



The Potter Yachter

Newsletter of the Northern California West Wight Potter Club

September 2004

Sailing & Event Calendar

February 25, 7-9 pm
Tides and Currents of the Bay at OCSC

February 28, 7-9 PM
Weather for Bay Area Sailors at OCSC

March 6 & 7
Docking and Marina Procedures Classes
RSVP Required.

March 20
Delta Day Sail. Launch at B&W sail to
Korth's Pirates Lair for lunch, and re-
turn to B&W.

April 2-4
Potter Rendezvous at Coyote Point
Yacht Club. Dinner with guest speakers
from International Marine. RSVP req'd.

April 24
Salt and Pepper Sail on Estuary. Launch
at Estuary Park and/or Grand Ave. Ala-
meda.

May 1-2
Brannen Island to Lundborg Landing @
Bethel Island.

June 5-6
Lake Sail and Overnight Campout at
Woodward Reservoir.

July 17-18 SCA Cruiser Challenge in
Monterey.

August 7-8 Eagle Lake Sail and Camp-
out.

September 18-19 Tomales Bay Sail and
Beach Campout.

October 2-3 Monterey Bay Over night.

November 6-7 Richmond Over night.
Sail to Loch Lomond on the 6th and
Angel Island on the 7th.

Tomales Bay Sail Sept 18 and 19

Potter Yachter Tomales Bay Trip September 18- 19, 2004

Launching

The Tomales Bay Potter Yachter Trip is scheduled for Sept. 18 and 19, 2004. We will be launching from the ramp at Miller County Park near Nicks Cove, located on the east side of Tomales Bay, off Highway 1, north of the town of Marshall. The fee is \$5.00 to launch plus \$5.00 for overnight

parking. We will be launching in the morning on Saturday, and those interested in getting together for a pot-luck dinner should plan to meet on the beach one cove North of Marshall Beach at about 5:30 p.m. (same location as last year). I will bring wood for a fire. We plan to anchor out just off the beach. There are pit-toilets available at the camping beaches, however you **must** have a PORT-A-POTTY on board for over night stays on

Monterey Bay Sail and Overnight October 2 and 3

When I last checked the Monterey municipal marina accepted no reservations so again this is a show up and get a slip where they are available weekend. Last year we had 20 boats and a whole lot of fun. No planned events, maybe an impromptu dinner somewhere, breakfast at Lulu's and some of the finest sailing in northern CA. Hope to see you there.

I know this newsletter looks a little funky and has no photos. I'm rushing to get us back on stream before the weather turns. Send me some articles, photos, jokes, etc. and I promise the next issue will look better.

Email to cadcotsm@aol.com or the commodore email address on the page 2. Please put Potter Yachter in

Inside this issue...

Tomales Bay

Sailing With A Whale

Monterey Quick Peek

From the Commodore

Rich McDevitt, Commodore

Well fall is upon us and I hope you're all still out enjoying some fine sailing. I apologize for the irregularity of the newsletter this year and if anyone is interested in helping with publishing let me know. I had a summer issue all ready to convert and send out and then I had a disastrous computer crash. Up until now, my most "commodorial orders" have been be safe and have fun. I'm going to add one and ask that you go do this before you finish reading this newsletter. **BACK UP YOR DATA!!!** I must confess I have a BS in Information Systems so for this to happen to me is not only a bummer, and a disaster, it is inexcusable because I know better, much better. I lost 3 years worth of personal stuff, tax records, bank records, and worst of all Potter photos and memories. Why, because I did not back it up. Your computer will die; it is just a matter of when. I knew that, but I did not pay attention to my own brain.

Thanks to those that sent in articles and/or photos, but I'm sad to say, they are lost unless you have a copy. If you have copies, send them to me and we will recap our sailing adventures in future issues.

On the cheery side, I have sailed more this year than any other year in my life and it feels great. My house is crumbling, lawn looks like crud, Mary's car is dirty, weeds are big, and the Minnow sits and smiles on her trailer because she knows she ranks high on my list. I must confess, when I had to make a choice to sit in front of the computer and type a newsletter vs. go sailing, well I chose sailing each and every time.

We have a few great events left this year before the weather shifts to winter so come on out and join us. The calendar is on page one. If you are new, expert, or like me, somewhere in between, come on out and sail with the club. The Potter Yachters love to see new and old faces and families so don't be bashful or feel you are not up to our "adventures". If the venue of the month seems "over your head" call or email me so we can discuss it. We have a lot of folks that will harbor sail or stay in the tamer waters with you if that is what safety dictates. Everybody started somewhere and most of us remember those days and enjoy helping others across the speed bumps of Potter Yachting. In my experience, September and October often offer some of the best SF Bay Potter sailing of the year. Conditions can always change so pay attention, but the summer winds are abating and we still have some daylight and warm days to enjoy so you have no reason not to come on out and at least ride along with someone.

I know it's only September but before you know it we will be electing new officers so if you would like to volunteer or feel you have some time and/or talent to give to the club please get in touch with me so we can discuss it. We're all part time volunteers at this so don't think it's too much. You can commit to the level you are comfortable. Life changes for all of us and priorities shift so even if you only have a few hours, I'm sure you can pitch in on a special project.

Enough of my rambling, come on out and sail.

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Sailing With A Whale *by Bud Kerner*

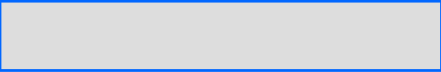
Sunday morning, the day after the Cruiser Challenge, was the beginning of my solo trip to Morro Bay. My sail plan was as follows: Sunday a thirty plus nautical miles (NM) to an ocean anchorage just south east of Pfeiffer Point. Monday a 50 NM sail to San Simeon. Tuesday a 40 plus NM sail to Morro Bay. Once you leave Monterey Bay going south there are no harbors or marinas until you reach Morro Bay.

I made my usual toast of grog to King Neptune and slipped away from the dock at nine thirty. The morning was overcast with little or no wind. Since my first anchorage was over thirty (NM) away I raised my mainsail and motored sailed.

The fog continued to thicken as I motored northwest along the Monterey Bay coast. There were times the visibility was near zero. From the chatter on the VHF I knew there were fishing boats in the area. I was moving at about 4 knots and kept a lookout for other boats. Around 12:30 PM I reached buoy R2 which is off Point Pinos and marks some submerged rocks. Just past the buoy I turned to port and headed south along the California coast. Shortly after the turn the wind started blowing from the north, or directly at my back. I raised the lapper, turned the motor off, got out my whisker pole and sailed wing on wing.

By the time I reached Cypress Point the fog started to retreat out into the ocean. The sun came out and I had a glorious view of Pebble Beach, and 17 mile drive. In fact for the rest of the day I had a wonderful view of the coast.

The wind and waves continued to increase. For the most part the wind was still directly behind me. It was however making slight shifts and it became increasingly difficult to keep the sails wing on wing. I lowered my lapper and continued on with just my mainsail. There were times I surfed down waves at better than 8 knots ground speed. Even climbing waves I never dropped below 5 knots ground speed.



I was within two miles of my first night anchoring, when I decided there was just too much wind, so I started my motor and turned into the wind. I set my auto pilot and proceeded to lower my sail to reef it. A wave caught the bow and, before the auto pilot could respond, turned the boat. The mainsail was drawn in tight and the wind knocked the boat down. The Potter turned into the wind, the auto pilot steered into the wind, and we came up very quickly. Since I was in the process of lowering the sail I took it completely down and stored the sail and boom in the cabin. I had about 2 inches of water in the cockpit, none in the cabin. I turned the boat back onto the anchorage heading set the auto pilot and began to check for damage.

At the time of the knockdown my backup GPS was laying on a cockpit cushion and wound up on the cockpit floor in sea water. My cell phone was in a cup holder in the cockpit and got wet enough to stop working. I lost some gas from the vent on the portable gas tank, but that was it for the cockpit. I had all large items in the cabin tied down and nothing large moved. However, there was a lot of small stuff that wound up on the cabin sole. I keep all my medical supplies in the storage shelf above the stove. Everything on that shelf wound up on the floor. A bottle of rubbing alcohol came uncapped and spilled. My sailing hat got an alcohol bath.

I passed Pfeiffer Point at 4:00 PM and began looking for my anchorage. The fog was again moving in towards the coast. I had envisioned the anchorage as being an inlet, all I could see was beach and cliffs. I went beyond the anchorage waypoint, saw nothing and decided to come back to the waypoint. I discovered at the waypoint there was a section of beach that had no breaking waves. I motored in to about a depth of 40 feet and dropped anchor. As a safety precaution I dropped a second anchor. The cruising book mentioned if there were swells the anchorage would be affected by them. There were swells and I was affected. I thought that once anchored the boat would turn into the swells. It did not. There must have been a tidal current, because the entire time I was there the boat stayed parallel to the beach and swells.

After having my lunch I decided to put the boom and sail

Sailing With A Whale *continued from page 3*

back on the mast to be ready for the next mornings sail. I had the boom on and was standing on the cabin roof to attach the halyard to the sail. I noticed the halyard was wrapped once around the topping lift. I like to think because of the swells and the movement of the boat that I didn't want to climb down off the cabin top to untangle the lines, as opposed to being just too lazy. In either case I took the halyard and tried to toss it between the topping lift and shroud. The halyard wrapped itself around the shroud, just out of reach. I gave the halyard a tug and it unwrapped itself one turn, but it moved higher up the shroud. I gave another tug and it went right to the top of the mast.

I got out my mast lowering blocks and line and lowered the mast. I still couldn't reach the top of the mast. The only way I could retrieve the halyard would be to un-step the mast... I considered this, but the way the boat was rocking in the swells I was afraid I would lose the mast

At the time I thought I had two choices, motor to Morro Bay which was almost a hundred miles away, or go back to Monterey. My truck was still in Monterey so I thought I would motor back in the morning. With that decision made I opened a beer and settled in for a very rocking night. It seems I woke every fifteen minutes to check to see if the anchors dragged. I did turn 180 degrees but didn't move any closer to the beach.

I was up at five, made coffee and then weighed the anchors. I was hoping the wind wouldn't pick up until noon like the day before. No such luck, by 6:30 AM I had 15 mph headwind with 4 foot steep waves. The wind and waves continued to increase. I had hoped I could do some motor sailing so I left the jib hanked on; however, the wind was too strong, it eventually reached 35 mph with steep waves 6 to 8 feet. The jib was taking a real beating from the wind. Even though I had a jack line around the boat and was wearing a harness and tether I did not really want to go forward to retrieve the jib. All though I had never tried I thought one could change head sails from the forward hatch. I was able to get my 200 pounds with foul weather jacket, life persevere, and harness through the hatch and brought in the jib. I ran my 5 hp Nissan 4 stroke at three quarter throttle. My speed would drop to 1 ½ knots when climbing a wave. Just like the day before when I approached the 17 mile drive Pebble Beach area the fog began to lift, the wind began to subside, the waves got smaller, and the sun came out. I went below to use the head and to change into dry clothes. I was going to make my self some lunch when the fog returned. Visi-

bility dropped to less than a quarter mile.

I was sitting in the cockpit keeping a sharp eye out for other boats when I heard this snort. There about 25 feet off starboard was a grey whale. He was close enough to get a good look at his eye. He went under, and I thought "man that was great". Within the next minute he appeared again in the exact same relative position to my boat. This went on for at least ten minutes. Approximately every minute he would appear in the same relative position. It was the highlight of the trip.

When I entered Monterey Bay it was as it was the day before, fog and no wind. Four thirty that afternoon I was again in a slip at the Monterey Bay Marina. I forced myself to stay awake until almost dark, and then I had the best night's sleep I have ever had on my Potter.

My goal is to sail the California Coast in sections. I will have to repeat this same sail plan next year. In planning my trip I used Don Douglass & Reanne Hemingway-Douglass's cruising book "Exploring the Pacific Coast San Diego to Seattle". I found it most helpful.

Hindsight

It goes without saying I should have reefed sooner. There was a time when the wind had picked up enough that I had to zip my foul weather jacket to stay warm. That was the time to reef.

I fell in love with my GPS. That is, I was able to sail directly towards my target. My velocity made good was the same as my over the ground speed. If I didn't have a GPS with me I would have sailed on a broad reach. This would have given me more control over the boat.

When I did attempt to reef I should have raised the jib and hove to. In the conditions I was sailing my auto pilot could not react fast enough.

I checked the weather on my radio, and the weather forecast was for moderate wind and calm seas. I didn't realize, while in route, I left the San Francisco weather radio and crossed into Los Angeles weather radio. Los Angeles weather was reporting a tropical disturbance off the coast of Mexico that was causing high wind and steep waves in my area. Next time before starting I will consider a wider range of weather reports. *Cont. bottom right of page 5*

Tomales Bay. I have been inspected by the rangers.

Tides and Navigation Notes

Day	Tide	Time	Ft.	Sunrise	Sunset
18	High	3:30 AM	4.2	6:56 AM	7:14 PM
18	Low	9:21 AM	1.9		
18	High	3:17 PM	5.4		
18	Low	10:24 PM	0.2		
19	High	4:39 AM	3.8	6:57 AM	7:13 PM
19	Low	10:04 AM	2.4		
19	High	3:59 PM	5.4		
19	Low	11:25 PM	0.1		

Communicate on VHS Ch. 72.

Tomales Bay is fairly shallow south of Marshall. The west side of the bay is deeper and with the above tides you should be able to get all the way to Inverness at any time other than the evening lows, be sure to stay to the western side of the bay south of Marshall. The entrance to Tomales Bay is a legendary hazard, due to large sleeper waves that may break in the entrance. Note the channel markers heading north and do not attempt to pass out the entrance. Also, the area to the north of a line drawn between the launch ramp and Hog Island is quite shallow. Saturday nite make sure your boat is floating at 8:00 p.m. if you want to get off the beach in the morning.

Accommodations and Dining

We generally treat a trip to Tomales Bay as a camping trip. Boaters may anchor out, or camp on the beaches north of Marshall Beach on the west side of the bay. No permit is needed to anchor out. (a boat-in camping permit must be obtained from the Bear Valley Visitor Center near Olema on the south end of the park if you plan to camp on the beach). There are no car camping areas in the park, but there is a private campground/trailer park near Olema (no access to water). You can stay and launch at the Golden Hinde Inn and Marina (415-669-1389) located at the very south end of the bay on Sir Francis Drake Blvd., rooms range from \$60-\$150 per night. The ramp and marina should be serviceable on this weekend. There are a number of restaurants on Hwy 1 south of Miller Park. It is possible to dock and dine in Marshall, though I have never done so.

Eric Zilbert is coordinating the trip for the potter yachters. I (ezilbert@cde.ca.gov) or call to let me know if you plan to attend.

For more information you can call:
 Eric Zilbert: 530-757-6783 (eves)
 Miller County Park: 415 499-6387
 Golden Hinde Inn and Marina 415-669-1389
 Bear Valley Visitor Center 415-663-1092
 Recorded Weather & Information 415-663-9029

Sailing With A Wale *cont. from page 4*

I will have to remember my camera. Of course if I had, and it was in the cockpit it probably wouldn't work any better than my cell phone, or backup GPS.



The Potter Yachter

Summer 2004

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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*