



The Potter Yachter

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

October 2015

Report: Lake Hennessey

Potter Yachters Savor a Serenely Scenic Sail

by Carl Sundholm



Don Person sailing *Sarah Anne*

One of the best kept secrets of Potterdom, Lake Hennessey is a quiet slice of paradise in an Oak woodland habitat. Located to the north of Napa, east of Lake Berryessa, and west of St. Helena, Lake Hennessey is one of the most scenic sails that the Potter Yachters do. Because it is the water supply for the city of Napa, there are no speed boats, no jet skis, and no boats over 16 feet long.

The area was originally occupied by the Locoallomi tribe of Wappo Indians, and later was settled by Joseph Ballinger Chiles. Chiles first came to California in 1841 over the Sierra Nevada from Missouri in covered wagons with the first emigrant Bartleson-Bidwell party. He then returned to bring more settlers to California in 1843 with the Chiles-Walker party, which included settler John Conn. In 1844, Chiles obtained the Catacula land grant, consisting of what is now known as Chiles Valley.¹ In 1853, Conn received the neighboring Locoallomi land grant which became known as Conn Valley supplied with

(Hennessey continued on page 6)

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The Commodore's Corner

By Rob Sampson

Right now I'm sailing vicariously through all of you and your stories. After 17 years at my current location I'm moving (just across town) so for the time being, that is taking up all of my sailing time. I should be finished in the next few months and can get back on the water.

Save the date: The Potter Yachters' Annual meeting will be on January 24th, 2016 in the Regatta room at the Oakland Yacht Club. Speaking of 2016, if anyone has suggestions for new sailing locations in 2016, please forward them to me at py.commodore.rob@gmail.com. We'll have to see if the El Nino winter really pans out with enough rain to make some of the lake sails viable enough for our use.

In some years, we have had an educational seminar in February. If you have a suggestion for a topic or speaker for that, forward that as well.

Please submit photos from the 2015 sailing season to Don Person, Phil Marcelis or myself as candidates for the 2016 Potter Yachters Wall Calendar.

There are still some good events left in this year. The Moss Landing to Monterey overnight is coming up October 3-4, and don't forget the Delta Bridges sail and overnight October 17-18.

See you on the water (hopefully sooner rather than later),
Rob — 

Ship's Stores for sale. Send orders to [Pat Brennan](#):

Show your colors! Fly an official Club Burgee on your next sail!

Burgees	\$25.00
Bumper stickers	\$ 2.50 (just shows the burgee; no text)
Patches	\$ 2.50 (Both round and burgee shaped)
Info Packets	\$20.00 (Primarily P-15 information)

Or head over to our CafePress website and buy a Cap, Stein, or T-Shirt with the club logo on it.

Visit: <http://www.cafepress.com/potteryachters>

Advertise our club with Potter Yachter pens!



You may have noticed how often people comment on our boats while we're rigging or de-rigging. Let's direct them to our website where they might be enticed to join us; maybe even on their own boat! Get your free pens from [Phil](#).

Club Events on the Horizon

[Event Calendar](#)

Oct 3 (Sat-Sun) Moss Landing to Monterey Overnight (*Mike S./Bud K.*)
intermediate to advanced, depending on the weather; again it should be noted that most open ocean sails are advanced and not for beginners; overnight at docks
[See [Nov-2013 PYN \(page 9\)](#) for previous Moss-to-Monterey report. —*Ed.*]

Oct 17 (Sat-Sun) Delta Bridges Sail and Overnight (*Bud K.*)
generally easy, perhaps intermediate on windy occasions; the overnight is usually spent in the boats moored at a dock

2016

Jan 24 (Sun) Annual Meeting in the Regatta Room at Oakland Yacht Club.
Sunday brunch (reasonably priced) typically starts at 9:00, and we haphazardly assemble at 10:00 "Potter-time"; generally an easy sail upstairs and down, perhaps intermediate depending on mimosa consumption; overnight option moored at dock with prior arrangement

Upcoming: October 17-18, 2015

Delta Bridges Sail and Overnight

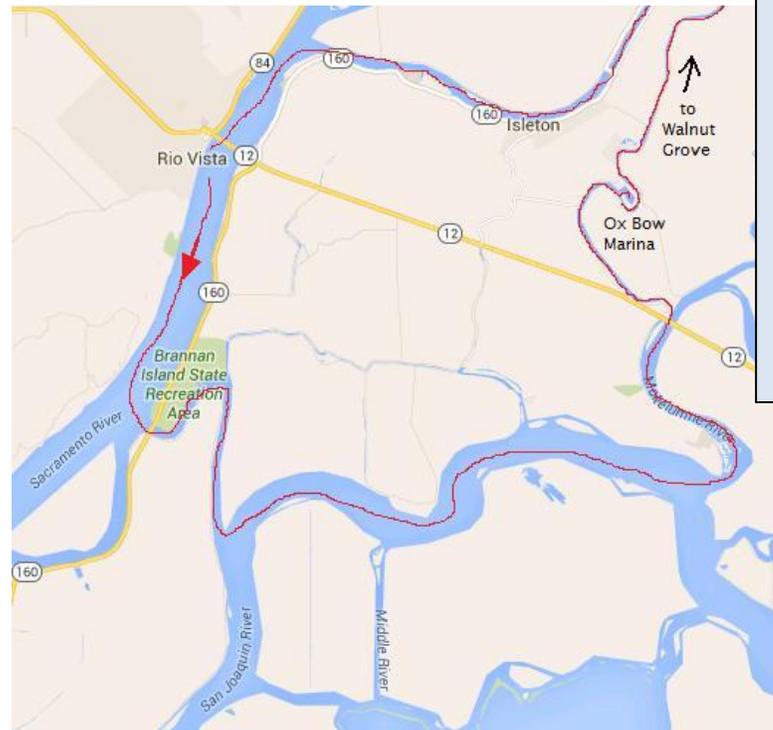
Hosted by Bud Kerner



Come join the Potter Yachters for a leisurely, two-day sail through the California Delta. We'll leave the Rio Vista city launch ramp at 10AM and sail down the Sacramento River to Three-Mile Slough. From there we'll connect with the San Joaquin River and Sail to the Mokelumne River where we'll stop at Moore's Riverboat for a beer break before continuing up to Georgiana Slough for an overnight at Ox Bow Marina. I believe there will be Pulled-Pork for dinner and free breakfast. Slip fees are \$.75/foot. We'll leave Ox Bow at 10AM on Sunday and continue up Georgiana Slough to the Sacramento River. We might stop in Walnut Grove for some great ice cream, and then it's back down river to Rio Vista. —



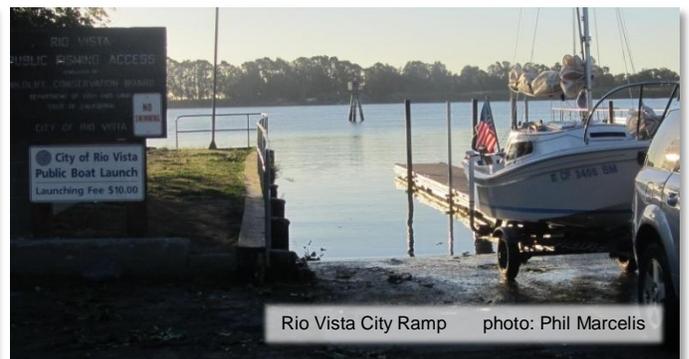
Mokelumne River Bridge photo: Phil Marcelis



Directions to:
Rio Vista City launch ramp on Montezuma St.
from Highway 12 West bound:
Make first right (River Rd.) after Rio Vista Bridge, then go right (Front St.) under the bridge. Just after Stop Sign, turn left into parking lot.
from Highway 12 East bound:
Turn right just before Rio Vista Bridge at Chevrolet Dealer. Right at Stop Sign (Front St.) In about 1/4 of a mile, straight at Stop Sign. Launch ramp parking lot is just ahead on left.



Ox Bow Marina photo: David White



Rio Vista City Ramp photo: Phil Marcelis

Participation in Potter Yachter events is subject to the guidelines published in [March 2015 PYN](#), page 4.



Richmond - The Rest of the Story

by **Harry Gordon** 2 Sep 2015, 10:25 AM
[from the [Trailer Sailor](#) website]

The newsletter left in doubt what had become of Harry and Goose, but all is well.

I was even more absent-minded than usual. I launched the boat and was ready to depart, then realized I had not mounted the Honda outboard. I returned the car to the top of the ramp, carried the motor down to the boat, and managed to mount it without dropping it into the water. It started okay, so I headed out into the harbor, and then realized I wasn't wearing my life jacket, which was in the car. But I had a spare PFD in the boat so I put that



one on. I motor-sailed into the channel as I tried to catch up with a couple of Potter Yachters that had departed ahead of me. Then I realized that I had also forgotten my camera and VHF radio (still in the van), but since they were not essential, I kept on motor-sailing. Remembering the PFD, camera, and radio must have tweaked another thought, but I was a mile or two down the channel before it hit me: the van and trailer were still parked at the top of the ramp! I immediately headed back, but it took me a while, and I was hoping I had not been ticketed or towed.

I eventually tied up to the outside of the dock, then found the van and trailer parked at the top of the ramp, the door still open where I had removed the motor. Camera, PFD, and VHF were still inside. I parked properly, locked the van, then returned to the boat and headed out again, now alone, the other boats far off into the Bay. I motor-sailed for a while, then just sailed until I reached the end of the breakwater, then turned to port and aimed at Angel Island, where the other boats had headed.

The water was choppy now, and I was getting some spray, so I was considering heading back when Goose appeared in his much-modified HMS-18, Re-Gale. His latest boat mod was not working out as expected, and he was encountering a strong current, so he was headed back. I came about, and we enjoyed a fast run together back to the harbor. — 

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CALL FOR CALENDAR PICTURES!

The Calendar Committee is putting together the 2016 Potter Yachter Calendar. You can have your photo on the calendar for others to enjoy for an entire month.

Dig through your archives from the past year and find something that shouts, "This should be in a calendar!"

If you don't have any photos like that, there's still time to go out with your boat and a camera and **take some pictures**.



So, if you have a West Wight Potter picture that you feel would make a great calendar photo, please send an email to Don Person at dniperson@comcast.net as soon as possible, since the creative process is beginning soon.



(Hennessey continued from page 1)

water from the Conn River.² In 1948, Edwin R. Hennessey persuaded the City of Napa of the value of making Conn Valley a reservoir and constructed the Conn Dam, forming Lake Hennessey, named after the man who caused it to happen.

The Potter Yachters began this sail several years ago, but re-construction of a sliding dock last year resulted in having to cancel. We left this sail on the Potter Yachter calendar for June 20th, but because the new dock was not ready by then, we rescheduled it to August 29, 2015. . . and it's a good thing we did. The weather was in the mid-80s, the skies were a vibrant blue punctuated by billowing clouds, and there was a strong enough breeze to make sailing fun, which got more interesting as the day progressed. It was a fantastic day.



Considering our four year drought, I was pleasantly surprised to see the water level at Lake Hennessey had gone up and was several feet above normal. Perhaps the City of Napa is conserving in case things get worse. Nonetheless, it was nice to sail in a full lake.

On arriving I first saw the familiar tanbark sails of Minnow sailing with Rich and Mary McDevitt, who were pottering around in the bays and tules, exploring the Lake.

Don Person and the colorful sails of *Sarah Anne* with the backdrop beauty of Lake Hennessey looked like a colorful Andrew Wyeth painting.





Dana Suverkrop's vivid sail colors also were quite photogenic with the tules and Wine Country hills in the background.

However, right when my borrowed sturdy Potter 15's motor was being temperamental and repeated pulls wouldn't start it, none other than Larry Tkach and his Peep Hen drove into the parking lot. Between working on the motor and sailing the lake, the choice was clear.

Larry let me ride along on his one fine, unusual, and very cool Peep Hen sailboat, *Groovin'*. It has about the beam of a Potter 19 and the length of a Potter 14. With its high sides, it has a very secure feeling on the water, and can heel very far over without taking in water. It was originally created by Reuben Trane, who designed a series of "Hen" boats beginning in the 1980s, starting with the Marsh Hen. Trane designed the Peep Hen to compete with the Potter, but he did not build and sell a lot of these boats between 1981 and 1987 when he sold the molds. Production stopped in 2003 when Nimble Boats founder Jerry Koch passed away. So these are fairly rare boats, with a very unique design. They are plenty of fun to sail too. Great sailing and conversation, Thanks Larry!



Photo by Don Person



As the winds picked up later in the day, we were mostly off the water by 2:00 pm, which left plenty of time to enjoy a drive through Chiles Valley, or Lake Berryessa, hang out, or just take a leisurely drive back home. To those of you who haven't sailed Lake Hennessey, you don't know what you're missing. Come on out next year, but don't tell anyone how nice it is, because we need to keep this one of the best kept secrets in Potterdom. —

Footnotes

- 1: Source: Hoover, et al., *Historic Spots in California*
- 2: Source: *California Place Names*



Report: The Treasure Island Sail **A Foggy Day at Clipper Cove**

by Carl Sundholm

After a week of blistering hot late summer temperatures in excess of 100 degrees, we welcomed the weather forecasters' prediction that a protective marine layer of fog would enter the bay and grace our annual Potter Yachter Clipper Cove Picnic Sail on Saturday, September 12, 2015.



As I drove up to Alameda's Grand Street boat ramp with my trusty Potter 19 "Dagmar" in tow, it was good to see that they were right. Unfortunately, parking space was at a premium because the Alameda County Sheriff's Department had commandeered half the parking lot for their aquatic operations exercises, which probably had something to do with the 9/11 anniversary.



Potter Yachters turned out for the sail, including smaller Potters captained by Rich and Mary McDevitt, Jean-Pierre Bouquet, and Harry Gordon, and two big Potters skippered by Phil Marcelis and myself (co-captained by my able son, Sam Sundholm). Larry Tkach brought his very cool Peep Hen, and Kjeld Molvig, appeared in his new Hunter 23.5.



At the outset, there was sufficient wind for doing some sailing on the estuary on the way out. A westerly breeze allowed for long port tacks almost in line with the northwesterly orientation of the estuary, and short starboard tacks, which enabled us to sail and make decent progress towards our goal.

I enjoyed having my son, Sam, join me for the sail. He's getting good enough at this sailing stuff that dad can hang out in the cabin and take more pictures.



About half way up the estuary, we saw Kjeld Molvig, looking good in his new Hunter 23.5 motor on by, flying the Potter Yachter flag, as well the Denmark colors and another burgee of unknown origin.



As we approached the mouth where the estuary opens onto San Francisco Bay, a stiff breeze came straight down the estuary against our direction of travel. This made it very difficult to continue tacking out the estuary, so we radioed the remainder of our fleet, who were still tacking out the estuary, that we were starting up the motors and heading out onto the Bay towards Treasure Island and Clipper Cove.

At the mouth of the estuary, you could see San Francisco covered by a cool layer of fog. It got pretty cold out there, so Sam and I got to use those long sleeved shirts we brought, but thought we wouldn't use. Later we found out that Kjeld and Harry did not bring warmer clothing and turned back when it got too cold out on the bay. When it's cold out on the bay on the water, it can get very uncomfortable, if not downright hypothermic, very quickly. I grew up in San Francisco, and due to the unpredictability of the

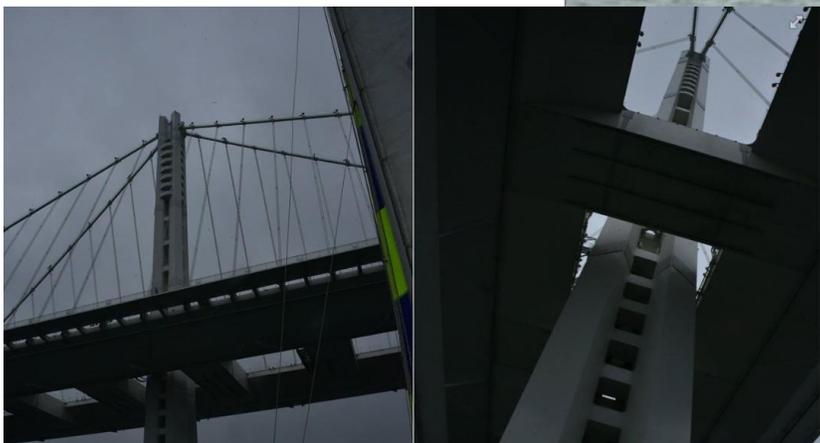


fog, learned to always bring cold weather gear whenever in or near the City (even during summer). Wasn't it Mark Twain who quipped, "The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco"? Actually it came from an 1880 letter where Twain was referring to Paris, and subsequently was re-applied to San Francisco by others.

Citation: <http://quoteinvestigator.com/2011/11/30/coldest-winter/>



Rich McDevitt and Phil Marcelis were out ahead of us in the vanguard motoring towards Yerba Buena Island and Clipper Cove.



Conditions allowed us to catch a little more sailing on the part of the bay between the estuary and the Bay Bridge, with intermittent motor-sailing, to reach Clipper Cove by lunchtime.

When we sailed under the new Bay Bridge, I took a closer look at the construction of the main tower and realized that the main tower is not directly connected to the bridge roadway itself, but rather it rises through a hole between the two sides of the roadway, and is only connected to the roadway through the suspension cables. This is unlike the Golden Gate Bridge and most other suspension bridges I have seen, where the towers are connected directly to the roadway. I suppose the architectural reasoning is to allow flexibility in the event of a severe earthquake or high winds.



As we turned the corner under the Bay Bridge into Clipper Cove, we saw a **swarm of** Flying Junior sailboats in what seemed to be a choreographed race in the protection of the cove.



I squinted into the distance at the Clipper Cove beach, made a bee line for where Rich and Phil's Potters were beached, and motored Dagmar up on the beach next to them.



I thought we had seen it all at Clipper Cove, from nude sunbathers, to territorial sea lions, but when Sam stepped off Dagmar's deck, we discovered that there is actually "quicksand" at Clipper Cove.



Having rescued Sam from the quicksand, we settled in, opened up the lawn chairs, and enjoyed our picnic lunches and some great conversation.



It was great to see Jean-Pierre and Larry, when they pulled up their boats on the beach and joined the party.

“Ukulele Master” even broke out the strings and provided some Island Music to background the conversation and remind us that we can enjoy life “Island Style”, even in the middle of a foggy day on San Francisco Bay.



Fun times with great friends at Clipper Cove on San Francisco Bay! — 🚤

Do you have a favorite sailing destination? Maybe an overnight anchorage in a quiet corner of a slough, or a ‘sporting’ swath of a windy slot. Whatever the venue, write about it for a future issue of *The Potter Yachter*! Send your stories or comments to the editor: sail@marcelis.com

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”.



Or see us online at:
www.potter-yachters.org

Send your payment (with your name and address) to: Pat Brennan
1305 Webster Street #C205
Alameda CA, 94501

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.



Patrick Brennan
1305 Webster St., C205
Alameda, CA 94501

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*

