



The Potter Yachter

Newsletter of the Longest Lasting West Wight Potter Club in the World

December 2014

Report: New Sailboat from International Marine

Sailors in Richmond Celebrate Voyager 20 Debut

by Phil Marcelis



It was fun seeing everyone who joined us for a sail with the new Voyager 20 in Richmond on November 15th. We had a great time in nearly ideal weather. And the dock party at the end of the day was a nice way to leisurely chat with Ken and get a firsthand look at his latest creation. (See it in action at: http://youtu.be/nhFA_CtDQHg)



We trickled into Marina Bay Yacht Harbor in our usual Potter way; which is to say that we showed up and were in the water anywhere between 9am and noon. In any case, there was plenty of time to enjoy sailing and good company.

(continued on page 5)

Also in this issue:

Commodore's Corner.....Page 2
Thanks From The EditorPage 3
The Dreaded TowPage 3
Getting or Giving a Tow.....Page 4



The Commodore's Corner

By Carl Sundholm

As a result of sailing in the San Francisco Bay area, we see a lot of things other folks don't see. For example, in Bud Kerner's recent Delta Bridges Overnight Sail (which had an outstanding turnout and was a fantastic success), the Potter Yachters saw an unprecedented glut of water hyacinth in the Delta. Where does the time go?

Looking back, the start of our sailing season earlier this year seems so distant. I suppose that's because we did a lot of fun stuff. It seems like forever since Dave Bacon kicked off the season with his talk about the "Gentle Art of Pottering," and we had our relaxing picnic sail to the U.S.S. Thompson. I thought our Potter Yachter's talk on places to trailer sail -- which we presented at the Strictly Sail Boat Show -- was outstanding, with our "stars" Jerry Barrilleaux, Judy Blumhorst, Bud Kerner, Tim Derry, and Dick Herman doing the Potter Yachters proud. The Potter Yachters also made the best sail by that I can remember at Jack London Square, with many horns a tooting to accentuate the moment of our arrival. Too many sails to mention but those that come to mind are Jerry B's Delta Overnight (and Phil's exploration of the Delta thereafter), the Moss Landing-Elkhorn Slough overnight, the Monterey Cruiser Challenge XV and Goose's Dory Taylor Memorial Sail, Clipper Cove under the remnants of the parted old Bay Bridge to nowhere, a fantastic Tomales Bay overnight with a bounty of oysters and music by the campfire, and Bud Kerner's wonderful Delta Bridges Sail. And then Ken Lange brought his Voyager 20 north for a season-ending sail out of Richmond.

This is my last year as Commodore of the Potter Yachters and I feel so very fortunate to have had so many memorable experiences and wonderful friendships develop during the past three years. It has been a fantastic ride and I want to thank everyone who took this "thing of ours", this magnificent sailing club, and made it better, with special recognition for jobs well done to Patrick Brennan, Phil Marcelis, Eric Zilbert, Don Person, Goose, Rich McDevitt, Rob Sampson, and sail hosts and contributors too numerous to mention. Thank you all for making this the splendid and incomparable group of unique and special individuals and wonderful shared experiences that make us the Potter Yachters. - 

Club Events on the Horizon

Late January 2015 - The Annual Meeting of the Potter Yachters

We're planning to hold our yearly meeting at the Oakland Yacht Club on a Saturday toward the end of January. Details in the next issue of the Potter Yachter Newsletter.

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The Dreaded Tow

by Dick Herman

I'm a collector of stories – sea, war, tall, short, or “there I was.” It gives me a false sense of security at dockside happy hours when I try to hold my own with the best of the Potter Raconteurs. It doesn't matter if they are true or not (the stories, not the PRs) they just have to be good. When I was asked to contribute some thoughts on towing for the newsletter, one of those stories came to mind – the Legend of the Flying Potter. As I first heard it from B. Frank Franklin, I know there must be some truth behind it.

It all started on a gorgeous spring afternoon on the Delta. It was a Saturday, the temperature a balmy 72, partly cloudy, the wind out of the west at eight to ten mph with a following tide, and Lost Isle was still open. A lonely P15 was making its way up the San Joaquin to that den of iniquity when the wind kicked up. Soon, the Potter was reefed. Then something went wrong. We will never know exactly what happened, but a reliable witness reported seeing the mast come down, which indicates a rigging failure. The same witness reported the outboard motor would not start. Now, the wind really started to gust as the Potter skipper paddled for shore. Unfortunately, his bulky PFD got in the way so he removed it. But that didn't help and he made little progress, still paddling like crazy.

A Cigarette offshore racer raced past at half-throttle, going approximately forty knots, kicking up the traditional rooster tail as it headed for Lost Isle. At the helm was a potbellied skipper, his shorts at the proverbial backside half-mast, exposing some not very attractive body parts. Of course, the two requisite bikini-clad blondes (BCBs) were lounging on the aft seat. The go-faster driver throttled back, sensing the Potter was in dire straits (he was actually in Mandeville Cut). With the massive V-8s at a throaty, loping rumble, the Cigarette pulled alongside and offered the Potter a tow. “Where are you headed for?” one of the BCBs asked as she passed over a towline at the end of a boat hook.



obvious lessons are: never mention you are going to Lost Isle; and beware of gifts offered by a BCB.

There is a moral to the story – Cigarettes are hazardous to your health. – 

THANKS FROM THE EDITOR

As the year comes to a close, I'd like to thank the many contributors for your support of the Potter Yachter Newsletter.

The newsletter continues to serve as a record of the club's activities, and sailors both near and far who are not able to attend our events have voiced their appreciation of the pictures and stories being shared in the newsletter. During the past year we've seen photos and articles from our sail hosts and other contributors, including Bud Kerner, Bud Newhall, Carl Sundholm, Dan Phy, Dave Bacon, Dave Norris, David White, Dick Herman, Don Person, Eric Zilbert, “Goose” Gossman, Jerry Barrilleaux, Kevin Crowder, Mike Swartz, Neil Dorf, Pat Brennan and Rob Sampson.

That's quite a list of contributors, in addition to Carl's monthly Commodore's Corner. I'm thankful and lucky to have so many folks providing content for the newsletter.

Wishing you and yours a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year!

Thank you. – Phil, *The Editor*

“Lost Isle,” the Potter skipper answered as he cleated the towline down.

“Not a problem!” the go-faster skipper shouted as he firewalled the throttles. The Potter disappeared at a high rate of speed around a bend, bouncing and skimming over the water, at times ten feet in the air. The Potter was never seen or heard of again.

There are obvious lessons to be learned for the Potter Yachter requiring a tow. One: when being towed, wear a PFD. Two: tell the towboat skipper what your max hull speed is. This is critical when being towed by a powerboat. Three: tell the skipper how you will signal a problem. The two less



When it's time for a rescue...

Getting or Giving a Tow

by "Goose" Gossman

Getting towed or giving a tow is inevitable if you are boating. It's also a mariner's duty to offer assistance to others in need, so it's good to be prepared. I subscribe to BoatUS, or Vessel Assist, and have needed them on my big boats. If (and when) you need assistance, it's a lot better to swallow your pride ahead of time and be ready to receive a tow quickly if events turn sour. Timing is everything, so if you (or a distressed boat) have lost control of a vessel, you need to act quickly. Maritime law is pretty harsh, and there's a big difference between a "towing" and a "salvage" operation, so read up on it.

Getting towed: Don't be afraid to ask for help from a fellow boater, but be ready with a suitable tow line to enable a successful rescue. I've always been told to use my own line if I need a tow, not to take the tower's line. I don't know if this really affects legal status, but it makes it easier and safer to separate from the towing vessel. On Gale I have a long bow-line attached at all times which I can reach from the cockpit. It is fastened to a deck fitting capable of enduring towing stress, but could also be attached to the bow eye. Attaching around the mast base could make tracking a problem when being towed. Having your line ready in moments is the key to avoiding bigger problems. Same goes for having an anchor ready to go in an instant, and makes it less risky for the towboat to hook up. Side tying (rafting) works too, but only for short distances. You need a spring-line amidships and good bumpers to do this. While I have lots of horsepower, the extra power isn't really needed to tow another Potter. What's most important is to act quickly to get the distressed vessel away from imminent danger (like rocks, surf, other boats), and then get a game-plan figured out. Don't be afraid to help your fellow mariner out.

Towing: On Gale, I have a bridle attached to the stern corners which is long enough to clear the motor and rudders without tangling the prop. It is good quality braid, but it's not poly, so it doesn't float. However, because braid has a smooth surface, the towed boat's bow-line will slide over it and center itself without having to thread through a pulley. I've towed lots of boats over the years, and keep a bridle ready to go. It hangs in back of the cockpit, and can also be used to attach a back-stay. If someone needs a tow, I take their bow-line, loop it through the bridle, and hand it back to them. I also have stern lines in place on both corners, which are handy to use if one needs a short, quick drag away from an obstruction. Proceed slowly – remember, there are no brakes – and have them use their rudder to keep their boat tracking. If they move around their boat, or have too much weight forward, their boat also will veer off course. If your sails are up, it can get "interesting", so dump them quickly if you can. Same goes for boat needing tow. You don't want to put yourself at risk, and cause the rescuer to become a victim. –



Safety Considerations

- Make sure everyone has life-jackets on
- Always bring a suitably strong tow line
- Have bumpers and boat hook at the ready
- Act quickly to avoid aggravating the problem
- Accelerate slowly and plan for momentum

Methods of Towing

- **Stern Tow:** *line from aft cleat to bow cleat*
This is good for long distances when you're in open water. The boats don't interfere with each other but slack lines can bind the prop. Keep the towed boat just a few boat lengths astern, riding on the face of towing boat's wake to reduce tension.
- **Side Tow:** *raft up using a spring line*
It's a safer method in tight quarters, but slower. Use large bumpers and tie spring line from amidships of towing boat to stern cleat of towed boat. Towing boat's rudder should be aft of towed boat's rudder for more effective control unless both boats steer.



The Potter Yachter

(“Voyager 20” continued from page 1)

Some of us ventured out into the SF Bay and headed toward Angel Island, braving the ever-present tankers and container ships which may or may not have tooted their horns five times at a couple of us as we drifted across their path in the wind shadow of the island.

The important thing is that we had fun, enjoyed time with friends, climbed aboard a Voyager 20, and got home safely. – 



(clockwise from above): Rob & Dave K. at Angel Island; tug captain calls out “too close!” and Don says “I agree!”; Katie rides with Jerry on Sunshine; Ken Lange & Judy on the Voyager 20; partying late into the night on the dock.



Potter Yachter Membership

Join the *Potter Yachters* – the club that has been around since 1978 and, with your participation, will continue to withstand the test of time. We’re really a bunch of nice folks who would just love to have other nice folks join us. Your dues help support club activities and publish the newsletter, so you’ll be sure to know when we’re out sailing, whether that’s in the San Juan Islands, Monterey, the SF Bay, or elsewhere. Annual dues are \$25. Make checks payable to “Pat Brennan”.

Send your payment (with your name and address) to:

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See us online at: www.potter-yachters.org

Organized in Northern California in 1978, the *Potter Yachters* is the longest running West Wight Potter club. Membership is open to anyone interested in West Wight Potters and other trailerable microcruiser sailboats.



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With a Grain of Salt

The **Potter Yachter** is a forum for exchange of ideas and information among West Wight Potter (and other mini-yacht) sailors. But we Potter Yachters are mostly a bunch of amateurs finding our way by trial and error and luck.

You will probably find some very helpful tips or ideas in the **Potter Yachter** that will enhance your sailing experience, but you may also find some ill-advised suggestions or ideas that just don't work for your particular boat, your sailing environment, your level of sailing experience, or your boat-working skills. So please understand that any sailing tutorials, suggested boat modifications, recommended cruises, etc., are the opinion of the author, based presumably on his or her personal experience and judgment at the time the article or letter was written.

If a Potter Yachter believes s/he has a good idea and submits it to the newsletter for publication, we will usually pass it on to the rest of you in the newsletter, but take it "with a grain of salt" and a large portion of your own good judgment, and perhaps get a second opinion before undertaking a modification or cruise or sailing technique you read about in the **Potter Yachter** (or any other publication).

- *The Editor*

