



## OBITUARIES AND APPRECIATIONS

### **Emily Potter Morse, Honorary Life Member**

Emily died in October 1999 after a two year fight with cancer. She grew up in Massachusetts but spent her summers at Cape Cod, where she learned sailing from her family in small boats built by themselves. Her first profession was teaching, first in New York and then in Japan, before returning to New York to enter the world of finance. She worked her way up to become a partner in a major brokerage firm, at a time when women partners were still a rarity.

Throughout her life Emily's greatest love was sailing, including ownership of a Stone Horse sloop named *Croatan*. She joined the OCC in 1976 after a passage from the US Virgin Islands to Oyster Bay, New York aboard Club member Ed Greef's *Puffin*. Six years later she was elected Rear Commodore USA North East.

A 1978 marriage having ended in divorce, Emily married Forbes Morse in 1986. Forbes was also an expert mariner. They both relished ocean sailing and reveled in the accomplishment of their many lengthy cruises. Forbes sailed the Atlantic a dozen times and Emily made either five, seven or nine crossings, depending on whom you consult. In 1990 Emily, Forbes and three others left Darien, Connecticut aboard their Swan 43 *Blithe Spirit* for an eight month cruise. The first stop was Cork, Ireland, followed by the English Channel, France, Spain, Portugal and Madeira, and then back across the Atlantic to Barbados. They then cruised the Caribbean until late February, ending up in the Bahamas.

Emily could navigate, steer or change a diesel head gasket better than most men, with no loss of feminine dignity, and her magic in a galley was matched in her charm presiding over the cocktail hour. In May 1991 the Ocean Cruising Club awarded Emily Honorary Life Membership in recognition of her outstanding service during two terms as Rear Commodore at a time when the Club was going through major difficulties.

Eventually, after many more cruises, Emily and Forbes retired from cruising and Emily devoted herself to caring for Forbes at their home in Pound Ridge, New York. Even while caring for Forbes, Emily took on other activities as diverse as tap dancing, training a puppy to be a guide 'dog for the blind', working in a thrift shop, and teaching library skills to the inmates of the Bedford Women's Prison.

In November 1997, in preparation for a knee replacement operation, Emily was found to have stage four cancer. The next two years were a story of extraordinary courage, dignity, enthusiasm and outward cheer in the face of a mortal enemy. As she made plans to move to a retirement residence in Redding, Connecticut, her newest ambition was to become a professional clown because she witnessed the immediate joy and happiness clowns brought to children of all ages in hospital.

On 14 November a memorial service was held in Greenwich, Connecticut attended by 114 devoted family members and friends, many of whom spoke of Emily's rare qualities of enthusiasm, *joie de vivre*, thoughtfulness, generosity, industry, integrity and imagination – what a woman.

Philip Potter





