

GULFSTAR OWNERS CLUB

News from the Gulfstar Owners Club office is both good and sad.

I'll start with the sad news first. Irene Meinch, founder of the Gulfstar Owners Club passed away on March 12, 2011. Her obituary from the Atlantic Cremation Service, was as follows:

Irene Kropp Meinch. Irene was born in Philadelphia, PA., November 10, 1932 to Chester Joseph and Bertha Kropp. She lived in Florida more than 40 years and retired from the yacht brokerage she ran with her late husband, Jack Meinch. She moved to Wilmington in November 2002 to be closer to family. Irene was a generous and hard-working woman. She loved people and they loved her. She was a great cook, loved to garden, crochet and spend time with her many friends and family. She loved yard sales and sharing all her "finds" with those she loved. Irene is survived by her daughter, JoAnn Daley, son-in-law Mike Daley and grandson, Joe, Wilmington. Step-children: Kurt Meinch (Cindy) of Ashville NC, John Meinch (Gina) of St. Petersburg, FL, and Linda Marx (Glenn) of Burton, OH, and their children and their grandchildren. Dorothy Kropp, step-mother and lifelong friend. Brothers Jim Kropp (Cathy), Wilmington NC. Philip Kropp (Sharon), Fayetteville, NC. Sister: Faye Bryant, Williamsburg, VA. 6 nieces and nephews. Her loyal dog, Louie. She will be greatly missed by her family, her friends at St. Mary Church, her Red Hat group and her neighbors at University Place. Special thanks to her physician, Dr. Aymen Gebrail and his staff, for always taking the time to help make her life better. Donations in honor of Irene can be made to the St. Mary/Tileston Outreach at 412 Ann Street, Wilmington, NC 28401. Mass of the Resurrection was held at St. Mary Catholic Church, Thursday, March 17, at 4:00 pm., Rev Robert K. Kus officiating.

Condolences may be made to the family at www.atlanticcremation.com.

ED: Ironically, Irene's passing occurred during the 20th year of the club life.

I'm sure that all of you who knew Irene benefited in some way from the association with her. Personally I worked for and with Irene for about 10 years, during which time the GOC was established. I have only the highest regard for her. Trish

Now for the good news.

The Gulfstar Owners Club web site is up and running efficiently now. We ran into numerous problems nearly a year ago when we decided to change web site hosts.

The company we chose had been giving good service as computer repair service. Then we decided to expand and ask the technical side of the company to take over the web site because we thought we were being charged excessively for the service being rendered.

Initially, the new host acted and sounded knowledgeable and experienced. They began immediately upgrading the site.

Then, when we started trying to export data from our database into the web site so we could start emailing the newsletter and renewal notices, the problems began. Our new host kept telling us that things were being held up while waiting on specific software that would support our needs.

We waited far too long, giving them as much leeway as possible

until we finally realized that nothing was going to be done. It was during this time that the Forum was being “spammed” and nothing was being done to correct that. Numerous telephone calls from both Bill Gutknecht and Trish were ignored and never returned.

At some point we got smarter and hired another web site host. Fortunately, this one is a better choice.

Within a month, the website was cleaned up, upgraded and the Forum was “unspammed” (if, in fact that is an acceptable word). We continue to work toward exporting the membership list into the website so that renewals and newsletters can be transmitted via email rather than snail mail. But there are problems associated with getting the information into the website. The host keeps trying everything to avoid having to re-key nearly 1200 records that have been developed since the beginning of the Club.

So, for now the User ID remains “starstar” and the password is “snickers” so that anyone needing the Forum, or any other portion of the web site can access it with no problem.

I can only apologize for the long wait in getting this done. And I believe having the site inaccessible has cost us members, which we can hardly afford to lose.

So, if you are aware of anyone who opted to drop out of the Club as a result of this, please make them aware that things are now up and running on the website.

NEW MEMBERS

MARTIN, Robert

PHALEN, Tom & Susie
TYSON, Walt
EWING, Carol, Jon & Scott
STANLEY, Marry
MAGRINO, Russ, & Jody Schoen
MITCHELL, Rusty & Brandi
LRSON, Terry & Darlene

My aim is to still be in the office most Tuesdays, from about 9:00 am to 12:00pm or 1:00pm. However, I sometimes miss that. For anyone who contacts the office but gets no immediate response, my personal cell phone number is 727 434 5802 and I try and keep it charged and with me all the time. Response from that number may be quicker, in some cases.

The newsletter has been intermittent, due mainly to the fact that members are not communicating their trips, problems, etc so that they can be published and shared with other members. In the beginning, there was a great demand for information regarding Gulfstar because the company had been sold to Viking and there was no one else for owners to turn to. Initially we received tons of mail, phone calls, etc asking for information which we published monthly for the benefit of the entire club.

So, if there is anything you would like to contribute, please do so. We need more input to get the newsletter back into focus. The Forum will now be a good place to communicate, but articles about your boats, trips, problems, solutions, upgrades, etc, etc, etc will also be immensely helpful.

We started out reprinting a 3-part narrative about the Gulfstar Company. Two parts have been printed, this is the third. After the first part was printed, I found a better, more in-depth history of the company. But maybe that can be done much later.

THE GULFSTAR STORY, Part 3

The Lazzaras and Healyes continued to work together in the southeast Florida area under the Viking South company, with Bob and Bill Healy as the controlling parties. A reasonably good manufacturing time was enjoyed until the announcement of the Federal Luxury tax to be in effect s of Jan 1, 1991.

The big explosion of the War in the Middle East and uncertain economy forced the closing of the Viking (Ex-GULFSTAR) facility in Florida. All production then moved, as of early 1991, to Viking Yacht Company in New Gretna, NJ.

The old Gulfstar plant in Pinellas Park was being used to produce “Super Hawaii” motor boats and the commissioning yard housed our office and another brokerage firm.

For some time the site was for lease or sale.

The idea of the Gulfstar Owners Club came to pass, due to the calls and mail directed to the Gulfstar Mall in hopes of keeping a great product alive. We looked forward to a growing membership.

End of Story. For a very long time, we attracted and kept a growing membership. That has diminished in the past few years but we would like to reverse that.

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Hopefully, the cleaning up of the website will be an effort in that direction.