



# The Potter Yachter

Newsletter of the Northern California West Wight Potter Club

December 2007

## Motor Days on San Francisco Bay



Dave Kautz and *Tilly Lucy* on San Francisco Bay in November. It looks like Dave is calculating, — if the wind doesn't blow soon will I have enough gas to get back to the dock? More articles about the day when one sailor reach his goal after 20 years.

## The Commodore's Log

Well, folks, this has been a great year for sailing. Now it is time to start thinking about 2008, which will be the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our club. Now that is a lot of water under the keel. If you haven't heard, The annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at the Oakland Yacht Club. As always, brunch starts at 9 A.M. and the meeting downstairs around 1030 in the Regatta Room. We'll do the usual things, like a gift exchange, the Potter of the Year award, and the election of officers. So if anyone is interested in running, please let Pat Brennan know.

There is a reason for holding the meeting late in January. In the past, we've always held a scheduling meeting afterwards to plan the year's activities. But this time, we will have a proposed schedule for you to discuss and vote on. The schedule we're working on with a few tentative dates is in this newsletter. We hope to have it refined and more firm dates by the end of January. Please look it over and let me know if you have any suggestions.

We've added more events in order to give you more options for sailing. The key to an event is the sail host and I'd like to thank the all the usual stalwarts who did it this year. I hope a few more of you volunteer to help. It is no big deal; sending a few details for the newsletter, maybe a post or two on the Trailer Sailor Bulletin Board, making sure the ramp is open, checking the tide tables as necessary, and then showing up to get things started. Writing it up for the newsletter is great but not necessary.

There are two new events you might find interesting. One is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July overnigher, the other is the expedition to Florida for the Beer Cruise. Dan Phy believes in Trailing with a capital "T", and showing the flag, er, the burgee. Think of it as Potter Imperialism. Dan also wants to find and bring to justice Small Craft Advisor's chief scalawag, B. Frank Franklin. This is a big deal, so if you are interested, contact Dan at the earliest possible time. Also, this year's Messabout to the Pacific Northwest will launch out of Anacortes for the San Juan Islands with maybe Sidney in B.C. as the turn around point. Please join us if you feel the urge, but remember, we camp on the boats for about ten straight days. Contact me if you are interested.

See you at the annual meeting!

### UP COMING EVENTS:

January 27      2008 Annual Meeting

## The Officer's Club

### Commodore:

Dick Herman  
112 Landrum Circle  
Folsom, CA 95630  
[Commodore@potter-yachters.org](mailto:Commodore@potter-yachters.org)  
*Muddy Duck*

### Vice Commodore:

Bruce Hood  
21 Regulus Ct  
Alameda, CA 94501  
[ViceCommodore@potter-yachters.org](mailto:ViceCommodore@potter-yachters.org)  
P-15 #2229, *Eilidh*

### P19 Fleet Captain:

Dave White  
2724 Richard Ave.  
Concord, CA 94520  
(925) 685-4577  
[P19captain@potter-yachters.org](mailto:P19captain@potter-yachters.org)  
P-19 #1099 *Wee Boat*

### P-15 Fleet Captain:

Don Person  
1651 Rambelwood Way  
Pleasanton, CA. 94566  
[P15captain@potter-yachters.org](mailto:P15captain@potter-yachters.org)  
P-15, #2472, *Sarah Anne*

### Secretary/Treasurer:

Pat Brennan  
1305 Webster St. #C205  
Alameda, CA 94501  
(510) 769-1246  
[Secretary@potter-yachters.org](mailto:Secretary@potter-yachters.org)  
P-15 #621, *Eaglet*

### Webmaster:

Mike Westfield  
[Webmaster@potter-yachters.org](mailto:Webmaster@potter-yachters.org)  
P-15 #2248 *Watertoy*

### Editors:

Mike and Janet Dolan  
16670 Buckskin Ct.  
Morgan Hill, CA 95037  
(408) 778-5655  
[Editor@potter-yachters.org](mailto:Editor@potter-yachters.org)  
P-15 #2571, *Lizzie D*

### Commodore Emeritus & Education Capt.

Judy Blumhorst  
228 La Pera Circle  
Danville, CA 94526  
(925) 820 0800  
[Education@potter-yachters.org](mailto:Education@potter-yachters.org)  
P-19 #266 *Redwing*

## 2008 Sailing & Event Calendar

(Last year's events listed in Red

Proposed for 2008 in black)

Jan 27, Sunday: Annual meeting, Oakland Yacht Club. Brunch 9:00 – 10:30

Meeting 10:30 Regatta Room. Gift exchange.

Feb

Training class

Mar

3/15, Sat: USS Thompson Day Sail, Redwood City

Delta Day Sail

April

Oakland Estuary Day Sail with Strictly Sail, Jack London Square

Santa Cruz to Moss Landing

May

Delta Cruise Overnight

5/18, Sun: Del Valle Regional Park Day Sail (Very first Potter event held at Del Valle on Sun, 5/21/78)

June

Woodward Annual Campout

Eagle Lake Annual Campout

Expedition to Florida for BEER

July

Richmond Day Sail

7/19 or 7/26, Sat: Cruiser Challenge IX

7/3 to 7/4, Thurs/Fri: Fourth of July overnighter Granville Island, the Delta

Aug

Richmond Day Sail

8/16 or 8/23, Sat: Huntington Lake Campout with SoCal Potters

Sept

9/2 to 9/18: Messabout VI. All the Usual Suspects to Northwest

9/27, Sat/Sun: Tomales Bay Overnighter

Delta Day Sail

Oct

Moss Landing/Monterey Overnighter

SF Bay Day Sail, Clipper Cove picnic

Nov

Richmond Day Sail

## Through the Golden Gate

After 20 years

This year I missed a lot of sailing time due to a new job and my son's wedding. When the forecast looked good for the November Potter Yachter sail I decided nothing was going to stop me. We were greeted with a very crowded parking lot, clear skies and very light winds for the duration of the day. Dave Meredith held a dockside skippers meeting and outlined what we should expect for tides, currents and winds that day. The plans called to motor out of Richmond harbor through Raccoon Straits and either sail around Angel Island or over to the city front looking for wind. Somehow I ended up first out of the breakwater so I killed the motor and kicked back riding a 1.5-knot ebbing current. About 1/3 of the way to Angel Island I found 5 knots of wind and had a nice sail but my course

I've been out the Golden Gate several times on other boats but it was great to finally accomplish it on the Minnow.

was a bit low so I ended up in the wind shadow of Angel Island. The current was still moving me the

right direction so I just went with the flow as several of the bigger boats passed me in decent wind in the center of the straits. Eventually a few of us met in Raccoon Straits and sailed on. Brad pointed out a couple dolphins behind us and I noticed the standing wave generated by the currents and knowing since the wind was so light, that wave was going to be an issue and we fired up the outboards once again.

Still in the grip of a decent ebbing tide I was making about 5 knots with no wind and the throttle at about 15%. As we continued to close on the Golden Gate I noticed Jerry next to me and several other familiar sails about a mile to the east of us. Jerry and I had a short conversation about heading out the Gate and it looked about as benign as it gets so we gave it thumbs up. Dave's forecast for the current was about 2 1/2 knots so I figured with a healthy motor; I should be able to get back in. A couple P-19's were well out the Gate ahead of us.

Even with only 5 knots of wind it was pretty lumpy water. Looking at the boils, waves, and water's surface, it was obvious to me that you need to pay a lot of attention to things out here, even with light winds and minimal currents forecasted. I took a few photos of the bridge, Breezy, and the surroundings and then decided to put my focus back on keeping the Minnow moving. We sailed out about a mile or so where the water really calmed down so I headed across towards San Francisco. About 1/3 of the way, I made the decision to head back into

the bay. By now several others of the group has made it out the gate also.

The trip back in was slower due to the current and equally as bumpy as the trip out. The dream/goal of taking a Potter out the Golden Gate has been bouncing around inside me since the late 80's but I just never seemed to be out there when it was safe to attempt it. On the way back in I was basking in the joy of having achieved a 20-year dream as I listened to the drone of the Honda. This day was also the first day of crab season so every monkey and his brother with a sport fishing boat was out. One of the jerks was heading straight at me when he makes a hard turn to port and dumps about 10 gallons of water on me. Even on a warm day, that bay water is cold. After some bailing and changing into some dry clothes I warmed back up and continued to drone back towards Richmond. A few of the folks were sailing over towards the City Front. I could see Dan Phy's "green" sail from several miles away.

Finally about half way between Angel and Richmond I could shut the outboard off and sail. Heading back down the channel I was surprised at how warm the breeze was. Upon arriving back at the launch ramp I was entertained by various boats of crab fishermen yelling at each other as they pulled boats onto the trailers, washed them off and over sprayed onto each other.

I've been out the Golden Gate several times on other boats but it was great to finally accomplish it on the Minnow. A word to my



fellow crazies, don't just run out and try this. West Wight Pot-  
ters have been sailing out the Golden Gate for as long as they  
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have been built but there is a reason it took me 20 years to get this done. On this trip I had the benefits of minimal currents, clear skies, light winds, and several other good, safe sailors to accompany me. San Francisco Bay has many moods and on this day we were treated to one of her mellow ones. The photos did not turn out so well but my memories are crystal clear.

Rich McDevitt

Minnow

### The Wednesday Launch and Lunch Bunch

Wednesday mornings around nine, weather permitting, a group of dedicated trailer sailors begins to gather at the pleasant Grand St. Marina parking lot in Alameda. The lot almost always has plenty of space for our cars and trailers. Opening fishing and crabbing days may be a little tight but there are plenty of additional spaces nearby. The building at the rear of the lot is the City Of Alameda's vehicle maintenance facility so we share with fire engines and police cars. Their presence contributes to the feeling that it is a very safe area. Svenson's Shipyard and Chandlery are next door to the east and Grand St. Marinas boat repair facilities are across the street to the west.

The launch ramp is excellent. It is not too steep and long enough that we don't run out of ramp even at



very low tide. We launch into the Oakland Estuary across from Government Island and the Coast Guard Headquarters. The estuary is well dredged and there has always been plenty of water for launching. The two docks are kept in very good condition. Waiting to launch or pull out our boats is rarely a problem.

On a typical morning there will be four or five P15's

and maybe a Monty 15 or a P19. Regulars are Dave Bacon, Don Person, Bruce Hood and Ron Bell. Other frequent launchers. are Terry Gotcher, Mike Truman and Pat Brennan. Three or four time a year the Nor-Cal contingent sails with us. Dan Phy, Dick Herman, Brad Evans and Jim Kirwan spend a few days on their boats at the nearby Oakland Yacht Club. Contrary to its name the OYC is in Alameda a short mile west of Grand St.

Rigging the boats is usually done by ten am. It takes considerably

longer than necessary as there is always a lot of information to exchange. As the boats are launched we mill around off the end of the dock and then head up the Estuary toward Jack London Square. How far we get is determined by the wind.



On a breezy day we might make it almost to the Bay. If the wind is light, as it may be in winter, we don't get very far. After sailing about two hours we turn around and head for Quinn's Restaurant. This is a downwind run through a channel

on the north side of Government Island.

Quinn's is a large two story building which was originally a light house at the western end of the Estuary. Thirty (?) years ago it was moved to its present location where it serves as a restaurant. A guest dock is next to the restaurant and we have always found room to tie up there. The first floor is a formal dining room but upstairs where we gather is very informal. For instance peanuts are on each table and it is customary to throw the shells on the floor. The walls and ceilings are covered with sailing pictures and artifacts giving the place a nautical feel. When the weather is sunny we often eat outside on the upper level deck with its excellent view of Government Island and the Estuary.

After eating and gamming we leave about two pm. Most days the wind has come up and the sail back to the ramp is a spirited beat with many tacks up around the tip of the island then a run back to the launch ramp. We are generally pulling our boats out around 3:30 pm. If we can get away around four we are a little ahead of the rush hour traffic.

We invite any who would like to join us to do so. I think you would find the sailing fun, the socializing entertaining and the food very good.

Don Person

P-15 Fleet Captain

Thanks from the Editors

We would like to thank you Potters Yachters and associates of the Potters, for your support of the *Potter Yachter Newsletter*. With your contributions the *Newsletter* continues to serve as a record of the club's vital capacity.

This year regular contributors and those who wrote articles for the first time have shared their experiences with those who could not attend the events. We thank the following writers:

Dave Kautz, Rich McDevitt, Ed Dove for his more personal experiences, Gretchen Ricker for her experience on Monterey Bay, Jerry Kergan, Don Person, Carl Sundholm, a new contributor, Mike Swartz and Harry Gordon. Dick Herman provides his thoughts, every month and the Commodores Logs..

Along with the writers are the photographers. When I put the *Newsletter* together I try to work in as many photographs as I think will work, then the final edit is done and the direction is, "put in more pictures". It is always a hard choice when it comes to selecting photos for the articles, when there are so many great ones to choose from.

This *Newsletter* would be black and white, and green without all of the great photos. The digital camera has provided us with easy transfer of images from the camera to the page. The one person who we depend on for great photos, is Don Person. If you have sailed with him you know that he is always circling taking your picture. Other photographers who's photos that have been used are: Rob Sampson who's photo of the Hawaiian Chieftain at Redwood City is outstanding. Jerry Kergan is another Potter who takes a lot of good pictures (we have to watch Jerry because he has been known to put sharks in his photos), and Carl Sundholm. One of Carl's photos is used for the screen saver on our computers.

Thank you.

Editors



Steve Potter and *Stars and Bars*

Dick Herman and *Muddy Duck*

Photo by Don Person



Potter Yachters

Photo by Don Person



Mike Swartz and *Burgundy Splash*

Photos by Carl Sundholm

Potter at the Golden Gate



Happy Holidays, yo ho ho

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



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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*