

By RICH ROBERTS, LA TIMES  
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The sailing community was stunned by the recent, sudden death of Peggy Slater at 72 on November 20, 1990. She seemed indestructible.

As sailor, yacht broker or all-around good person, with her flaming red hair and a trademark flower over her left ear, Slater was a match for anyone.

Peggy Slater taught Humphrey Bogart to sail. On her advice, he bought his sailboat, "Santana," from another actor, Dick Powell.

Stories such as that will be told in Slater's book "An Affair With the Sea," due out in February. A couple, brought to mind by longtime friends Rick Ermshar and Elyse Mintey, are worth telling now.

Slater learned to sail at 3 and was racing at 13. During World War II she crewed on the 56-foot ketch "Lucky Lady" to Mexico to collect shark livers for vitamins for the Army Medical Corps. One Christmas Eve they weaved back into L.A. Harbor through mines, unaware that the pattern had been changed while they were gone.

On a singlehanded sail to Hawaii she went forward to change a headsail during a squall in the Molokai Channel, fell overboard and was trapped against the hull by the sail for 11 hours.

"I believe I'm the only person to sail to Hawaii underwater," she said.

Peggy Slater retired as a broker two years ago and was living in San Pedro on her 43-foot boat, "Valentine."

She had just arrived for a speaking engagement before the women's Sailing Assn. at Marina del Rey when she suffered a massive stroke.

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