

Rick Kennedy

Log of *Boethius*

Pilgrimage to the Yankee Dolphin Homeland of Santa Ana

May 2018

After a proper Mother's Day afternoon dinner, *Boethius* and I sailed north. The kids had called in for their talks with mom. The parents-in-law shared our meal. I had loaded the boat and filled the gasoline jugs on Saturday. After dinner, after the ice cream, my eighty-eight-year old father-in-law said he would drive me down to the boat. This was the scariest part of the whole sailing venture.

I cast off my mooring at 1650 put up sails in San Diego Bay in an excellent wind of maybe 15 knots. I rounded Point Loma then tacked up toward the entrance to Mission Bay, the former estuary of the San Diego River. The sun set and the sky was darkening when I anchored in the free anchorage at Mission Bay.

At 0540 on Monday, May 14, I pulled up anchor and started motoring north. As usual I pointed the bow between Catalina Island and Dana Point—both more or less 50 some nautical miles away. If the wind, when it filled in, was more westerly or southerly than normal, I would go to Santa Catalina Island. If the wind was more normally northwesterly, I would fall off to Dana Point.

Dana Point it was, and the wind eventually picked up to 25 or so knots in a boisterous sea which kept us moving fast. I anchored behind the breakwater at Dana Point at 1545. No one else was in the free anchorage. Given the rough seas, I decided that I would not, the next day, go out to the island. *Boethius* and I would, instead, stay close inshore and tack up along the coast below the San Joaquin Hills to Newport Beach and its neighbors Costa Mesa and Santa Ana—the fiberglass triangle of late 1960s and early 1970s boat building. Santa Ana was where *Boethius* had been built and where I, barely a few months old, had lived in 1958 before shipping across the Pacific out of Long Beach to live in navy housing in Japan for three years.

Next morning, I motored over to a guest dock where I could go to a restaurant to have a good breakfast.



Morning at Dana Point

In light winds I tacked in close to the coast. The freeway goes behind these hills because they drop steeply down to the coast. I thought it would be good to go in close and see the fancy houses and keep an eye out for cool architecture and church steeples. Only in Laguna Beach did I see a church tower. This one in some sort of Spanish-Romanesque form.

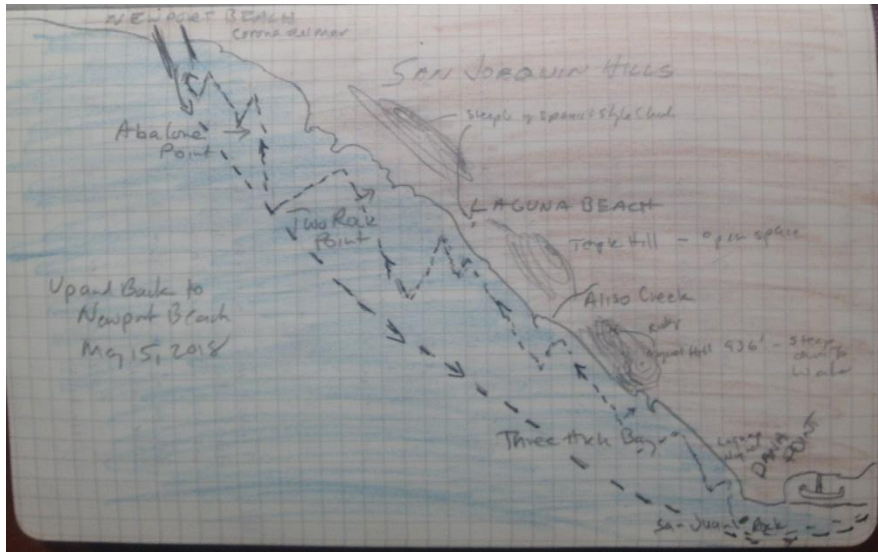
Laguna Beach is an old (by California standards) artsy-beach-bum town. Founded around the turn of the twentieth century at the mouth of a canyon that cut through the San Joaquin Hills it was, back then, very much isolated from the Los Angeles basin. Newport Beach/Costa Mesa/Santa Ana are not far away-- but yet a world away—because they are at the busy southwestern corner of the flatlands of Los Angeles. I took a picture of the the mouth of the canyon where Laguna Beach sits:



Newport Beach is more Disneyland than harbor town. In the 1950s and 60s, even in the 1970s, it had a lot more character, as did Costa Mesa and Santa Ana. Now this whole region, with its nearby University of California at Irvine, is overbuilt, over-rich, and has no cultural center. There are nooks and crannies where Newport Beach has some of its pre-1980s character, but they are hard to find. The best place to look for character was in the mooring fields. I did not see any other Yankee Dolphins, but I saw many late 1960s early 1970s boats that still rode their mooring with dignity even if they looked a little overworked. Throughout the morning as I had tacked up the coast dolphins (them mammal) and pelicans were abundant. I had plenty of time to think about my pelican clips on the safety line. The one's on *Boethius* are way cool in a 1960s sort-of style. The new one's in the West Marine catalog have none of the shapeliness that signals a real pelican. As *Boethius* and I motored around in the harbor we bonded, psychically, with others boat with pelican clips that looked like ours.



As we motored around the harbor, the wind was still blowing at 25 knts or more. It was past time for when winds usually start dying. These winds, like the night before, were going to keep blowing. *Boethius* and I decided that we should just ride the wind back down to Dana Point. Rounding up and heading out the channel, we had a great sled ride south! We ran with only the jib out, racing along with three to four foot swells lifting us from the starboard quarter and running underneath.



The next day, as we ran back down to San Diego in similar conditions, the Coast Guard regularly broke in on the radio declaring small craft warnings throughout the California Bight, especially up in the northwestern channel islands. Heading to San Diego we were on the edge of these winds and had a great run back to home.