

April 1987

Potter to Potter

Newsletter of the Northern California West Wight Potter Assn.

COMMODORE John Simpson VICE COMMODORE Don Bernreuter SEC./TRES. John Ockes HISTORIAN Candy Hogan
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Sailing Schedule



Sunday, April 26	Annual Opening Day on SF Bay, Sausalito to Angel Island
Saturday, May 9	Petaluma River Sail
Sat-Sun, June 6-7	Woodward Reservoir Campout
Sat-Sun, August 15-16	West Wight Potter National Regatta, Encinal Yacht Club



COMMODORE'S LOG

Business Meeting: March 29, Encinal Yacht Club, Alameda

Congratulations are in order to our new officers for 1987-88. The nominating committee's choice of officers were accepted by unanimous vote: Commodore--John Simpson, Vice-Commodore--Don Bernreuter, Secretary/Treasurer and continuing as newsletter editor--John Ockes, and Historian--Candy Hogan.

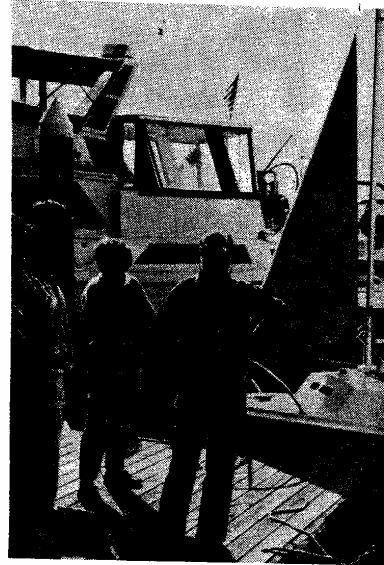
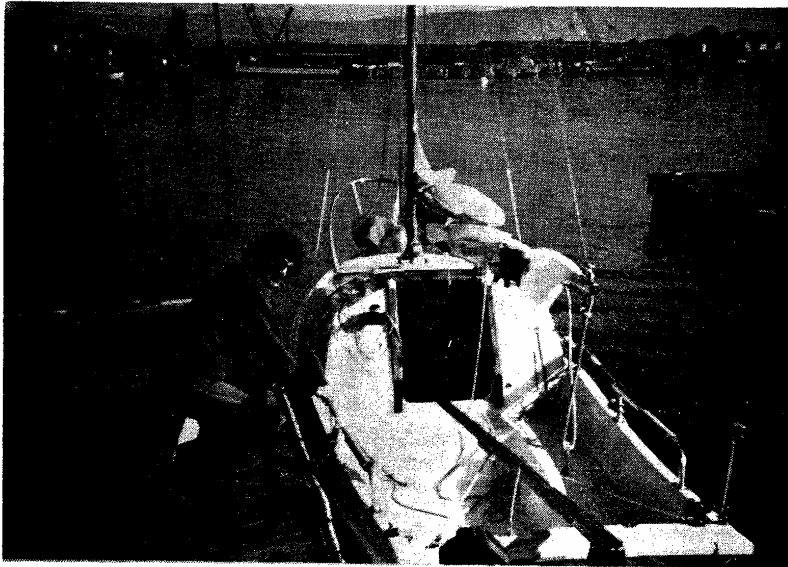
We first met on the outside deck of the yacht club and then after our luncheon in the dining room met downstairs in the Regatta Room to conduct our business meeting. First on the agenda was the treasurer's report. There is almost \$2000 dollars in membership dues including postage stamps and copies of the Many Ways to Potter. It was decided to pro-rate the dues of new members. Next September, the club's officers will meet to determine if a dues decrease is in order for 1988.

In other matters, it was decided that our annual West Wight Potter National Regatta will be limited to Potters only. Owners of other boats, such as the Montgomery, may borrow someone's Potter and race in this prestigious event. Although we welcome Montgomery owners as Potter members, it was suggested that their manufacturer promote its own national regatta such as Joe Edwards does of HMS Marine, Inc. Space will be provided in the newsletter for the Montgomery owners who want to list their own activities.

Ideas were discussed for future sails and our new commodore and vice-commodore will be planning our scheduled sails and other events. Members are encouraged to contact the commodore about places to sail. Here is a list of ideas for sails that was presented: Overnight sails to South Beach Marina, San Francisco, and a campout at Angel Island and also Woodward Reservoir; Moss Landing (new ramp); Petaluma Creek; Antioch to Pittsburg; Brannan Island in the Delta to Rio Vista; Lake Cachuma near Solvang with the Southern California Potter-Yachters; Vallejo to Benicia; Stockton to Lost Isle; Alameda to Mission Rock; and sails at Santa Cruz and Monterey. With ideas like this, we'll have a great year coming up.

The last items on the agenda was the election of officers and awarding the door prizes. Those attending this event were Annie & George Bunn (P-19), Ray Monroy & Kathleen Lynick (P-19 #149), David & Candy Hogan with Heather & Krystle (#261), John & Barbara Simpson (#266), Dory Taylor & Mike Downey (#610), Gwen & Mahendra Singh with Wendy (#706), Mike Bartunek & Clauia Hassler (#748), Don & Dee Bernreuter (#817), Terry & Mary Gotcher with Barbara (#821), Dave Grandt (#1053), John & Anne Ockes (#1060), Bill Sprietsma (#1205), Donald & Berit Shaw (#1236), Bill Hayes (#1388), Gene and Sharon Averill, and Bill & Joyce Wight.

Bill Sprietsma (#1205)



Upper Left
 Freda Sprietsma (#1205)
 Above - Mike Bartunek (#748)
 Mary & Terry Gotcher (#821)
 Left - Rob McClain (#1168)
 Below - Philip Sullivan (#1051)
 Terry Gotcher (#821)
 Bill Sprietsma (#1205)



Welcome Aboard New Members

John & Kathleen Angood
 19833 Braemar Drive

Saratoga, CA 95070

Gary Mis
 13740 W. Keefe Avenue

Brookfield, WI 53005

Dick & Verna Freshley
 5630 So. 305th Street

Auburn, WA 98001

Joseph & Pamela Rossman
 Route 4, Box 123

Winchester, TN 37398

The English Potter-14

P-15 #1632 "First Step"
 408/714-1653

P-15 #1648 "Puddles"
 414/781-2528

P-15 #1198 "Puffin"
 206/735-1050

P-15 #210 "Shamu"
 615/967-8455

Thanks to Peter Schwierzke (P-18 #48), who receives the British Magazine Practical Boatowner, sent the editor the article of the "Little Legend" from the November 1986 issue. The editor would appreciate any photos, articles, cartoons, and fillers for the newsletter.

Last Sail: April 12th - Martinez Marina to the Naval Mothball Fleet

Attention

Your new commodore arrived first at the launch ramp along with gold stars affixed to his Potter's cap and a ceremonial sword in hand to lead his fleet thru the crowd of ducks at the ramp and launch our yachts into the Carquinez Straits. Six Potters and two Montgomeries sailed towards the mothball fleet with a strong current in light winds. On the way there we passed the Glomar Explorer, Howard Hughes vessel that was once used to search for a sunken Russian submarine.

There is a large sandbar in the center of Suisun Bay that Don & Dee Bernreuter found but they raised their centerboard and pushed off with an oar which is something a bigger sailboat can't do. The fleet headed home as the slack tidewater started to ebb. The wind came up a little but not the 20 knot winds as predicted on the news. We had gone quite far in the Bay and many had to motor back.

After the sail some of the Potter group stopped at a local pizza palace: John & Barbara Simpson with David & Candy Hogan (#261), Bruce Hood with Gary Mis and Linda Persand. Gary Mis just joined our association and is waiting delivery of his new Potter-15 this month. He and Linda came to California for a short vacation and joined Bruce Hood on this sail. Also attending were Dave Grandt with his daughter (#1053), Marc Thygeson & James Flower (#1144), Mike Bartunek & Claudia Hassler (#748), Don & Dee Bernreuter (#817), Bill Day & Gigi Gobb (M-#383), and John & Anne Ockes who stopped by later to check on the sail.

Next Sail: Sunday, April 26th - "Opening Day on San Francisco Bay"

Did You Know

There will be heavy boat traffic and it will be best to launch early, between 9:00-10:00 am. The theme this year for the decorated boats is "The Fabulous 30s on San Francisco Bay." We will sail from Sausalito to Angel Island and meet on the grassy area for a picnic lunch at Ayala Cove. There is a charge to use the dock but it is free to sail your boat onto the beach. Near the dock is a snack bar for fast food. Perhaps there will be time to hike to the top of the island to view the Bay and the hundreds of boats that will be on the water. Be aware that there may be some general craziness by a few yachties with random water balloon attacks.

One place to put your boat in is at the public launch ramp which is off Bridgeway Boulevard on Turney Street, between Zack's and Yet Wah Restaurants. First, check out the parking one block north behind the caboose and box cars before launching. The other place is at Clipper Yacht Harbor which is next to Caruso's Sportfishing and located off Bridgeway Boulevard and at the foot of Harbor Drive. This is just north of the Corp of Engineers facilities. There is a nominal charge to use the launch ramp but there is plenty of free parking. It is recommended to use the north entrance from Route 101 to Sausalito, Bridgeway Boulevard, and the launch ramps.

And The Following Sail: Saturday, May 9th - Petaluma River

and that's not all . . .

We will be heading to Marin County and meet at the Petaluma River public fishing access launch ramp. It is located directly under the Petaluma River overpass bridge off Highway 37, about 3 miles northeast of U.S. Route 101. From Highway 37 going northeast, use the Atherton Avenue/Black Point Road, exit and follow the Black Point signs on Harbor Drive for 1 mile. The launch ramp is on the right and free. If you are traveling southwest, use the first frontage road exit after crossing the bridge.

We'll stop along the riverbank to have our picnic lunch before sailing on. Bring along ample fuel for your motor. Launch time: 10:00-10:30 am. Driving from the East Bay, you might take the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge to Route 101 & 37, or you might take Route 80 to Route 37 that leads across the top of San Pablo Bay.

AND MORE!

Optional Sail: Saturday & Sunday, May 23-24, Whiskeytown Sailing Club Memorial Day Regatta

How about a warm-up for our National Regatta and join the handicap fleet for racing. Call Barbara Simpson who has information about this annual event at 415/254-2621. You also have the opportunity to use your Potter as a camper. You can also write to Pat & Dennis Myers for an entry form at 3780 Hole-In-The-One Drive, Redding, CA 96002.

Little Legend

Dave Greenwell sails the West Wight Potter

Does the West Wight Potter live up to her legendary reputation — that's what we set out to discover. Conditions for sailing small boats were far from ideal with a very wet, cold and blustery wind — *picture top right*. But this little 14 footer, with her fascinating past, now built in GRP by The Potter Boat Company, left us in no doubt of her pedigree.

She first caught the public's imagination way back in 1956 when her designer/builder, Stanley Smith of *Nova Espero* fame, sailed his West Wight Potter across a storm swept North Sea to Sweden. It took him 37 days during which time he sailed 780 miles to make landfall in mid November. This proved her seaworthiness in extreme conditions, but the original concept was to create an inexpensive boat for cruising areas typical of the Solent with its rivers, creeks, mud flats and often difficult sea conditions — not a deep sea voyager. And it is by that yardstick that she should be judged.

However, the jolly little boat we tested was quite a bit different from Mr. Smith's original. Gone, is the removable 'lid' with shape reminiscent of traditional Dutch sailboat cabins and in its place, a rounded, more conventional fixed cabin top — devotees will recognise it as the 'C' type cabin. The use of GRP for hull and deck, in place of plywood construction, has done away with internal frames that steal those important inches from the space aboard, and she now has the benefit of a roller reefing headsail and a self-draining cockpit. Otherwise, the 'new' West Wight Potter is remark-

ably like the Potter as originally conceived by Mr. Smith.

Translating a design from plywood to GRP has its problems, not least of which is providing sufficient stiffness in panels that only curve one way — as is the case with the Potter. Some early attempts at building plastic Potters were far from successful in this respect but the latest version seems to have cracked the problem. Her topsides, the larger of her single-curve panels, show no sign of flexing and she has a very firm feel when you move about on board. Overall, she is very nicely built and although many owners, I'm sure, will add their own pet modifications, structurally she wants for nothing.



Above: Reefed ready for a squall. Left: Recovering the 'Potter' is easy thanks to her 7 inch draft.

The boat we sailed was rigged with a 'modern' gunter mainsail plus a 34 square feet jib. Modern, because it has a rather sophisticated method of reefing which we felt an unnecessary complication. Her mainsail is lowered for reefing by adjusting a peak pennant made fast on a cleat attached to the foot of the yard. You loose the pennant and slide the main down its luff groove in the yard, recleating it to suit. This seems very simple but tempts you to stand on the cabin top to reef down without lowering the yard — not the thing to do on a 14 footer. But lowering the yard does away with the need for the peak pennant arrangement — all you need to do is re-bend the halyard further up the yard in the traditional manner. The sheeting system, too, has been 'modernised' bringing the blocks half way down the boom and in the middle of the cockpit sole right where it gets in the way. The original boom-end sheeting works far better on a boat such as this and although means more 'string' for a given purchase, leaves the cockpit far less cluttered.

Some may also criticise the roller reefing on the headsail as yet another unnecessary complication. There's a world of difference between handling the three-hundred or so square feet of a cruising genoa and the 34sq. ft. jib set by the Potter. Useful as it is, roller reefing gear complicates mast stepping and as she sails perfectly happily under main alone, there will be very few occasions where the Potter would be sailed with a reefed jib. A simple downhaul to the peak of the sail is really all that's needed for complete jib control.

But for all that she is a capable little

boat, fun to sail, stands up well to her canvas and willingly sails to windward. Her chunky coamings and deep cockpit make her feel like a much larger boat and, indeed, she sails as such. Her somewhat boxy sections, softened by a very pretty sheer line, gives high initial stability, enabling her to sail with only a small angle of heel, even in rough conditions. From the way she felt when we sailed her, you would never need to 'sit her out'.

When overpressed, however, she does not develop that 'falling-off-the-edge' feeling that, with many dinghies of her vintage, is the first and often only warning of pending capsiz. On the contrary, she retains a high righting moment and although we sailed her in conditions that would have threatened to capsize a lesser boat, she showed no sign of going over. She does, however, develop heavy weather helm when heeled well over — a good

indication that you should reduce sail which is the seamanlike action.

Her accommodation in the miniature cabin is sparse to say the least. It's perfectly adequate for the lone sailor and those used to dinghy camping might even say that she is comfortable, but squeezing two into the cabin calls on a special type of relationship. But already I'm making the classic mistake of considering the West Wight Potter as a scaled down cruising boat. She is not, nor is she a scaled up camping dinghy. She is one of those rare craft ideally suited to what James Whar-

ram, that eminent catamaran designer, has called coastal trekking.

Sitting on her trailer, she can be used as a caravan, providing free accommodation on the way to your chosen cruising ground. She is easy and quick to rig and because she only draws a few inches, simple to launch off a trailer. Once afloat, she can sail almost anywhere that's wet and easily escapes from those crowded and oversailed areas in favour of quieter waters where seabirds find sanctuary away from the bustle of weekend yachtsmen. And at the end of a perfect day's sail, she can be hauled up a quiet beach, sitting comfortably on her runners specifically intended for the purpose, to spend a peaceful night ashore.

Yes, the West Wight Potter can still weave her spell. She'll look after you when the day turns grey and open up wide new horizons barred to boats of a more demanding nature.

WEST WIGHT POTTER

LOA	14ft. 3in.
Beam	5ft. 5in.
Draft	0ft. 7in./3ft. 0in.
Weight (trailing)	670lb.
Sailer Area (gunter	100ft ²
(junk)	110ft ²
Builder	The Potter Boat Company,
Price:	7 Whitlocks Avenue,
£2750 + VAT	Durham City DH1 4HP