemorates the battle of Puebla de Los Angeles (in east Mexico) where a vastly outnumbered army of Mexican Americans defeated a well-equipped French force of 6,000 men on May 5th, 1862. The Mexicans were led by General Ignacio Zaragoza Seguin. But this battle, and others like it, was fought over concerns about freedom and civil rights—the issues at the heart of the American Civil War. Mexico had abolished slavery in 1810, and Mexican Americans were concerned that the Confederate South would continue to support slavery of indigenous peoples. They were very much in support of President Abraham Lincoln. The Mexicans who fought back against the French were mostly of the NahuaT background.

Now back to the South End Rowing Club ...

It was hot in San Jose/Santa Rosa/Sacramento, but 60 degrees and freezing in the City. Like Mark Twain once wrote, “the coldest winter I’ve ever spent was a summer in San Francisco.” But inside the historic SERC, the courts were warm and dry, and the handball action was in full take-no-prisoners battle mode.

A strong field of 50+ players hit the courts, with open/A, B/C/60s/70s divisions.

There were also piñatas—filled with two pounds of candy and courtesy of Wayne Black—held high from the balcony by Rory Moore as kids like Andrew Negrete drew aim and whacked away.

Outstanding food was provided by Frank Vasquez, and many people remarked on how delicious all the flavors and seasonings were. A big, five-gallon pot of menudo soup was on hand for the players, and cold IPA bottled beers were offered to the discerning beer aficionados.

Saturday night, the Dolphin Club graciously allowed the players into their inner sanctum to watch the big fight (Pacquiao/Mayweather) for a modest fee. The Dolphins and the South End are one happy family, and the players are the beneficiaries of that thanks to the hard work of tournament director Jim Silla and Wayne Black working tirelessly behind the scenes to make things go smoothly for the players.

Men’s Open Doubles:

Number-two seeded Lennart Delatorre/Mike McDonald ran into the dynamic team of Jesse Harris/Tom Parkinson of Willits, CA. Jesse/Tom were too quick, too agile, and just too DAMN YOUNG. Mike and Lennart hit plenty of their legendary shots, just not enough to overcome their young opponents.

On the other side of the draw was the 50+ dream team of Gary Stedman/Francis Breining. Both players were fit, quick, and played determined handball—no weakness to be found. Miguel Negrete and Nacios Delgado battled, but Gary has been on a roll for a year now. He was shooting with precision, and choosing excellent pass-shot trajectories to put their opponents back on defense. In the end, the Nacios/Miguel team struggled with the glass back wall, made especially dark with the new cheerful (?) “Alcatraz grey” color that made everything look darker. Victory to Stedman/Breining, a “Golden Masters” team was in the men’s open semifinals!

That’s where they ran into last year’s open champs Erik Torres and Coleman McGrath. Incredibly, Gary/Francis started out red hot ... scoring the first five points with wicked reverse serves by Francis, and bottom-board kills by Stedman. Vicious rally after vicious rally commenced, with Gary leaving his feet and diving on numerous occasions to extend rallies, and Francis nimbly covering the front court.

Erik used pass after pass to try to soften their senior opponents, who were determined to hang tough. No
towel breaks, no timeouts called. Just fast play that resembled a soccer game.

But in the end “Youth must be Served,” and the tremendous pressure created by Erik/Coleman gave them some scoring possibilities that they jumped on. First game was won 21-16.

In the second game, Gary and Francis knew they “let the first one go.” They continued to battle but darn (!) THEY WERE GIVING UP THREE DECADES ... but that doesn’t mean they didn’t stop fighting to the bitter end, giving Erik/Coleman the match 21-8.

In the finals Jesse and Tom looked strong, and started out hot. But it seems Erik just needs a bit of court time before he starts unleashing lighting-quick wrists to snap off passes and kill shots. Coleman made incredible saves and flat rollouts, GAME ON! Jesse used his timeouts, used his reverse serves, but succumbed to the pressure of two athletes hitting their prime, Erik and Coleman. The final scores were 21-10, 21-12.

Men’s A Doubles:

Ron Strausbaugh’s superhuman performance—playing three full matches in one day (Saturday)—was insane. He managed this partially by dipping into the cold waters of the bay after every match, which is Mother Nature’s Advil.

Ron and partner Jesse Ward had outlasted Jim Silla/ Mike Linnik in a brutal two-hour match in the semis. In the finals, Mike Housman had to fly back to LA so Artie Ward jumped in to square off against his son Jesse and Ron Strausbaugh. Artie and Juan Carlos O’Campo put up a spirited fight, but the athletic Jesse’s court coverage was extending every rally. Yet when the ball went to former US Open champ Strausbaugh, he made them pay as well for a final score of 21-7, 21-14.

In a city known for its preference for a good wine, it seems that a fine whisky is the drink of choice in watching and enjoying a good match. First Jack Daniels, then Clansmen Scottish Whisky came out.

Down below in the bar, Wayne had brought delicious homemade tostadas. Someone also brought white cauliflower to the party ... seriously?

Thanks to Frank Vasquez and his crew for the delicious catering all weekend. Thanks to new South End handball commissioner Jim Silla for directing yet another successful tournament. Thanks to Rory Moore, Wayne Black, and all the South Enders who helped make it happen. A special thanks to Sue Crothers for managing the desk from sunup to sundown. Thanks to the hospitality of both the South End and Dolphin Clubs opening up their courts to the players.

Meanwhile, on Sunday, the players watched as the Alcatraz swimmers were coming into the beaches cold, tired, and happy to be on tierra firma. Unbelievable stuff.

Cinco de Mayo—and Viva la Mexico as we celebrate the Mexican victory over the French in 1892. If you didn’t make it this year, don’t miss it next year. And congrats to our two-time open doubles champions Erik Torres and Coleman McGrath. As the rest of the field already knows, these guys are just going to get better for next year, so get used to a long run by these two athletes.

Scores

Men’s Open Doubles:

Round of 16:
Arturo Suarez/David Kennedy d. Rory Moore/ Frank Vasquez 21-14, 14-21, 11-10;
Gary Stedman/Francis Breining d. Michael Housman/ Juan Carlos Ocampo 21-17, 21-5;
Nacio Delgado/Miguel Negrete d. Matthew Anderson/ Paddy Dunn 21-6, 21-4;
Jesse Harris/Tom Parkinson d. Ron Strausbaugh/Jesse Ward 21-11, 21-14;
Tom McGrath/Joe Tierney d. Arthur Ward/Mark Reynolds 21-4, 21-13;
Quarterfinals:
Erik Torres/Coleman McGrath d. Suarez/Kennedy 21-7, 21-5;
Stedman/Breining d. Delgado/Negrete 21-10, 21-16;
Harris/Parkinson d. McGrath/Tierney 21-8, 21-12;
Lennart Delatorre/Mike McDonald d. Sternberg/Walsworth 21-15, 21-8.

Semifinals:
Torres/McGrath d. Stedman/Breining 21-16, 21-8;
Harris/Parkinson d. Delatorre/McDonald 21-8, 21-18.

Finals:
Erik Torres/Coleman McGrath d. Jesse Harris/Tom Parkinson 21-10, 21-12.

Men’s A Doubles:
Quarterfinals:
Michael Housman/Juan Carlos Ocampo d. Matthew Anderson/Paddy Dunn 21-8, 21-10;

Semifinals:
Housman/Ocampo d. Rory Moore/Frank Vasquez 21-15, 21-19;

Finals:

Men’s B Doubles:
Round of 16:
Larry Pilgram/Richard Perez d. Bob Del Torre/Julio Fabian 15-21, 21-15, 11-3;
Eoin Lehane/Dave Santos d. Adam Diaz/Michael Aguilar 21-2, 21-7;
Peter Briceno/Dennis Reis d. John Stellamach/Stephen Williams 21-11, 19-21, 11-4;
Welcome, New Members!

Christopher Alonzi
Mark Bellias
John Binder
Gary Blum
Angelina Calderon
Jason Camero
Eric Chasanoff
Wendy Cornish
Tanya Couch
Jeff Critchfield
Philip Cussen
Lisa Diener
Myles Dungan
Khalid El-Awady
Lucy Faust
Jamie Firth
Karen Gemmel
Peter Grant
Frederick Healig
Liz Hutchinson
Peggy Johnston
Rebecca Konkel
Kurt Krikorian
Robert Levi
Samuel Nelsen
Deborah Newton
Lisa Overton
James Peirano
David Penner
Vivian Queirolo
Gilbert Ramirez
David Rothwell
Kennan Saiz
Michael Scharf
Ed Schweitzer
Mikhail (Misha) Shemyakin
Kevin Silva
Brandon Smith
Benjamin Sniekus
Ben Stevens
Nitsa Swain
Peter Van Bemmel
Mark Walseth
Catha Worthman

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