



# The Potter Yachter

Newsletter of the Northern California West Wight Potter Club

October 2003

## Sail Calendar

**October 5: Daysail at Richmond**

**October 18-19: Monterey Harbor Weekend**

**November Dates to be announced**

**In September Four P-15's and one Com-Pac Catboat Traveled North to have a great cruise together in the South end of Puget Sound...**

## *Intrepid Bay Area Potter Sailors Explore Southern Puget Sound*



To: Rich McDevitt, Commodore Potter Yachters From: The Usual Suspects (Pat Brennan, Don and Judy Person, Dan Phy, John Wheeler, and Dick Herman). Subject: After Action Report: The Great Potter Yachter Northwest Escape and Messabout.

First, we did accomplish our mission of trailering our trustworthy boats to Southern Puget Sound, sailing for five days from Fair Harbor, Jarrell's Cove, Boston Harbor, Olympia, Longbranch, to Gig Harbor. From there, we returned safely home. Second, there is no truth to the rumors that we were attacked by the Montgomery Mommas, or that Judy was kidnapped, The weather cooperated and we were rained on Monday night and Tuesday morning before we departed Longbranch. However, Don's invocation to the sun gods failed and we were dumped on as we reached Gig Harbor. At least it washed off the boats.

The scenery was fantastic and the natives very friendly. In fact, we took advantage of a lovely couple's hospitality at Jarrell's Cove for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres Friday evening.

We had to motor to Boston Harbor but had an excellent sail on Sunday down Budd Inlet where our intrepid (Don said I had to

use this word) crews advanced on the Washington Capital at Olympia. After gorging ourselves at the Oyster House we sailed the six nautical miles back to Boston Harbor in one hour and thirty minutes.

From there we sailed to Longbranch Marina on Monday. On arrival, we learned that one of Washington's prisons is on nearby McNeil Island. Needless to say, we were on our best behavior.

On Tuesday, we shot the dreaded Tacoma Narrows and paraded under the Narrows Bridge, treating the natives to a display of Potter Power. We finally reached safe harbor at Gig Harbor and spent the night at Arabella's Landing Marina. We pulled out on Wednesday and reluctantly headed home.

Okay, so we drove over 800 miles one way to sail 56 nautical miles in five days. On the face of it, it was a silly thing to do, but we did advance the cause of Potterdom and met your prime directive: HAVE FUN! Respectfully submitted:

Dick Herman, survivor. ( Dick sails "Muddy Duck" his beautiful ComPac Catboat with the Potter Fleet regularly....)

## Richmond Sail Report

*Don Person, Skipper of P-15 "Sarah Anne"*

The August 23-24 Potter Yachter Richmond over-nighter was notable for the usuals who couldn't make it. No Captain Judy, Jerry, Mike, Harry, Greg, Bruce and Kathryn, Dave Kautz, Rich McDevitt, and others who often show up. Dick Herman, Pat Brennan, Don Person, Dave Lawson, Dave Meredith, John Wheeler and Dan Phy were there with P15's. Another P15 had to retire with motor trouble. Bud Koerner, Ray and Myrna Lozano and a newer skipper whose name I didn't get brought their P19's. The trip to Loch Lomond was restful except for the motor noise as the wind was light and we motored more than half way. Six boats made it to the marina and really filled up the guest dock. Bobby's Cafe as usual came through with really good fish and chips and hamburgers. After lunch as we left the marina channel Dan Phy came wing and winging up from the south. His motor had conked out and he had spent the morning trying to catch us. Dan had come down from his home in Ft. Bragg, and also managed to get out on the water with his Kayak as well as getting in some sailing with his us in his P-15. We all left Loch Lomond, and by then the wind had picked up, and all of us started the return to Richmond. Now the wind was around twelve knots from the south and the current was about three knots from the north and there was plenty of chop. We sailed under the Richmond-San Raphael Bridge being wary of the currents attempts to swing us into the abutments. Once past the bridge and Red Rock it was a bumpy broad reach back to the Richmond channel. The trip down the channel on a very broad reach in relatively smooth water was great sailing. Most of the locals pulled out on Saturday, but Dan, John, Bud, Ray and Myrna and the mystery P19 tucked in for the night. Sunday morning was almost windless so Bud and Dan decided not to wait for the wind and left. John, and Ray and Myrna, started out first. Don and Judy Person, were back and followed them out. We caught up with Ray who said his gps registered 0.3 knots. Once out in the channel there was enough wind to sail and it was a beautiful day. Near the end of the channel we saw John's rainbow sail returning from the direction of Angel Island. "There was no wind out there", John reported, so we reversed course and followed him back down the channel on a very pleasant leisurely down wind sail to the launch ramp. Sorry more could not make it, it was another grand Potter Yachter weekend.



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## Where's The Oakland Estuary ( 5th Ave. ) Launch Ramp ?.....



**Right by the Jack London Square Aquatic Center Parking lot.....**

It's on the Embarcadero in Oakland. Going north on 880, I take the Oak St. exit, turn left on Oak , go to the end of Oak St, and turn left onto Embarcadero, then turn right into the ramp parking lot at Estuary Park.

Or you can get off an exit earlier (5th Ave.?) and find your way onto the Embarcadero going west, then turn left into Estuary Park. the Park and ramp are actually halfway between Oak St. and 5th Ave. There is a marina at 5th Ave. but no ramp.

*Harry Gordon, Skipper of "Manatee"*

The JLAC boathouse is situated in [Estuary Park](#), along Oakland's Embarcadero, about a mile southeast of Jack London Square, where the Lake Merritt Channel empties in to the Estuary. It is just a ten minutes walk along the shoreline from the foot of Broadway. In the 1850's the park site was a tideland area near the southeast corner of the town named for its oak covered shoreline, the Township of Oakland, 'El Encinal (oak grove) de Temescal'.

The Jack London Aquatic Center is a multipurpose boathouse that accommodates many aquatic sports, currently including rowing, sculling, sailing, kayaking and dragon boat paddling. The first floor consists of 5 boatbays with ceilings of 15 feet, with a total of approximately 112,000 cubic feet of space for rowing shells, kayaks and small sailboats. The second floor features a large community room and balconies with expansive views overlooking the Oakland Estuary. It houses two smaller meeting rooms, locker rooms with showers for women and men, and a catering kitchen. The community room, meeting rooms, and balcony can be rented for meetings and social occasions. A sculpture by Robert Ellison, the noted artist who created the "zoo scene" on the Eleventh Street side of the new Alameda County Recorder's building, sits on top of the boathouse's cupola. The striking two story design is the creation of Franz Steiner of VBN Architects in Oakland.

A 100 ft by 30 ft dock, designed for launching low-to-the-water craft like rowing shells and kayaks, is situated immediately outside the boathouse, and can accommodate 2 eight oared rowing shells and several smaller craft simultaneously. There is a boat hoist for coaching launches and other larger craft. **Nearby, in the parking lot is a public boat launching ramp for craft on trailers.** The Oakland Estuary provides approximately 5 miles of fairly protected waterway, between the Oakland shoreline and the island of Alameda. Numerous marinas, houseboats and restaurants dot the edge of the Estuary along with famous Jack London Square, the Oakland port and various light industrial sites. Three bridges add to the scenery along the length of the Estuary at the South end..

## Commodore's Report: Tomales Bay Sail

Several Potters enjoyed a beautiful weekend on Tomales Bay. Three 19's and four 15's made the trip. We enjoyed beautiful sailing conditions, warm days, beautiful sunrises, a campfire on the beach and a great potluck on Saturday evening. I saw so many jellyfish it was amazing watching them drift by. Although Tomales is known as a breeding ground for great whites, none were spotted. The pelicans were a joy to watch with their aerobatic skills as they glide in formation and dive for snacks. Most of the time when a pelican dove, there was a seagull standing by in case the pelican dropped a crumb or something. This was my first trip sailing at Tomales, but it definitely will not be my last. Kayaks abound here and PWC's are non existent. *Rich McDevitt and "Minnow"*



*Miller Beach State Park (Nick's Cove) on Tomales Bay is the launching site for the annual Potter Yachters outing on this long, narrow, beautiful bay, which is sheltered by the headlands of the Pt. Reyes Nat'l. Seashore*



**Beautiful late October Sunshine and light air greeted the Potter Yachters at this year's Tomales Bay Gathering**

Photo by Dave Lawson

## Another Great Potter Weekend at Tomales Bay Don Person

Another great Potter event at enchanting Tomales Bay. Two very sunny days of wonderful sailing with Three P19's and four P15's attended. Four First Mates were along which made a company of ten. John Wheeler with his new/older P15 left Saturday evening. He has done a lot of sailing in El Toros and is already a skillful P15 skipper. Commodore Rich arrived early and helped us get launched. He always seems to

be there when someone needs an assist. Dave Lawson, Judy and Don Person and John Wheeler in their P15's headed out followed by Cheryl and Dave White, Alex and Keith Hubbard and Lisa and Eric Zilbert in P19's. After a few hours of sail exploring the north end of the bay and being entertained by pelicans and harbor seals we headed to the Potter cove where we beached for the night.

Other than a kayaking couple far up the beach we had it to ourselves.. Eric and Don had brought wood so the rest of the evening was spent visiting around the campfire. We awoke to find our boats high on the beach. Judy mentioned it might be more comfortable to anchor out a little and avoid the head down sleeping position! After about two hours of getting breakfast, bird watching and noting that there

was no wind the tide returned and we floated the boats. Soon the breeze started, picked up and we went sailing again. Lisa's sharp eyes spotted a herd of Tule Elk on the hillside. As all good things must come to an end It was getting time to pull out and return to reality. The only down side to the weekend was that more of you couldn't make it. Plan on it next year. Tomales is special!

## Why I prefer my Potter 15.....Pat Brennan Explains...

Everyone is familiar with the arguments in favor of our favorite boat - affordable, easy to sail, can be towed by just about any vehicle, easy to rig. While these are important they are not the primary reason I sail a Potter. My Mark II Potter is actually my second boat. The experience I had with my first one is the main reason I now have a Potter.

Since I had a fair amount of experience as an amateur carpenter and handyman and only a little real sailing experience, I decided it might be as much fun to build a boat as to sail one. I began to look over various plans available for sale. One name that came up frequently was Phil Bolger. It seemed he has developed many plans for boats that are easy to build, easy to sail, and in my opinion quite ugly. A website specializing in Bolger plans announced that it had acquired the plans of a new designer and that his boat was not only easy to build, but also quite good looking. An additional advantage was that the boat, originally designed as a twenty footer, could be scaled up or down and built in 10', 20', 30' and even 40' versions. The plans were not expensive and so I bought a set and decided to build a ten-foot boat.

. Let's just say that I proved you can build your own boat for not much more than the cost of a comparable used boat in good condition. After my boat was about three-quarters complete two pieces of information came my way that caused me concern. The first was

an e-mail from the seller of the plans acknowledging that my boat was the only ten-foot Flyaway being built and noting that the designer had just expressed doubt about the advisability of building a Flyaway that small. Then my two daughters gave me a Christmas gift - Dave Gerr's book, "The Nature of Boats". In his book he has an essay on the scalability of boat designs. He explains why a ten-foot boat would be sixteen times less stable than a twenty-foot version.

Gerr is quite right. I launched my boat in San Pablo Reservoir for the first time and set sail. I promptly capsized. I was able to right the boat but there was no way to get back in it without capsizing again. Fortunately some young men in a powerboat towed me back to the dock. I sailed the boat for a little over a season but only in very light air. Because the craft was so tender, the only way to sail her was to sit in the bottom with the centerboard trunk between my legs. By this time I'd had enough experience to know that I really enjoyed sailing so it was time to look around for another boat. I wanted one that that was easy to sail and easy to store, tow and rig, but I really had only one absolute requirement - it had to be a well-known design with an active group of sailors. I ran across the Potter Yachter website and felt the P-15 could quite possibly be the boat for me. After many months I found a local Potter, a 1975 model,

listed for sale in "Latitude 38".

After a quick demonstration sail I bought it.

A few months after I bought the boat, I saw an announcement for the first Cruiser Challenge. That event was my personal introduction to the Potter Yachters. I got a chance to meet some of the people behind the names on the internet and got to participate in my first race. I have to admit I did not do well although I did finally finish. I was dead last, but I didn't receive the "Guts and Glory" award because, by the time I finished, the race committee and all the observers at the finish line had departed for the nearest bar. For me the high point of the weekend was not the race, it was the chance to inspect other boats similar to mine and to meet people knowledgeable about the boat and about small boat sailing.

The Potter is a little jewel, but its main strength is the people who sail her. Because I had absolutely no one to turn to when I had any question about my first boat, I truly treasure the resource that is the Potter Yachters. The members are always ready to share their experience and knowledge of Potters and sailing in general. My experience with Flyaway showed me how important it is to have this kind of help. Even more important are the individuals that make up the Potter Yachters; they are all fine, friendly people and I feel fortunate to have found them.

*Pat Brennan*

## Overnighting in a P-15

### Packing a P-15 for several nights of sleeping aboard.

The basic principles Kathryn and I have used for sleeping aboard and camping out on our P-15 "Eilidh" have evolved over a number of years.

I have not built a lot of special storage devices into our boat, shelves, hooks etc., Instead I favor using soft bags and movable clear hard plastic boxes that can be quickly re-arranged as needed, and easily cleaned and re-organized after the trip is over.

Hooks, shelves, and hardware sticking out can gouge you rather easily in the pup tent sized interior of a P-15.

What has worked for us is really pretty simple: The basic principle is: **Daytime, and sailing... All stuff inside the cabin and pushed well forward.** The Sleeping bags and pillows spread out flat, heads at rear of cabin, feet toward the bow, with pillows topping off the boat gear stored in the small spaces in back of the centerboard trunk. Boxes and bags slide easily forward and back on the slippery nylon of the sleeping bags for finding items, which makes packing a re-arranging less effort. We use 3 milk crate size clear plastic boxes with lids, and one medium sized hard plastic ice chest, and about four canvas shopping bags. Contents are packed by categories and frequency of need. Stuff needed often or quickly, in the back to be reached quickly, heavier stuff forward as far as it will go to keep the boat balanced and in good trim for sailing.

**Nighttime, tied at Dock...** During almost all of our overnighting we have tied up at a dock somewhere for the night. All boxes and bags moved out into the cockpit, stacked back toward the transom and covered with a small canvas tarp. By moving all the stuff we can outside we regain the maximum room for sleeping comfort inside. I seldom secure the tarp heavily, preferring to be able to get at the items in the footwell easily in the evening, as needed.

In the morning you can be sure that the boat's exterior will be wet from night mist and dew. The cockpit will be quite wet, except for the things you've protected under the tarp. We always keep an old dry towel and a sponge inside at night to wipe dry the seats, cockpit and cabin top when the sun comes up. Later in the day we will hang out the clean up towel to dry.

I sleep in "gym clothes", shorts and T-shirt., with slip on shoes near by, so I can go out in the cockpit quickly or up on the dock as needed. We have P-Bottles so we don't have to go traipsing ashore to the bathrooms in the middle of a cold or rainy night. We use small pocket flashlights for reading, and a small portable radio for entertainment while falling off to sleep. We have found some small pocket flashlights with fluorescent tubes that last ten hours or more on one set of 3 "AA" batteries.

We have often camped out on our P-15 and included Spike our twenty pound Boston Terrier snoring bliss-

fully in the foot of my Sleeping Bag. ( he is a great cabin heater )

Even with the cockpit almost filled with our bags and boxes outside under the tarp, I always leave enough room to permit quickly getting under sail or motoring, if needed. We very rarely anchor out, but if so, it can be important to get going quickly if your anchor is dragging or another boat is swinging down on you.

Anchoring out is a special and sometimes beautiful experience, but I find I don't sleep very well then, as I wake up periodically in the night, to perform a quick check that everything is OK.. the famous "Anchor Watch"! When Tied up in a slip, or at dockside I find I sleep much more peacefully..

**Ideal Containers:** I like clear plastic boxes about milk crate size, with fairly watertight lids. You can see what is inside them, and grab them easily for moving or stacking. A packing system that has worked for us is as follows:

**BOX NO.1** food, and only food that is very easily prepared or ready to eat.and not very perishable.. For example Cereals, Ramen type soup cups, etc, crackers, canned stews, and so on..

**BOX NO.2** "The mini-kitchen Box" with Pot, Pan, utensils, can opener, knives etc. liquid soap, plastic garbage bags, mini stove, matches, plates,etc.. Thermos Bottle , condiments, spare batteries in plastic bag. ( standardizing on AA's and devices that use them is a good idea. On the



*Seen at left, our P-15 “Eilidh” overnighing at the Lundborg Landing dock during one of the Potter Yachter’s favorite summer gatherings in the Delta. Spike the Boston Terrier and Kathryn get ready to go ashore.*

*Although there is not a lot of space to spare in a P-15, it quite surprising how comfortable the thick cabin pads are to sleep on. If a box and bag system is used to easily move almost all clothing, food, and necessary camping gear out into the cockpit each evening, then covering the gear from dampness with a small canvas tarp, that opens up the maximum space for sleeping and lounging in the P15’s cabin...*

BOX NO. 4 is a small ice chest. Milk, eggs, or anything that needs to be cool, or is perishable goes in here,.

#### 2 CANVAS OR NYLON ZIP BAGS

Dry clothes, warm clothes, rain gear ( ponchos) for emergencies. Trip clothing is carried on board in these zippered soft bags, other types of clothing not needed for the boating portion of the trip are left ashore locked in the tow car. Trip clothing , toiletries are carried aboard in the zip bags for easy carrying to Marina bathrooms in the morning. One of these for each of us.

CANVAS “shopping bags” We have a couple of these and reading matter, cell phones, handheld VHF, chart book, small portable radio and other items are carried in them. They hold anything we want rapid access to us and near our heads at night, (as well as a place for “favorite snacks” and water bottle) These go right and left of the hatch door by the port and starboard bulkheads, near the pillows and can be reached quickly from the cockpit. An extra canvas bag or two is very handy for laundry or any brief shopping trips ashore, especially if it

is wet outside. They take up very little room when empty. Soft bags can be mashed into conforming shapes to wedge the hard boxes into place.

DRESSING: We have found that we have room to lay the clothes we have removed before going to bed, flat on top of the bottom end of our sleeping bags, and to our surprise often they are not too awfully wrinkled in the morning. I know of no easy way to dress and or undress while lying down in the cabin of a P-15, but am sure we could get some very funny videos of us struggling as we do it. I confess that I might have quickly shed or put on my clothes out in the cockpit when it seemed “private” enough.

KEEP IT SIMPLE: Keep the organization plan simple and the categories broad, and the number of boxes and bags limited to six or eight items. This will make it easy to find things, re-arrange them and move them about.

TIE THINGS DOWN? AN IMPORTANT SAFETY QUESTION.

A disclaimer! The methods Kathryn and I have used have worked well in calm to only moderately rough sailing conditions, and we did not lash things down tight as Bill Teplow wisely did on his now famous voyage to Hawaii in “Chubby”. For anyone contemplating packing their boat and being ready for “anything”, they undoubtedly should secure things tightly so the bags and boxes cannot move in a knockdown or capsize. For that purpose it would be necessary to put fasteners in the hull liner walls, and secure things with nylon tie down straps across the tops of the bags and boxes.. which would also make packing an unpacking a more complicated process each evening. For a person planning to single hand a great deal, and stay out on the boat often, custom cabinets, fasteners, straps etc, and a higher degree of organization would probably work better. For a single hander, managing things will be a lot simpler, as he or she could sleep on one side of the centerboard and move all the “Stuff” to the other side at night. For two of us, the methods I have described worked quite well.  
*Bruce Hood, Editor*



# The Potter Yachter

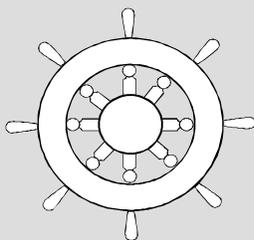
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## With a Grain of Salt

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 ex-

perience 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*

