

At Work With: *Anthony Sandberg*

Professional sailor and OCSC Sailing president, founder

By JoAnna Rodriguez

The view of the Bay from Anthony Sandberg's office in the Berkeley Marina is enough to drive anyone to distraction. Sitting on the second floor of his sailing school, the OCSC Sailing president and founder is so close to the water that when waves break, spray hits his window. "I chose this location for my school because the Bay has the best sailing in all of North America," he says. "It's just nine miles of pure heaven." We talked with him about teaching the sport to others, what makes a good instructor, and sailing at any age.

How did you get involved in sailing?

I've always been a sailor. My father is Norwegian and my grandfathers on both sides were sailship captains. If I had done anything but be a sailor they would have wondered what they did wrong. If you're Norwegian you're supposed to ski, fish, swim and sail.

Half my childhood was spent in Hawaii surfing, sailing and knowing that the water was my playground. Sailing just seemed like the most natural thing in the world.

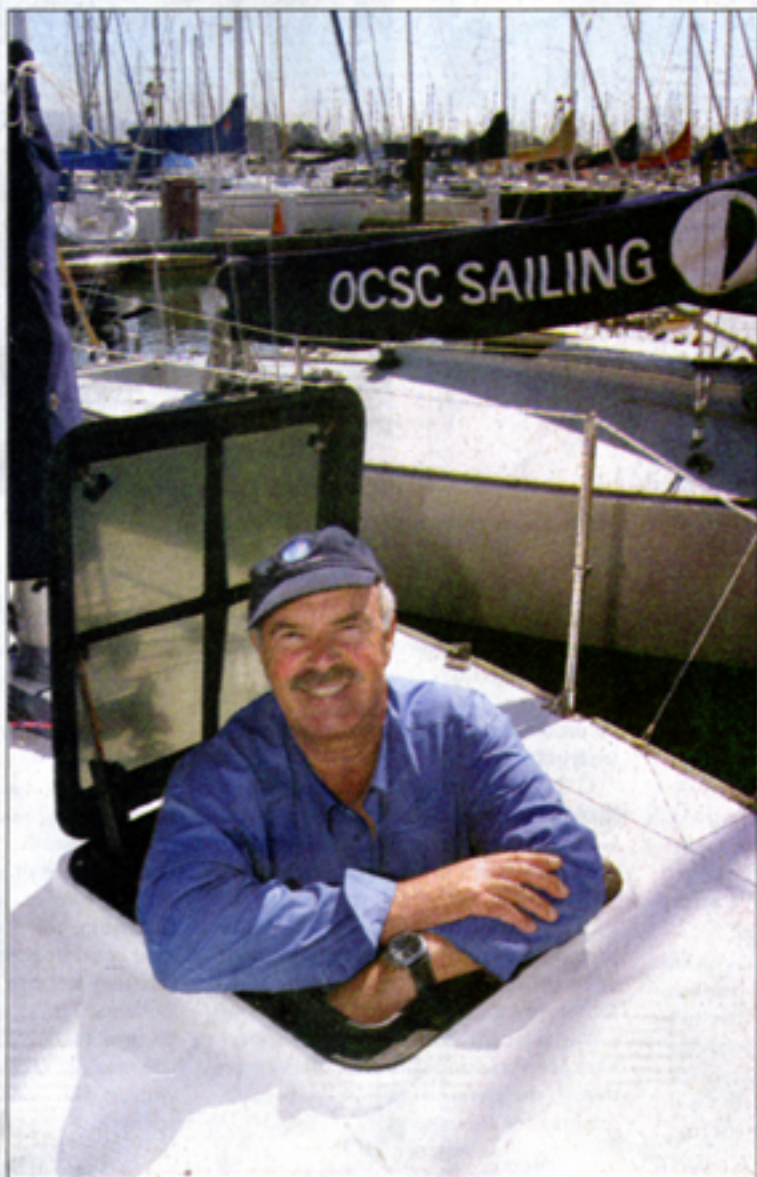
How did you make a career out of sailing?

At 16 I left home and got on a square-rigger and sailed around the Pacific. Out of college I skippered yachts around the world. By the time I opened the school in 1979 I had sailed all over the world and in major races.

What was your motivation behind opening the sailing school?

I realized that most people view getting into sailing as unapproachable. I thought, "This is too much fun to limit to the rich. What can we do with sailing?" I wanted to make sailing approachable and professional. There have always been yacht clubs and there have always been sailing schools, but we get credit with the sailing club concept, where you can have the entire world of sailing opened to you without owning a boat. Thirty years ago, this was a new concept.

When I first opened the school there was a boat, a phone and myself. A day would include teaching people to sail and essentially testing my recipes for how to pursue this. Now we have more than 30 different courses that we teach and six million dollars worth of yachts. The place is busy day and night.



PHOTOS BY JIM CHAPMAN

Anthony Sandberg has been sailing all his life. He now runs a sailing school in Berkeley, teaching folks of all ages.



Anthony Sandberg

Job title:

Professional sailor and OCSC Sailing president, founder

Place of employment:

OCSC Sailing

Years on the job: 30

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People skills are necessary if you're going to become a sailing instructor, maintains Anthony Sandberg, shown at some of his many daily tasks.

What is the scope of your work?

I teach the school's sailing instructors and specialty classes on things like Mediterranean mooring.

There are specific techniques for docking and anchoring in the small harbors of Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy and Turkey that are unusual and you have to know how to handle your boat in close quarters.

Also, we run presentations on sailing in various places like the South Pacific or the Caribbean, where you're dealing with reefs.

A big part of my job is going on adventures around the world with my clients. This year, I've done a trip on a schooner down the coast to Mexico. Coming up are trips to Peru, the Greek Islands and Antarctica.

Wherever we go, I want to make sure we give back on a local level so in every place that we sail we find and donate to a nonprofit environmental organization.

What are some of the rewards of pursuing a career in sailing?

The nice thing is there's longevity to sailing. Some of my instructors are 65 and 70 years old. They are kept young [by the sport]. Also, you can really be in any field and still teach or work in sailing. One of my instructors is a physicist, and for everyone it is a sport they are passionate about.

How could someone who can't afford classes get involved in sailing?

If someone wants to get into this sport, my best advice is go work for the best business there is in any capacity. You have to be exposed to the day-in day-out aspects of a boat so start doing basic things like cleaning boats and work your way up. You will make progress in relation to your efforts.

What should a good instructor teach his students?

When we teach people to sail, the mechanics of raising a sail are frankly a small part of the sport. Teaching students to be

a good crewmate, make people feel safe and have a deep knowledge of sailing are all just important.

What does it take to become as an instructor?

U.S. Sailing is the national organization that's the controlling body of the sport. Going through their training program qualifies you as a professional instructor.

To work in our school, you have to sail a lot and know many different boats. You should have gone to a good sailing school or be associated with it to know the sailing techniques, and you'll need to know how sailing is taught. Some of my instructors have been teaching sailing for 20-30 years, though the average employee has been teaching for about six years and has 10-15 years of sailing experience.

What can someone make as a sailing instructor?

Starting out you're making \$30,000-\$40,000 a year and you can work your

way up to \$50,000-\$60,000. As a skipper on a private yacht you can make \$100,000-\$150,000 a year.

What's your advice for potential instructors?

You have to be a people person and you have to find pleasure in others' success. Always remember the student needs to be the star of the show. Look to inspire and support your students through nurturing leadership. You're taking people out of their comfort zone and you have to make sure they feel safe. Also, don't judge your students. There's no way to know who will become a sailor. The 30-year-old triathlete may not take to it, but the 65-year-old woman will. Sailing is about passion, not strength.

Learn more about OCSC Sailing at www.ocscsailing.com or call 510-843-4200.