

Harbor jumps the tracks

Harbor 9.14.13

Spaces for 360 boats south of the train trestle were dedicated at the new Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor on April 19, 1964. Congress had approved a recommendation



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Our Ocean Backyard

from the Army Corps of Engineers for a "harbor of safe refuge" for boaters who'd previously docked their vessels offshore and on the Santa Cruz Wharf.

Fishermen such as Victor Ghio and Angelo Canepa used the harbor as they thrived on the ocean's abundance. Recreational boaters in the Santa Cruz Yacht Club purchased a building on Woods Lagoon's western shore and relocated its operations there from the wharf in 1964.

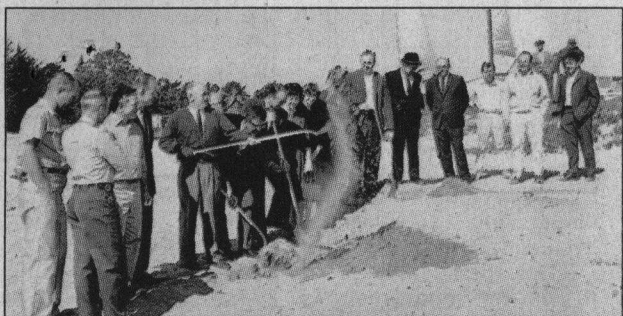
The harbor's leadership began to grapple with the problem of sand moving from the west and into the harbor mouth. But longtime award-winning sailor and former Santa Cruz Yacht Club Commodore Ernie Rideout reminds us that sand from the San Lorenzo River trapped at the harbor's west jetty has a benefit.

"The port district has provided this wide, beautiful beach at Seabright for people to enjoy," Ernie told me, recalling the days before the harbor when the beach was barely passable and he would wander into caves carved into the cliffs by high tides. During the dredging season the harbor will also deposit sand just offshore and east of the jetties, creating a great surf break. While providing these benefits from sand, the port itself serves non-boaters as well.

For example, Mike McClellan and Mike Clark bought the old Sea Witch coffee shop in 1969 and transformed it into the Crow's Nest, then selling it to Ted Burke and Bob Munsey in 1978. McClellan still helps out there today and, yes, according to Jack O'Neill that is a real anchor in front, provided by a couple sailors in exchange for dinner. Aldo's had been located at that location then moved to the other side of the channel.

In 1965, Jack O'Neill and Harry Hind spearheaded construction of the building next door and for the next 40 years it hosted among other things sail-making, a KUSP-FM studio, and a surf shop. Today, its upstairs houses O'Neill Sea Odyssey's ocean science education center and private tenant spaces managed by the nonprofit, including the Surfrider Foundation's lab and office. Other buildings that graced the edge of the lagoon still stand today, including the harbor office.

But it was that boaters' need for more slips that pushed the harbor to consider expansion in 1968, just four years after it opened. After studying the idea, the port commission approved building more berths inland from



O'NEILL SEA ODYSSEY/CONTRIBUTED

Groundbreaking for the O'Neill Building. Jack O'Neill is at the far right.

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the train trestle and what Jean Brockelbank has pointed out is named the "Glenn E. Coolidge Memorial Bridge" after the former California legislator which takes Murray Street motorists over the harbor.

Ernie Rideout said he remembers that the expansion was borne of the harbor's early success. "The demand for berths developed into a waiting list," he told me. "Because of that, increasing the size of the harbor was a natural thing to do." There was a minor downside to the expansion, however. "Sailboats have to

tabernacle their mast to go under the bridge, and that's a bother." Ernie said, describing the process of lowering the mast.

So the harbor jumped the tracks and at a cost of \$5 million, 455 more slips were built and ready for use in 1973. My next column: outlaw surfers and lost taxes.

And now for a shameless plug: The sixth annual Taste of the Harbor by Intero Real Estate — Santa Cruz Harbor Beach on Tuesday will benefit O'Neill Sea Odyssey. To get reservations, visit www.tasteoftheharbor.com.

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