

FEB 84



POTTER TO POTTER

Newsletter of the Northern California West Wight Potter Assn.

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March 4
April 7

Sailing Schedule

San Leandro Marina
Annual Luncheon, Encinal Yacht Club



From The Bridge

What a beautiful day that greeted a fleet of 15 Potters on Saturday, March 4--including two Potter 19's. Thanks to Ray Monroy who provided us with the knowledge of the free boat ramp next to Zack's Restaurant and also where we could park. One accident was prevented when the Potter 19's were warned of driving into electrical wires with their raised masts when moving their boats to the launch ramp.

Sailing was good in Richardson's Bay until we came near Angel Island where we had to motor most of the way to Hospital Cove. The choppy water along with the weird water currents and winds going through Raccoon Straits was an experience to remember.

While having our picnic lunch, there was talk about the upcoming national regatta in June. Gwen suggested a "Powder Puff" race. So women of the fleet, let's see if we can get enough entries and we'll have some fun. Another thought about the "National's" is to have a Lemans start for each race; that is, all classes of Potters will have the same start but each class have their own trophies. When we get the regatta more organized within the next month, the Encinal Yacht Club will provide us between 20 and 24 berths for keeping our boats overnight.

After lunch, the Averill's and the Simpson's hiked up to the top of the island to enjoy a beautiful panorama encompassing the Golden Gate Bridge and the Bay. You don't see this on the freeway. Most of the other Potter-Yachters took a short hike and then sailed around the island and back to Sausalito. This was truly a great day for sailing--the winds, weather, and tides were in our favor.

During the week of May 5-12, John and I will be at Incline Village at our time-share condo. This is an optional sail and if anyone is interested in sailing with us, please contact me personally so I can give you more details.

Barbara J. Simpson

Attendance of the March 4 sail were:

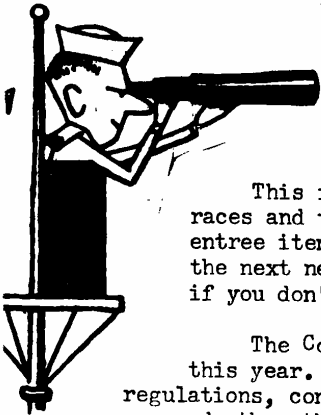
Ranney Thayer & Claudia Dennison (766)
Gene & Sharon Averill (1077)
Terry Gotcher with Gwen & Tina Singh (821)
John & Barbara Simpson (266)
Bill Sprietsma & Gail Frankel (1205)
Don Wilson, Charles & Marcia (P-19)
John & Anne Ockes (1060)
Ray Monroy & Connie

Leighton Johe & wife (773)
Dave Grandt (1053)
Jerry Barrilleaux & sons (564)
Mike Bartunek & Claudia Hassler (748)
John Graham & Charlie Nearing (312)
Judy, Lamar & Sarah Bell & David Geisser (279)
Harry & George Coleman, Lee Olin & daughter (1299)

Next Sail: San Leandro Marina, Sunday, March 4

Launch time: 10:00 am. Directions: From route 17 in San Leandro, turn off on Marina Boulevard driving west. When you get into the marina area, follow the arrow on the sign to "launch ramp." Bill Sprietsma says the marina has been up-graded including an enlarged parking lot. Also, you may stay overnight without charge--maximum two nights. Contact the harbor master.

Bring a picnic lunch for the sail. There are three restaurants at the marina and we can stop at one of them in the early afternoon after the sail. If the sail is postponed due to inclement weather, then it will be rescheduled for Saturday, March 10, same time & place.



On the Horizon: Annual Luncheon and Election of Officers

On Saturday, April 7, 1130 am, the Northern California West Wight Potter Association will meet at Encinal Yacht Club in Alameda for our annual luncheon, election of officers, and plan our sails for the year.

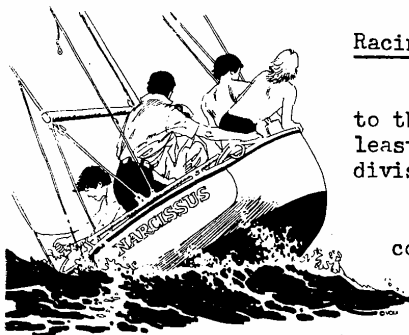
This is also a non-sailing event. The Encinal Yacht Club has scheduled races and the docks will not be available. Our commodore will be choosing two entree items from the menu to expedite the luncheon. There will be a ballot in the next newsletter but here is a WARNING . . . You may be elected to an office if you don't attend this important meeting.

The Commodore and the Historian have chosen not to run for office again this year. As most of you know, our association does not have any rules, by-laws, regulations, constitution or whatever that describe what the duties of the officers are and other things. Generally, the commodore provides direction for our association, suggests the up-coming sails, and provides information for the newsletter. The historian keeps an account of the sails and other activities throughout the year.

If you can put up with the newsletter editor's dangling participles, misplaced modifiers, misspelled words, and peculiar sentence structure then place your X on the ballot for him.

The "West Wight Potter"

For the next several months, stories about the West Wight Potter will appear with the newsletter. Norton Bell has provided us with the copies as well as the labels for the envelopes. Thankyou very much, Norton.



Racing, Anyone ! ! !

Most sailing clubs or yacht clubs have regattas that are open to the public. Trophies are awarded to the winners if there is at least 3 boats in a class. Less than 3 entries sail in an open division. There is usually an entrance fee to enter the competition.

If you hear about any open regattas or other newsworthy items, contact the editor. The Lakeport Yacht Club located on Clear Lake is having an annual spring regatta on April 14-15. Three races on Saturday and two on Sunday. Skippers are to check in before 10:00 am meeting. Motels & camping are in the local area. Telephone John Ockes for more details.

Write us

We welcome your letters and will publish as many as space allows.

HISTORIAN'S ALMANACK - 1983

Janus is the two-faced Roman god who looks back at the past and forward to the future. On January 1st, the Potter Yachters assembled at Pete's Harbor to remember past sails and plot future exploits. The Singhs exhibited their fine album of photos of the Potter Nationals.

Seven boats tasted light winds on the Oakland Estuary on January 9th. They finally drifted to Quinn's Lighthouse- closed! - and on to Victoria Station.

Rain threatened the five Potters that met at Lake Elizabeth on February 5th. Two boats- Don Bergst and the Averills- defied the elements and launched in a thunder shower. All others assembled for some "van sailing" and great company.

1983 was a year of record rainfall, and in March our luck ran out. Two consecutive attempts on Treasure Island, March 5th and March 12th, were blasted by winter storms.

Thirty three people from eighteen boats met at Encinal Yacht Club on April 9th to elect officers and swap sea stories. This was the Annual Dinner of the Potter Yachters - our one and only business meeting of the year. Officers elected were Barbara Simpson, Commodore, John Ockes, Secretary/Editor, and Frank Winans, Historian. The remaining business consisted of arm-chair sailing- past and present, real and imagined.

May 14th & 15th marked a first for the club: first at Treasure Island, first overnight at anchor, first rondevous sail. Ten Potters visited Treasure Island Cove, and five spent the night at anchor. Rafting can be fun!

Potter Yachters love Woodward Reservoir, and on June 4th & 5th eleven families gathered there for sailing, fun, swimming, socializing. The Woodward campfire is tradition.

June 25th was the date of the 16th Annual Potter Nationals at Marina Del Rey. Again, Potter Yachters garnered the glory: 1st place, Jerry Barrilleaux (564), 2nd place Mike Bartunek (743)! Also competing from Northern California were Barbara Simpson (266), Lee Clin (1299), and Jim Silva (1253).

July 9th found the fleet at Brannon Island for a taste of river sailing. Ten boats sailed Three Mile Slough to the Sacramento, thence north to ThePoint Restaurant at Rio Vista. Lunch was enlivened by the rescue of Bill Spritsma's 1205 by our alert Commodore Barbara Simpson. Another exciting sail!

On August 6th & 7th sixteen families met at Potter Haven, aka Woodward Reservoir. The winds were light, the weather warm, and many sailors took to the water sans boat. The evening campfire was highlighted by the celebration of Mickey Bow Wow's 7th birthday.

On September 10th & 11th the Potter Yachters dared the open sea at Santa Cruz. Eleven boats sailed to Capitola and all hands safely returned, sharing the ocean with seals and otters. Thanks for the hospitality, Jim and Donna Silva!

October 1st & 2nd marked our first launch at New Hogan Reservoir. Threatening rain held participation to three boats, but this lake seems well worth re-visiting.

Eleven boats took advantage of Indian Summer on November 5 to launch at Encinal Ramp in Alameda. Great sailing was enhanced by lunch at the Whale's Tail. This ramp offers an alternative to the Oakland Estuary for Bay sailing.

December 3rd came blasting in with rain and gales that pre-empted the scheduled Del Valle sail. Nevertheless, four indomitable Potter families salvaged the date at Concannon Winery to taste wine by flashlight, then lunch at Smorga Bobs.

1983 was a year of change-the Potter Yachters welcomed new members and sailed new waterways. Yet old values endured: the tradition of friendliness, fellowship, helpfulness, and concern for safety. All this in the timeless setting of wind, water, and sky- always the same, always different. It was a pleasure to sail together in 1983.

Frank Winans (691)

The West Wight Potter

by MIKE PATTERSON

SMALLER and smaller they get, like Alice, until they can vanish into the creeks and saltings where no harbour master would dream of following to demand his dues. (Would that the Excise men adopt the same attitude to mini cars!)

Acceptance of mini-cars was logical and fairly rapid, but mini-ature sailing cruisers are a different problem because the seas remain capricious. For this reason it is particularly important that the designer of such a mini-cruiser should know what real ocean waves look and feel like. Not all such designers do, and Stanley Smith is probably the exception rather than the rule. For he has crossed the Atlantic twice, in a very small boat designed and built by himself and his brother. Not that his West Wight Potter design is intended to cross oceans, of course. It is designed as the title suggests, to potter; but you would soon tire of pottering if your boat was not enjoyable and efficient.

The Smith brothers, Stanley and Colin, will be remembered by some people as the young men who made world headlines in 1949, crossing from Nova Scotia through some of the worst Atlantic gales in living memory, in a boat 16 feet on the waterline. They had designed her on the voyage out, and built and equipped her to sail home on a very exiguous budget indeed. She was really a half-decker with no more shelter than an upturned dinghy clamped to the forward end of the cockpit: the *Nova Espero* (Esperanto for 'New Hope'). And to prove that it was no fluke Stanley sailed her back again as part of the Festival of Britain celebrations.

All of which sounds spectacular; almost brash. In reality Stanley Smith is the quietest, most unassuming of men, and the tales of his voyages have to be prised out of him almost by twisting his arm. His little boat is unassuming, too, and I do not mind confessing that it gave me the surprise (pleasant variety) of my sailing life.

Surprise, surprise . . .

To be as astonished as I was you would have to know Yarmouth harbour, Isle of Wight, pretty well. Out of it the ebb tide, especially on springs, sluices fast enough to grind the corn, and it is well known that you do not attempt to get into it under sail against the south-west wind, until the tide has slackened right off.

Secondly, you would have to be anticipating—as I was—a design in which sailing qualities and indeed everything else have been sacrificed to the requirement for two full-length berths on a 14-ft. overall length. (You *cannot* have a 14-ft. sailing cruiser, your preconceived ideas tell you. There ain't no such bird.)

Stand by for an attack on your convictions, then; because you can. Three of us went creaming out of Yarmouth in one, wind and tide behind us, and I told myself we were out for the rest of the day, because we had no motor with us, nor even a pair of oars. Mr. Smith, noting some remark I made to this effect, put his helm down and sailed back in—in two rapid tacks.

Ah I thought! The hand of genius! The designer can perform miracles with his—boat—rather like the test pilots with those weird aeroplanes nowadays. I said this as well. After all, had I not seen fast catamarans and exotic

racing keel boats fail to make Yarmouth against the ebb!

Spinning her round, he sailed out again, and I took over. You sail her like a dinghy of course, because she is unbalanced except for her centre-plate, or lifting keel. A squall hit us and I let some sheet go and also pointed her up into the wind a bit. The sheet did not run—because the third member of the crew was standing on its trailing end. Over went the Potter and I prepared for a swim, throwing myself to windward in best dinghy-racing style. The designer meanwhile sat on the centre-board case, looking mildly interested, and I suspect smiling inwardly while the Potter gently righted herself, correcting our mistake.

I began to respect the boat. But she was still an absurdly small week-ender, which could not possibly *really* sail, I felt. We stayed out until the ebb had got the bone in its teeth and then pointed for home once more, just to prove it could not be done—not by me at any rate.

Five minutes later we were inside the harbour again. I felt chagrin because my own boat will not do that and fascination because Mr. Smith's will. Boats, like cars, have 'feel' of course; and the Potter felt good. Being so small and with so little sail area, one felt she ought to be reluctant to go, to have that 'little boat trying to get nowhere' feel. In fact, she seemed long-legged and quite a mile-eater: definitely thoroughbred.

Accommodation and other details

I then gave up, nonplussed, and went 'below'. Here I was certain that I would find the snags. After all, a friend whose boat is 36 ft. long claims he cannot sleep aboard in comfort. But the Potter fooled me again, for I could prostrate my 6 feet 2 inches at full stretch. I lay there in the warmth (it was that day the sun shone, in April!) wondering why we run our 'exotic' racing sloop, of the type so neatly described by the same friend's definition of a yacht—a hole in the water, lined with wood, for you to pour money into. The water chuckled close by my ear. I sat up, and did not bang my head!

The lockable door to the cabin converts with one deft movement into a table round which three or four people can sit in comfort, and it fits in the cabin or in the cockpit.

Sails can be handled from the cockpit, the sliding gunter rig allowing a very low mast for passing under bridges.

Inside the cabin your floor is several inches off the bottom of the boat, so that a few pints of water will not slosh all over your gear, as it does in most miniature cruisers.

The latest model has a removable cabin-top developed directly from that upturned-dinghy-shelter on the famous *Nova Espero*. Thus equipped, with detachable hard-top, you can take advantage of day-sailing or fishing trips. It also facilitates maintenance.

The boat has a number of semi-bulkheads, so that a sea shipped over the stern should not penetrate the cabin.

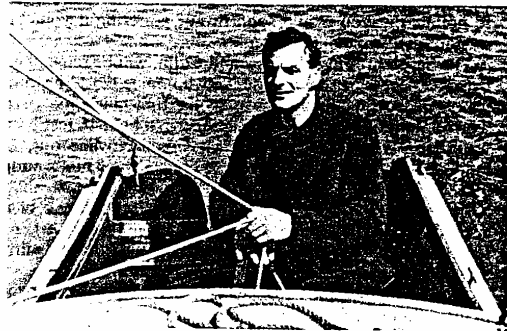
Oh, and you can use it as a caravan when you are trailing it behind the car—down to St. Tropez or up to Scotland, for instance. A Mini will pull it easily. It draws three feet with the keel down and a few inches with it retracted, so it can be sailed right up on to the beach.

FIRST BORN OF 2 ATLANTIC CROSSINGS



Mr. Stanley Smith, the brilliant designer and talented builder of the West Wight POTTER in England is known the world over for his authoritative knowledge of traditional shipbuilding. His father, his grandfather, and his great grandfather were accomplished ship builders on the same Isle of Wight. In 1949, Mr. Smith and his brother sailed the 16 ft. W. L. Nova Espero from Nova Scotia to England, one of the smallest ships ever to cross the Atlantic. In 1951, the publishers Robert Ross and Co., Ltd. published the 189 page book "The Wind Calls the Tune" narrating the arduous 1951 crossing of the Nova Espero from England to New York as part of the Festival of Britain celebrations.

From these voyages, Mr. Smith documented historic facts and data to lead him to produce his dream "What makes a dry boat". Another book is available, relating Mr. Smith's most recent history making accomplishment. On Oct. 12, 1965, he sailed a West Wight POTTER 780 miles across the wind swept North Seas, arriving in Sweden on November 17. The British photo here shows the actual departure from Wight of the POTTER delivered after one of the most daring sea adventures ever recorded.



Stanley Smith: F.R.G.S. A.F.B.I.S. - American Inst. S.O.



From these vast and incomparable experiences, Mr. Smith has created the most amazing small ship of our time. It is seaworthy beyond any boat its' size; roomier, yet as compact as possible. The POTTER has charm, beauty, a rare and striking personality that pops her out of a crowd. Besides this heritage, we quote Mr. Smith's engineering concern for the sailor:

"To explain one feature, the strong S sheerline; the high shoulders forward give the boat those few important inches of freeboard just where they are needed to discourage the bow wave from getting carried up by the wind when sailing close-hauled. The lower freeboard in the waist; it is at this point, where we most frequently get in and out of the boat, where the natural form of the surface of the sea dips down when the boat is moving, and a green sea seldom finds its way on board here. The "kick-up" towards the transom; it is very reassuring, when contending with awkward following seas, to have more freeboard aft. The result is a small craft which feels bigger, more comfortable and safer than any other 14 ft. boat".

Mr. Stanley Smith is Director of the prominent West Wight Plycraft, Ltd. producers of the plywood West Wight POTTER in England. The American version under license to HMS Marine, Inc. is produced in fiberglass, duplicate molds of which are in England. At the present time, there is a backlog of 6,000 inquirers whose needs for this incredible ship can only be satisfied through our associated, combined efforts and production molding of fiberglass parts.