

Neil Morgan

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ROCKING THE BOAT: Yachtsman Walter Cronkite told New York Times readers yesterday about his ride off San Diego with Dennis Conner on Stars & Stripes and called next month's America's Cup mismatch "the strangest race ever staged on land, sea or air between humans, animals or machines." Cronkite expects Conner to win and then mandate livelier boats for 1991. Michael Fay is agreeing that Conner will beat him and already is promising to file a court protest. If the lugubrious Fay wins in court, he vows he wouldn't enter his name in the America's Cup record book or keep the cup: He might return it to the New York Yacht Club until a round robin elimination race can be staged off New Zealand, with the two fastest boats sailing for the cup. CAROUSEL: Sen. Pete Wilson is slowing down on his 55th birthday. Last year he had four fund-raiser birthday parties. This year, only two: this past Saturday's at La Jolla Marriott (where automatic sprinklers rained on guests) and one that Pres. Reagan will attend on Aug. 23 (his actual birthday) at the Irvine Hilton....Soviet-born Vladimir Gurevich, a San Diegan, hadn't seen his sister, Svetlana, since he left Moscow 15 years ago. He borrowed a friend's car to pick her up at the airport (with her daughter and granddaughter). And that only added to their culture shock. Gurevich whisked them off in developer Terry Sheldon's Rolls- Royce. MONEY MATTERS: It's time for hiccups in the market, says financial tipster Robert Prechter. Listen to his logic: "The next few weeks should be very important as they mark several key anniversary dates: the disappearance of Jimmy Hoffa, Nixon's resignation and Elvis Presley's untimely demise."...Sally Thornton has a happy tally from SDMA's Bal Masque. It netted \$152,000 for the museum, three times more than any before it. THE NAMES: Smokey Gaines, the former SDSU basketball coach, has bought Monk's. He's revamping the dance saloon and plans a name change. It'll become Smokey's....Nancy Bauer, interim news director at Channel 39 since Ron Miller got the ax, has won the job permanently. Al Janis, weekend sports anchor, is out....Atty. Michael Crowley is on the cover of Barclays California Law Monthly. He posed at the old SDPD jail for a story on litigating cop abuse cases. BYLINES: Barbara Herrera, a Tribune assistant managing editor, is dogged in her efforts to boost the number of women on our staff. Now there's a Tribune woman she's getting no credit for: a talented college editor from Columbia University who's working in our sports department as a summer intern. Her name is Susan A. Marchiano. But Susan uses the byline Sam....Andy Rooney, who was threatening retirement not long ago, has signed a four-year contract with CBS and will continue his column, now in more than 200 newspapers, including The Tribune. "I've got this nice office, and by now I know how to get there every morning," he explains. LAST WORD: "Mayor O'Connor's 1989 Soviet arts festival could occupy all the land which has been shut down from home building," real estate guru Sandy Goodkin told San Diegans Inc. "That would make it the first festival to occupy an entire city." Alison DaRosa assists with the Neil Morgan column.

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