



# ALERION EXPRESS

NEWSLETTER · SUMMER 2008

## ■ BIGGEST ALERION YET TO DEBUT LATE 2009 THE ALERION EXPRESS 45

We've come a long way from our original 28, but actually we've stayed close to what has made Alerion Express so popular and successful. That and some determined friends of Alerion are the foundation for our latest model, the Alerion Express 45 which is now in development.

Immediately obvious is the strong family resemblance to the other boats in our line: the same attractive low but springy sheerline, the low coach roof of the deckhouse (easy to see over when seated in the cockpit), the same bow and stern profiles and family of curves, even the same distinctive elliptical portlights.

The rig, cockpit, deck layout and self-tending boomed jib are just like those on our 33 and 38. And, we've made sure that this remains a boat that could be singlehanded. Certainly, it's more sensible for two or more, but it doesn't demand an expert crew to have a wonderful sail – now with the possibility of more offshore adventures, longer itineraries and comfort over weekends, weeks, or more!

What's different, of course, is the larger size of our new 45. That came from requests from sailors who loved everything we have done, but wanted a full accommodations plan with live-aboard scale and a longer waterline to take their beauty for longer cruises.

The aft cabin is one of the features that is not available on any of the other "gentlemen's daysailers" of this size. Their designs did not solve having a decent aft cabin; ours does. The aft berth is large enough for a couple without cramping their style; the cabin extension below the starboard cockpit seat provides nice access: our beautiful low profile is preserved and a nice sleeping cabin is created.

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Galley, facing starboard



Settee/Nav, facing port

The galley is suited for short cruises as are many other aspects in this layout. Perhaps we are responding to many of our customers' preference to reach a destination and explore the dining opportunities ashore. Yet, everything needed for a nice meal onboard is neatly included.

On deck, the cockpit is slightly larger than on our 38. With the seats further apart, we now have room for a centerline table (which incorporates foot braces). The helm area is wider and the coaming is shaped specifically for outboard bolsters to make the helmsperson supremely comfortable.

There are so many innovative ideas in detail that they would overflow this newsletter. Just one example is the water access option for the 45's transom sketched below. It's an intriguing solution that gives great access without spoiling the lovely lines and alluring look of a traditional transom.

We hope this "snapshot" view of the Alerion Express 45 will tempt you to visit her section on our website ([www.alerionexp.com](http://www.alerionexp.com)) where there's so much more detail. Alerion Express 45 #1 should be sailing by late 2009. Since the build-time for a yacht of this size is longer and fewer are available, we do urge you to contact us or your local dealer as soon as you decide you'd like to consider owning.



## FACTORY RENDEZVOUS SUCCESS SUGGESTS REPEATING

On Saturday, March 15, we opened the factory doors and nearly 150 people poured in for the first Pearson Composites Alerion Express Factory Rendezvous. Ninety of these were Alerion Express owners, and one became an owner by "taking delivery" of her AE20 during this event. The timing insured that no one had to give up valuable sailing time: it was still New England winter. We were delighted by the huge turnout and refuse to think that the several door prizes and free lunch we had mentioned in our invitations caused the crowd to swell.



Here are the lucky Alerion owners who took home a half-model of their Alerion Express just for coming!



Anne Meyer, proud owner of Alerion Express 20 #66, "took delivery" during the Rendezvous.

One of the purposes for this "open house" was to bring together our owners and loyal friends. Alerion Express boats are rather unique and have attracted a very special group of owners and aficionados. This event gave them a chance to meet each other.

A continuous parade of factory tours showed how Alerions are built. For many of our visitors, this was their first opportunity to see modern boat production, from our SCRIMP layup to woodworking to equipping. Many expressed gaining a much better understanding of their own boat by seeing this building process from beginning to end.

Taking this one step farther, there were seminars conducted by personnel from North Sails (on sail trim), Hall Spars (on rig tuning), Yanmar and Volvo. Our entire Customer Service staff was on-hand, as well, to make sure every owner knew they could contact us any time for help or advice.



One of the factory tours, talking the high road.

## ALERION 20 SAILS CIRCLES AROUND THE COMPETITION

We received this news from Desmond Runyan from North Carolina. The growing Alerion 20 fleet in Virginia is showing the bigger boats a thing or two.

"Alerion 20's finished 1,2,3 in the spring season series of the PHRF B fleet at the Blackwater Yacht Racing Association on Smith Mountain Lake in Virginia and mine also won in the fall and took the season championship for the B or small boat fleet. (Now our Alerion PHRF rating is being reconsidered by the club and we are likely to be racing the Alerions in the "A" fleet. We consistently finish ahead of most of the larger boats as well."



Desmond Runyan sailing his AE20 on Smith Mountain Lake, VA.

## ALERION EXPRESS 33 GOES TO HEAD OF FLEET

Richard Barker sent us this account of a race around Jamestown Island in Narragansett Bay, near where our boats are built. He obviously was both delighted and impressed by the boat's race-ability:



"This was demonstrated recently when we took a new - straight from the factory - Alerion Express 33 to the race course. While the AE33 is not specifically designed to race, we felt that the only way to test her performance and handling was to take her out to the race course and see what she could do.

"The race was the annual Around Jamestown Island Race on Labor Day weekend. This regatta traditionally attracts the best boats in Rhode Islands' Narragansett Bay for a season finale. Our class attracted a number of well-sailed, much larger, fully crewed boats; my daughter Katie and I alone sailed the AE33."

The race featured almost every wind strength, including flat calm and a stiff beat and a final run for the finish. In the stronger winds, "The boat sailed beautifully with my daughter lounging on the comfortably cushioned cockpit seats as we closed the gap on the leaders, all with crew on the rail.

"We turned the corner at Beavertail Light on the islands' south end and cracked off the sheets, sailing downwind with a Swan 41 in front of us that we had to beat both across the line and on corrected time. The huge roached main pushed us at great speed with the Hoyt boom effortlessly holding out the jib, wing on wing, as we sailed by the fully crewed Swan.

"My daughter was now driving, and I was doing the lounging as well as coaching her as she passed the larger yacht. We opened up our lead on them and eventually beat them on corrected time as well as finishing second in class, missing the win by seconds."



## RACING OPPORTUNITIES IN NEW ENGLAND

Here's a call to Alerion Express owners to muster for The Vineyard Cup (Vineyard Haven, July 18-20). This is a super place to sail and the organizers are giving us our own class, possibly even our own race courses. This will be the site for our Northeast Alerion Rendezvous. There are already a few 28's and 33's and at least (1) 38 that will be there. Sign up soon to reserve a mooring or dockspace in Vineyard Haven. Mark your calendar for a great summer get-together. [www.vineyardcup.com](http://www.vineyardcup.com) Our Alerion Express 38 won the 2007 Vineyard Cup Regatta competing against a fleet of over 30 yachts. This two-race contest was particularly interesting since a number of direct competitors to the Alerion were present.

And, if we get enough boats together, the NOOD Regatta in Marblehead (July 24-27) will give us a class. The Smuttynose Regatta in Portsmouth, NH is another great opportunity for all of you in southern Maine. Please contact George Spiecker ([g.spiecker@comcast.net](mailto:g.spiecker@comcast.net)) if you're interested in one-design Alerion racing (Marblehead NOOD or at the Smuttynose). George is an excellent sailor with tons of experience starting and maintaining one-design fleets. As an enthusiastic Alerion 28 owner/racer he is perfect for this job. We already have others and will be happy to help form more racing fleets by bringing like-minded Alerion Sailors together.

George Spiecker learned how to sail in Optimist Class Prams in Miami, Florida, was a past International Moth Class Junior Champion, and today races an Alerion Express 28, Hull #227, "Airtha", out of Portsmouth NH. This past season he won the overall PHRF Cruising Class, and their Smuttynose Regatta. When not racing he day sails with family and friends from the Wentworth Marina.

## GIVE US YOUR IDEAS & STORIES

Each time we go to an Alerion get-together, we are amazed by all the clever, practical and innovative ways our owners find to personalize their boats, add to their comfort, extract more performance, increase safety, and more. We also want this newsletter to be your newsletter. So, send us stories: events, adventures, tempests survived, favorite Alerion experiences. Include snapshots, too. Send us what you've done: a photo plus a brief description. We'll publish the best and we'll send a gift certificate to our upcoming online store to each person whose idea/solution/recommendation or story we publish. Plus, we'll give credit where credit is due. Just send your entry to Scott Bryant ([sbryant@pearsoncomposites.com](mailto:sbryant@pearsoncomposites.com)).



*Airtha having her way with a J24*



## ALERION SAILING GOES WORLDWIDE

The photo shows that Alerion Express can cross oceans without getting her feet wet. This particular container was shipped to Japan, the first of several headed there. The other photo shows a recent 28 getting loaded to a ship bound for Greece.

More of our beautiful Alerions are actually headed for Europe where we are currently establishing a dealer network. Europeans and Brits are especially drawn to how our boats look and sail.

It's also true that sailors over there have similar time constraints to ours. Because an Alerion Express can get underway in minutes and sail the pants off anyone around her, our boats are being recognized as "breakthroughs"!

With our first dealer appointed in the UK ([www.sdmarine.co.uk](http://www.sdmarine.co.uk)), we're about to announce (last details being worked out) the appointment of other European distributors to handle interest from a growing list of dealers there who want to carry Alerion Express. Perhaps we will soon be announcing a World Championship for those of you who race your Alerions.



The Osaka's confirm their AE38 order



Astarte departs for Greece

## FLEET FOUNDER REMINISCES

The San Francisco Bay Alerion Express 28 fleet now has nearly 20 boats, with almost one half racing. This fleet was the first one organized in the US. How did that all happen? Kirk Smith gets the credit. Here, the Alerion 28 owner provides some history:

"At a boat show I saw a boat that looked beautiful, but it wasn't an Alerion. After finding out it wasn't a production boat, I spotted an Alerion in a harbor and sent away for the brochure. Then, like many of us, I took a year to decide to buy one. When you hit 65, there come those statements about "only living once" and "you can't take it with you."

"My order went in 3 days after my birthday, and I flew back to Rhode Island in November to see my boat half-built and, finally, sail on one with Garry Hoyt. Since I already knew it would be a great sailing boat because it was designed by Carl Schumacher, I had not needed a test sail before I ordered one. Since I planned to dry sail my boat, the



factory agreed to design an internal lifting device. The boat arrived at a boat yard in San Francisco the end of January 2003.

"After discovering that the local PHRF rating would be 144 and getting no relief from the PHRF committee, I decided to see if I could get enough boats to have one-design racing. The team at Alerion gave me some names and phone numbers, so on one Sunday afternoon in 2003 at the San Francisco YC five of us met, forming the first real fleet in the US."

"Although I am still a member of the San Francisco YC in Belvedere (the oldest on the West Coast), I am now a new member of the Richmond YC and my boat is now at a slip, which I find means I am sailing much more often.

"Finally, besides being a beautiful boat and being the right size, at least for me, it is a great boat to sail. Even with the summer SF Bay windy conditions we sail with just 2 of us and hardly ever reef. When I see pictures of boats with 6 on the rail, I think of all those sandwiches and beer I don't need to take!"



## NEWPORT EXHIBIT RATED BEST IN SHOW

Newport Exhibition Group, who put on the annual Newport International Boat Show, announced during the September 2007 event that Alerion Express had been selected by a panel of independent judges as winner of the Steve Collins Award for Best Display Overall.

Their citation stated, "We believe that the Alerion display exhibited the highest level of attention to detail and the most consistent use of colors and themes to represent the company brand."

Judges commented: "Right away, you are not only taken with the boats, but also the display on their docks. Beautifully decorated with rich teak furniture, plants not overdone, carpet with their logo, large photos of the boats under sail in the booth background.... The look of the whole display was in keeping with the craftsmanship of the boats themselves."



## ■ DITZY SPINNAKER WINS IN PHRF

We received the following from Ralf Morgan, owner of the Alerion Express 28, *Ditzy*: "*Ditzy* won the Champion of Champions Regatta on San Francisco Bay.... Since *Ditzy* is the only [Alerion] on the Bay with a spinnaker, and PHRF here assumes a spinnaker in the rating, we approached the YRA with a request to substitute *Ditzy* [for the season champion]. They agreed.

"My wife Deb and I crewed with Michael (Land, owner of AE 28 *Lizabeth*). We won the regatta with a 2,3,1 set of finishes. The racing was very close: the top 5 boats in all three races finished within a minute, corrected time. With the spinnaker, the boat has some spunk downwind."

Great Job Ralf!



## ■ INTRODUCING A DEALER NEAR YOU

Alerion Express has nearly completed the transition from factory-direct to dealer-sales now represented coast to coast, as well as overseas, with our latest dealer appointments. This transition to dealers reflects the strong growth of Alerion Express, its popularity in many new locations, and our determination to provide local sales and service for our owners - wherever they may sail.

In the Northeast (USA), Cape Yachts now covers from Maine to Eastern Connecticut from 5 locations; McMichael's Yacht Sales extends the coverage through Connecticut, metro-Manhattan, Long Island and New Jersey. In the Mid-Atlantic, Annapolis Yacht Sales' two offices reach from Eastern Pennsylvania southward through Virginia, where St. Barts Yacht Sales picks up the brand through 3 offices covering the remainder of the East Coast down to Key West. Murray Yacht Sales covers the west coast of Florida including Louisiana, Alabama and Arkansas. Texas is covered by Sealake Yacht Sales.

The Great Lakes now have Alerion Express dealers in Chicago, at Karma Yacht Sales, and Michigan, through Irish Boat Shop's two offices. Lake Erie's watershed from Western New York and Western Pennsylvania to Ohio and North into Canada is now covered by RCR Yachts. Yachtworks extends the mid-west coverage North of Milwaukee through Minnesota.

On the West Coast, Kelly Nuttall covers San Diego, Heritage Yachts represents Alerion in Long Beach and Newport Beach, Passage Yachts picks up the rest of California, north of San Jose, from offices in Point Richmond and Alameda. The Pacific Northwest is covered by Signature Yachts from their offices in Bellingham and Seattle. Further appointments are expected for sailing waters not reached by the dealers already in place.

## ■ AE 38 EARNS VINEYARD CUP VICTORY

The Vineyard Cup is a new regatta that raises money for the public sailing program on Martha's Vineyard. This was a delightful event rich with maritime tradition, island festivities, and of course great sailing. Located in the heart of Vineyard Haven, the surroundings could not have been more beautiful.

Our Alerion Express 38 won the 2007 Vineyard Cup Regatta (July 7&8) competing against a fleet of over 30 yachts. This two-race contest was particularly interesting since a number of direct competitors to the Alerion were present.

In every case, with a minimum crew, the Alerion Express 38 outsailed the competition, boat for boat, by wide margins. For example, in race #2, a 15-mile course conducted in brisk winds ranging from 15 to 20 knots, the AE 38 defeated the Hinckley 42 by 5 minutes. Against the Friendship 40 the Alerion won by 8 minutes, and against the Morris 36 the Alerion margin of victory was a whopping 17 minutes!

This open regatta in fair wind conditions, definitively established the sailing superiority of the Alerion Express 38 versus the competition, and provides a ringing endorsement for the aerodynamic efficiency of the distinctive full-roached mainsail and the self-venting Hoyt Jib Boom.

Please visit [www.vineyardcup.com](http://www.vineyardcup.com) for more information on the Vineyard Cup 2008. We hope to see you there!



## FEATURE STORY: THE GHOST SHIPS WILL HAVE TO WAIT

This story (which has been abridged to fit in this newsletter) about the 2007 Clipper Cup Race and surviving a Lake Michigan storm was sent to us by Pat Nowak:



Pat Nowak, AE28 #322

"I hadn't crossed the big lake before and hoped to do so with Curt [his crew, Curt VanDuren] sometime this season. When Rod Leonard of Bayshore Yacht Club in Holland, MI suggested we participate in this year's Clipper Cup, a daytime race from Muskegon, MI to Port Washington, WI, we decided this was our chance to cross in the company of other sailboats, do some racing with our Alerion Express 28, and perhaps do well. We had been racing the boat in the Bayshore

Yacht Club Wednesday Races and were on a bit of a roll having finished first and second in our Jib & Main fleet over the last two weeks of Wednesday Night racing....

"By about 9 PM on Friday, a good number of the skippers involved began to conclude that with the extended periods of no wind, they weren't going to make it in on time, and the calls of abandonment to the Clipper Cup race committee were starting to come in. In retrospect, these boats were making the right call. Only 24 of the 47 starters did make it over to Port Washington in the 24 hour period allowed. We were making slow steady progress so we forged on, never really discussing abandonment, particularly after we were more than halfway over. The shooting stars were almost worth the price of admission....

"We had planned on getting some sleep Saturday morning, presuming our arrival would have been sometime late Friday or early Saturday. When we arrived midmorning Saturday and worked on getting our battery restored, the time for sleeping had passed. The new plan was to leave Port Washington at 4 PM, alternating watches every hour, getting our sleep in small amounts. We left about 4:15, hoisted the sails, and motor sailed south east on a warm beautiful day, exhausted but happy to be heading home.

"About 7 PM we started to see the storm clouds gathering in the west. They also began to appear to the north, and then suddenly in front of us. The sails came down, rain suits put on, and the hatch was closed. The rain and wind arrived along with lightning, lots of lightning close by.

"As the night wore on the rain never let up, with winds building to 20-25 knots. Our pretty Alerion Express 28 has a freeboard of about two feet so we were more than a little worried about wave height. These big waves would roll up to the boat, often quite a bit higher than our cockpit coaming, and the boat would be lifted up slightly before rolling hard to leeward and then violently back to windward. Around 4 AM, the winds increased to 30-40 knots. We couldn't see the waves very well in the darkness, which probably was a good thing as

we weren't seeing the "cliffs we were close to driving over." We might have been even more frightened than we were.

"We were trying to keep the boat heading toward Holland, a bearing of 110-120 degrees. Every so often we could see big breaking waves in the glow from the steaming light or hear the roar of the big ones coming at us. Our defense was turn up 15-20 degrees into the wave to keep from getting rolled. This went on for most of the night, until it got worse.

"The wind began to build above 40 knots and there were three separate 15-minute episodes of extremely high winds. I checked the instruments later in the night for maximum wind speed observed and it said 78 knots. I don't know how high the wind actually got as instruments can be affected by the extreme conditions. During the first episode of very high winds, with the waves threatening to roll us, we decided that our only hope from getting rolled or knocked off the boat was to keep the boat headed dead down wind, relying on the wind instrument to tell us the direction of the true wind. Later on, Curt said he would never forget the sound of the wind blowing through the rigging. Even with the engine speed down to 1400 rpms, we were still moving at 6-7 knots.

"We kept checking our six-gallon diesel fuel tank as we sure didn't want to run out and lose the engine at a critical moment. It was full when we left Muskegon, burning very little getting to the starting line the day before. We had another full six-gallon portable tank on board but I can't imagine how we would transfer fuel through a funnel on that rolling deck....

"The lightning was still close by but we couldn't hear the thunder because the wind was so strong. I told Curt that wherever the wind took us we were going, even if it was back to Port Washington. I asked him if he knew any good prayers and he said he was saying every one he knew. He also sang, to himself, every Christian hymn he could remember. I was saying prayers too. We were both frightened, seriously afraid for our lives. Please, God, give us another sunrise. "We made it back to Holland about 11 AM Sunday, absolutely nacked, as the English would say. But we made it. Rod Leonard was there at our berth to greet us, greatly relieved that we were still alive. The Alerion Express 28 took the blows, the Yanmar diesel ran for 19 hours on one six gallon tank of fuel and didn't miss a beat. My crew, Curt VanDuren, never wavered. He was the ideal crew: strong, smart, resourceful, and brave.

"Thank You, Lord. The ghost ships will have to wait."





"Elwood", one of our two robots hard at work on a plug

## PEARSON PRECISION TOOLING

One of the now not-so-secret capabilities at Pearson Composites is our in-house affiliate Pearson Precision Tooling (PPT). Early on in the life of Pearson Composites, it became clear that without good quality tooling, our boats could not have high quality parts.

PPT was created. One of its critical tools is a ABB 5-axis CNC controlled robotic milling machine. This lets each boat brand under the Pearson Marine Group umbrella build hull, deck and parts molds right here, using master plugs produced by our own router – to standards nearly unavailable elsewhere.

PPT, supported by extraordinary staff experience is capable of tooling for marine, automotive, aerospace and industrial customers, not just our own boat brands. And this operation is already at work on everything from custom yachts to hybrid commuter bus bodies. Next up for milling: Alerion Express 45.

## ALERION EXPRESS GOES UP-FASHION



Keep your eyes peeled for the rollout of Alerion Express clothing and gear, coming early this Summer (with more items being added as we build this line – and hear from you what you'd like to see us offer). If you're on our electronic list, you'll receive an email as soon as we open our on-line store.

We're talking to some clothing and equipment suppliers about items that will let you subtly tell others that you're an Alerion Express sailor. We'll also be offering some items that Alerion Express owners have found and recommended but which turned out to be hard to find in stores or catalogs.

Uncommon stuff for an uncommon group. Stay tuned!

[WWW.ALERIONEXP.COM](http://WWW.ALERIONEXP.COM)

## 400TH ALERION EXPRESS 28 SAILS INTO HISTORY

The timeless attraction of our Alerion Express 28 has been confirmed – again: the 400th sistership has just been delivered. Sold by Michael Beers of McMichael Yachts in Mamaroneck, NY, the Joerss family will sail this Dark Green-hulled 28 on Long Island Sound.

Four-hundred is an astonishing quantity, even for boatbuilders serving the "mass market." To find this many of a single model of "gentleman's daysailer intended for a much more discerning clientele is, simply, amazing.

And, yet, it's not. Just ask any owner or the many magazine editors who continue to refer to Alerions as the prettiest boats on the water.



The Pearson Composites team celebrates with pride!

## 'SEMPER FI' SALUTES A HERO



held prisoner for eleven days. Badly wounded with gunshot wounds and a broken back his image as a POW was seen around the world on the cover of Time, Newsweek and other TV and media outlets. Those events were recounted in both the movie and book titled "Black Hawk Down".

As a trained pilot, Mike was more comfortable (and visibly contented) at the helm of the 38 then sitting as a relaxed passenger. But who can blame him – there's nothing quite like piloting an AE38!

Alerion Express 38 hull # 5, bearing the appropriate name "Semper Fi" owned by ex Marine, Steve Riordan, was the platform for a unique day on the water. We had the privilege of introducing "Alerion Sailing" to Mike Durant while he had some free time before speaking in front of 500 law enforcement officers in Newport, RI. Michael J Durant is a New York Time best-selling author and motivational speaker. Mike was the Black Hawk helicopter pilot that was fired upon and subsequently crashed during a combat operation in Mogadisho, Somalia in 1993. After a horrific street battle he was overrun, captured and



Ken Whitt, former Tanzer 16 Champion sails on Smith Mountain Lake, VA.



Bill Borsari takes delivery of his 33 in San Diego



Alerion 28's at rest in the Chesapeake

## BOATSHOW AND EVENTS SCHEDULE

As we have grown our territory, added dealers and sold boats into new areas, our participation in boatshows and new Alerion events has also grown. Here are a few events you won't want to miss.

**BROWN & HOWARD WHARF YACHT AND AUTO SHOW**  
Newport, RI. June 21-22

**CHESAPEAKE BAY ALERION GET TOGETHER**  
June 21st. Contact Annapolis Yacht Sales for more information.  
[www.annapolisyachtsales.com](http://www.annapolisyachtsales.com)

**VINEYARD CUP – NORTHEAST ALERION RENDEZVOUS**  
Vineyard Haven, MA. July 18th – 20th  
Go to [www.alerionexp.com](http://www.alerionexp.com) for more details.

**NOOD REGATTA**  
Marblehead, MA. July 24th - 27th  
Go to [www.alerionexp.com](http://www.alerionexp.com) for more details.

**MAINE BOATS AND HARBORS SHOW**  
August 8th – 10th (Boats to be shown: AE28, AE33)  
Contact Cape Yachts for more information. [www.capeyachts.com](http://www.capeyachts.com)

**SMUTTYNOSE ISLAND REGATTA**  
Portsmouth, NH. August 9th and 10th  
Go to [www.alerionexp.com](http://www.alerionexp.com) for more details.

**CHESAPEAKE BAY ALERION RENDEZVOUS**  
September 6th and 7th. Contact Annaoplis Yacht Sales for more information [www.annapolisyachtsales.com](http://www.annapolisyachtsales.com)

**NEWPORT BOAT SHOW**  
September 11th – 14th (Boats to be shown: AE20, AE28, AE33, AE38)

**ANNAPOLIS BOAT SHOW**  
October 9th – 13th (Boats to be shown: AE20, AE28, AE33, AE38)

**ALERION FEST!**  
Richmond Riviera, CA. October 18th - 19th  
Go to [www.sfbayalerion.org](http://www.sfbayalerion.org) for more information.



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