



The Potter Yachter

Newsletter of the Potter Yachters

November, 2010

Potters Sail to ... Alviso?

Is there any water in Alviso?



Photo: Rob Sampson

By Katie Taylor

This all started back in June when they (finally!) re-opened the Alviso launch ramp, after its silting in and closure oh-so-many years ago. For your reading pleasure, see the [June 2010](#) issue to read more about the opening of the new ramp.

Carl, Harry, myself and probably a few others have been toying with the idea of sailing to or from Alviso ever since. Then suddenly Carl comes to me and says that if we want to sail this year, it would have to be the next weekend. Oh, no! that was to be the only weekend available for us to re-paint the house, fallout from a spat between us and the landlords. But I can't just sit on the sidelines and *imagine* myself out there! Oh, no!

Last May Dave Candey gave me a VHF radio. I haven't yet installed it, and as I was looking at it, an idea struck me. Or

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was that a paint can? I couldn't install the radio in the boat, she was already snuggled next to Dagmar in Redwood City, but I certainly could listen in, couldn't I? That's exactly what I did!

Dory and I went to West Marine to get a few "finishing touches." Oh, nothing important, just an antenna, a few wires to connect to the battery, a mount for the antenna. Little stuff like that. Voila! A working radio. I was listening as hard as I could, and nearly launched myself into orbit when a transmission DID come through. I guess I had the vol-

(continued page 3: Alviso)



The Commodore's Log

I finished my hardwood floors in time to get to Moss Landing for the sail to Monterey.

Some of us came in on Friday and stayed over night at the Elk Horn Yacht Club. I arrived on Thursday, and sailed solo on Friday.

Friday evening there were about six of us Potter Yachters at the bar and we presented the yacht club with a check and a Potter Yachter Burgee. They in turn gave us one of theirs. Their Commodore invited us to participate in their small sailboat races which they hold the second Saturday of the month. He said they race every month, the only time they don't is when it is raining horizontally. The races are held in the harbor so weather shouldn't be a problem. He also said they would even set up a Potter class if we were interested. Here is a way for the Potter Yachters to practice for the Cruiser Challenge.

On Sunday morning Don Person, Dave White and I sailed back to Moss Landing together. I had to motor sail out of Monterey, but soon was able to turn the motor off and just sail. It was fun sailing in the rain, taking the boat down in the parking lot was not.

I stopped in Santa Nella on Interstate 5 for lunch and discovered I lost the bearings out of one of my hubs. I was still able to limp home. I am sure the rain helped keep the wheel cool. Soon the trailer will have a new axle with built in greasing ability, and a new hub, rotor and brake caliber. I better get it on the road I have to get my boat to Buckley Cove for our last sail of the year. Thank goodness it is a day sail. When I launched Thursday evening in Moss Landing I discovered my running lights aren't working. My boat is almost ten years old, could it be showing some of its age.

See you on the water,

Bud

EVENTS ON THE HORIZON:

November 20 (Saturday) . . . Delta Day Sail: Buckley Cove to Windmill Cove . . .

Host: Bud Kerner

January 9 (Sunday date tentative)... Annual PY meeting: Oakland Yacht Club.

Be there or be Square!



Organized in Northern California in 1978, the **Potter Yachters** is the longest running West Wight Potter club. Membership is open to owners of West Wight Potters and anyone interested in Potters and other trailerable microcruiser sailboats.

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(Alviso: continued from page 1)

ume on the wrong side of the dial. It was Dave Norris telling me, in fact, to tell the Potters that he was going out to meet them. I had mistaken that message as “I’m in RWC, and I’ll catch up with them.” I was ecstatic, I picked up something from that far away! Yeah, sure. I did try to relay the message, but it was no good. The paint crew must have been running the paint pump too hard, and were drowning out my signal. (yeah, right!)

It wasn’t until about one that afternoon until I DID hear PY traffic: Carl complaining about the depth

sounder not agreeing with the chart. The chatter got louder and clearer, and soon they were abreast of Moffett Field.



Photo: Terry Gotcher



Photo: Dave Norris

Well, to me that signaled a half-way mark, and I turned off the radio and ate lunch. When I turned it on an hour (or so) later, I was shocked to hear they were already pulling out. Whaaaat?!? I forgot to read the chart myself: Once they went under the Dumbar-ton Bridge, it’s a left turn into Alviso, dead downwind. The fleet ran the other half of the trip in half the time. I hastily dropped everything, packed up the radio, and shoed off the Mason painting crew (oh, they were done already, and just getting ready to leave), and hopped in the truck to at least say “Hi!”

There they all were, (that many) boats, all lined up on all sides of the launch ramp docks, and each wearing a sparkling new ring of genuine Alviso mud. What a beautiful thing. Dory and I went around, chatting and joking it up with everyone there, and had a great few minutes. Alas, we had some blue painters tape that some nut-case stuck all over the house’s “brightwork”, and we had to go remove it all before it dried out and got stuck.

(Alviso: continued on page 4)

And the skippers had to get home with enough daylight to wash off the mud before it dried to dement. One boat was dressed even fancier than the rest: Dagmar had picked up some tules along the centerboard rest on the trailer, and when Carl lowered the CB to rest on that support, the tules got stuck in place. Dagmar had a hula skirt!

It was fun, even though I wasn't an active participant, and everyone else had a great time. The winds and tide were perfect, and there wasn't one single grounding. What could be better?

Harry Gordon adds:

What a day! Perfect weather, perfect timing, and a flood current that got us all to Alviso an hour ahead of the high tide. Thanks to Carl Sundholm and Dave Norris for detailed planning and for transporting us all back to Redwood City in Dave's RV after we shuttled our cars and trailer to Alviso.



Crossing under the old Dumbarton RR bridge. Photo by Jerry Higgins



Going under the power lines. Photo: Carl Sundholm

Thanks also to Dave Myers, who led our procession through the uncertain stretches and managed to make all the correct turns. And to Terry Gotcher, who kayaked out to the mouth of Alviso Slough to meet us and make sure we were headed the right way.

The sounder registered 3.0 ft as I was finding my way into the slough. The centerboard didn't hit bottom so far as I could tell, but I pulled it up a little, then found my way into the deeper water. As I recall, the depth inside Alviso Slough was 10-14 ft all the way. I stayed in the center and a little toward the outside of the turns.

Thanks for the work-of-art photo (*Previous page. ~Ed*), Dave N. I didn't realize that was you standing on the levee as I motor-sailed by.



Photo: Don Person



Photo: Don Person



Photo: Don Person

Too many pictures to choose from!



Photo: Dave Kautz



Photo: Jerry Higgins



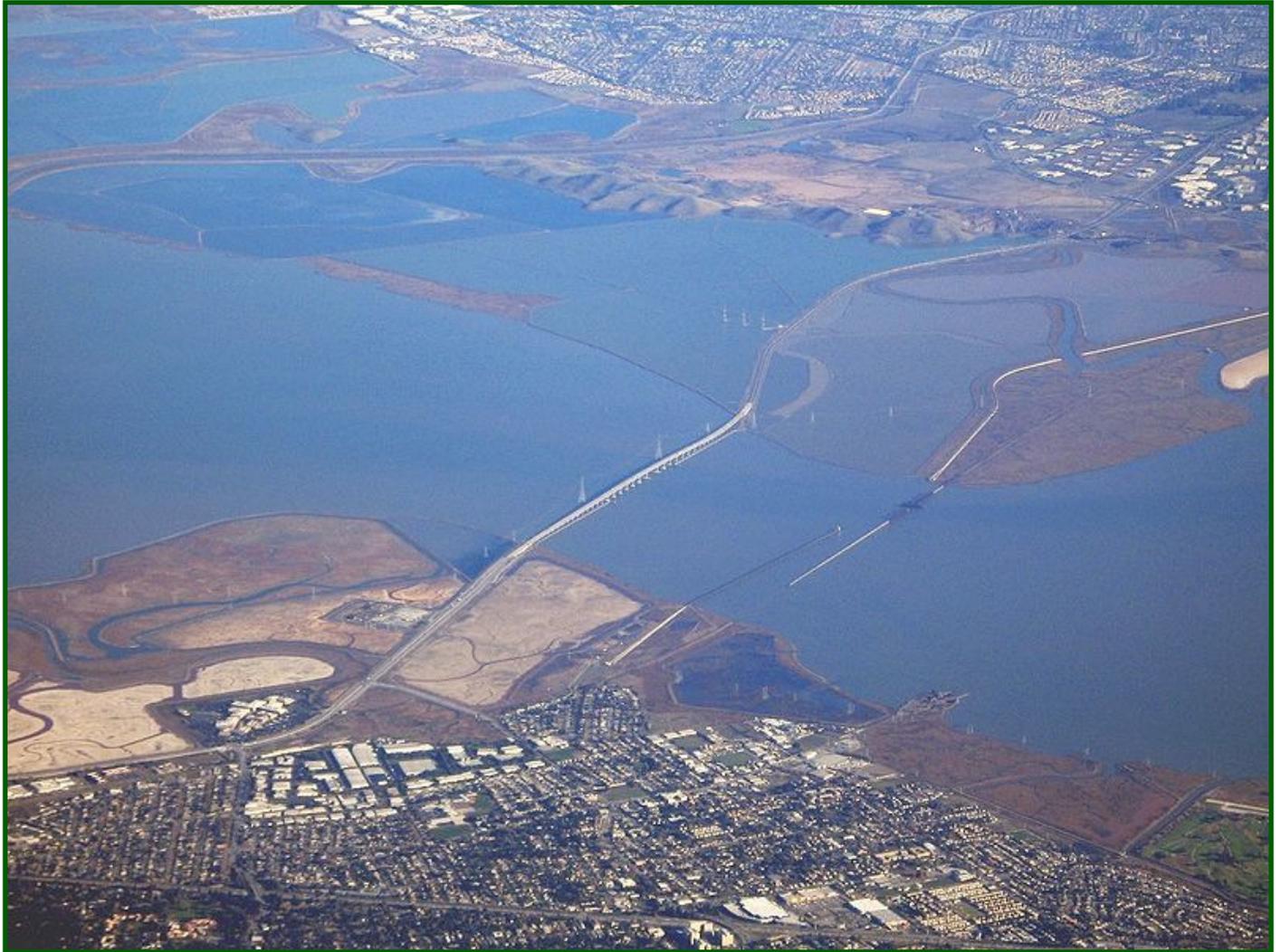
Below the Dumbarton Bridge

Harry Gordon (via Trailer Sailor)

When I sailed *Manatee* out of Palo Alto in the early 1970s, the Dumbarton Bridge was only a two-lane lift bridge. The new six-lane plus bicycle/pedestrian lane bridge opened in 1982. The old bridge was removed except for a section that was retained as a fishing pier, which can be seen between the new highway bridge and the old railroad swing bridge. The RR bridge remains but is permanently open.

The old highway bridge was closer to the water, and I remember driving across and looking out at the breakers that form when the wind is opposing the ebb current in the shallower parts. Barely visible in the photo (the darker blue area) is the deeper water channel where the flood tide gave us a fast ride Saturday.

Palo Alto no longer has a yacht harbor or launch ramp (<http://www.paloaltohistory.com/yachtharbor.html>), only a small dock for hand launching kayaks and windsurfers. Might be an interesting future Potter exploration goal from Redwood City but would probably have to be limited to two or three small boats and a brief lunch stop because of the absence of docking space. I have not researched the route, distance, depths, and tides, so I'm not sure if that would be a reasonable day trip.



Moss Landing to Monterey October 2010

Well, another Potter Yachters Moss Landing to Monterey sail is in the books. The people and boats in attendance were, Bud Kerner in his P-19 "Cat's Meow", Jerry Higgins in his Bulls Eye "Lia", Harry Gordon in his WWP "Manatee", Dave White in his P-19 "Wee Boat", Don Person in his P-15 "Sarah Anne", Dan and Gretchen Ricker in their Com-pac 19 "Good & Plenty", Rob Sampson in his Ranger Tug, Vin and Barbara O'Hara in their WWP "San Miguel", Dave Kautz came down on Friday but had to head home on Saturday morning and did not make the sail. Sailing up to meet the fleet from Monterey were Kevin Mayer in his P-19 and Russell and I in our Cal 2-27 "Breezin".



Photo: Don Person

Most of the party arrived on Friday October fifteenth, rigged their boats and made the short motor to the Elkhorn Yacht Club guest dock. After docking, we headed to the club to enjoy their hospitality, and where our Commodore, Bud Kerner, presented their Commodore, Mark Pastick, with a Potter Yachter burgee and a check for \$250 to show our appreciation for their years of hospitality.



Harry Gordon in "Manatee".

Photo: Mike Swartz

After "happy hour" we wandered over to the Sea Harvest restaurant to enjoy a fine meal before retiring for the night (that's what I did anyway, I have no idea what anyone else did). the following morning I woke up early to Motor/sail up from Monterey to Moss Landing to meet the fleet.

I arrived at the entrance of Moss Landing harbor about 10:30 to find Jerry and Don already heading out for an early start. We then continued on to the guest dock to see how the rest of the fleet was doing. The rest of the fleet was preparing to leave and left shortly after, except the O'Haras and us, who got a slightly later start. The sail down was relatively uneventful with light winds and calm seas. On Saturday night we got to watch the Giants beat the Phillies in the NLCS at the London Bridge Pub.

(Moss Landing, continued on page 8)

The Potter Yachter

(Moss Landing, continued from page 7)

Several sailors, myself included, had Sunday commitments so Kevin was nice enough to shuttle folks back to Moss Landing to retrieve their rigs. The weather was not as nice on Sunday, as the rain was on the way, and proved to be a wet sail or un-rigging.

Depending on departure time, with, I believe only Don, Bud and Jerry sailed back, and all else hauled out in Monterey.

All in all, it was another fun and Successful sail, and I was glad to see everyone in Monterey.
~Mike Swartz



Dave White and "Wee Boat".

Photo: Mike Swartz



Mike and Russell Swartz in "Breezin"

Photo by Don Person



Performance Sails for Potters

By Judy Blumhorst

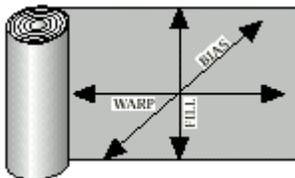
Performance sails are cut to the same shape as regular sails. In Potterdom, "performance" means you get upgraded sailcloth and full battens (rather than partial).

All sails stretch when the wind hits. That affects the shape. The choice of sailcloth and the number of full battens determine how stable the shape of the sail is when the wind hits it. Cloth choice and batten choice also determine how well the mainsail maintains its shape as the sail ages with use.

I'm going to oversimplify things in the next sections, in order to make my points. Sailcloth is highly engineered stuff, and there's a lot more to it than I'm going to discuss. For this article, we'll focus on just three characteristics of woven sailcloth: thread diameter, thread composition, and resin coating. We'll see how they affect sail shape under load and durability in the sun and when they get creased.

Upgrades: Woven Polyester Sail Cloth

Nothing beats Dacron sail cloth for durability and cost. Dacron is DuPont's trademark for polyester. Woven polyester sailcloth is extremely durable and relatively inexpensive. It has excellent physical characteristics that make it the fabric of choice for most sailors. It doesn't break easily if you crease it, it resists UV degradation well, and it can be tightly woven to give it good stretch resistance in all three directions: warp, fill and bias.



When the sailmaker upgrades the cloth, there are two ways to do it. S/he can increase the diameter of the threads used in weaving and/or choose a different formulation of polyester that is less stretchy (and more expensive). If you increase the diameter of the thread, the cloth will stretch less on the warp and fill. Depending on the way the loom weaves it, it may or may not stretch less on the bias. Your sail will stretch a little less when the wind hits it, and will last a little longer when UV hits it.

Upgrading from "ordinary" polyester sailcloth to less stretchy "high modulus" sailcloth costs a lot more. High modulus is an engineering term which compares the stretchiness of the thread independent of the diameter. Using cloth woven with less stretchy yarns (high modulus) is comparatively costly, but there's a noticeable performance boost. If you are a good trimmer, you will notice the improvement in the stability of the shape with high modulus cloth. Finally, you can reduce stretchiness of woven Dacron cloth

SAIL CLOTH FIBER COMPARISON CHART

SAIL CLOTH FIBER	Initial Modulus grams/denier	Tenacity grams/denier	Flex Life % lost after 60 bend cycles	UV-Resistance 50% strength loss (months)	Elongation at Break Percentage
PBO Zylon†	1830	44	27%	2-3 months	2.5%
High Tenacity Carbon Fiber	1350	60	22%	not effected	1.2 - 1.5%
Spectra™/ Dyneema*	1250	33.5	no effect	6-7 months	5.0%
Kevlar® Edge*	956	29.4	22%	2-3 months	3.0%
Kevlar® 49*	945	23.9	25%	2-3 months	1.5%
Iwaron® 2200 (HMT)*	810	23.5	25%	2-3 months	1.5%
Cetran®	650	15	no effect	6-7 months	4.0%
Technora®	540	28.3	7%	3-4 months	4.2%
Black					
Vectran®	510	23	15%	1-2 months	2.0%
PEN Fiber (Pentex®)	250	10.2	no effect	6 months	6.0%
High Tenacity Polyester	135	7.9	no effect	6 months	8.0%
Nylon®	45	9.5	no effect	3-4 months	13%

† UV-Resistance tested with Magna Shield cover

* ASTM 885 (American Standard Testing Method #D885)

INITIAL MODULUS: A yarn's ability to resist stretch. Higher numbers indicate less stretch.

TENACITY: A yarn's initial breaking strength. Higher numbers indicate that greater load is needed to break the fiber.

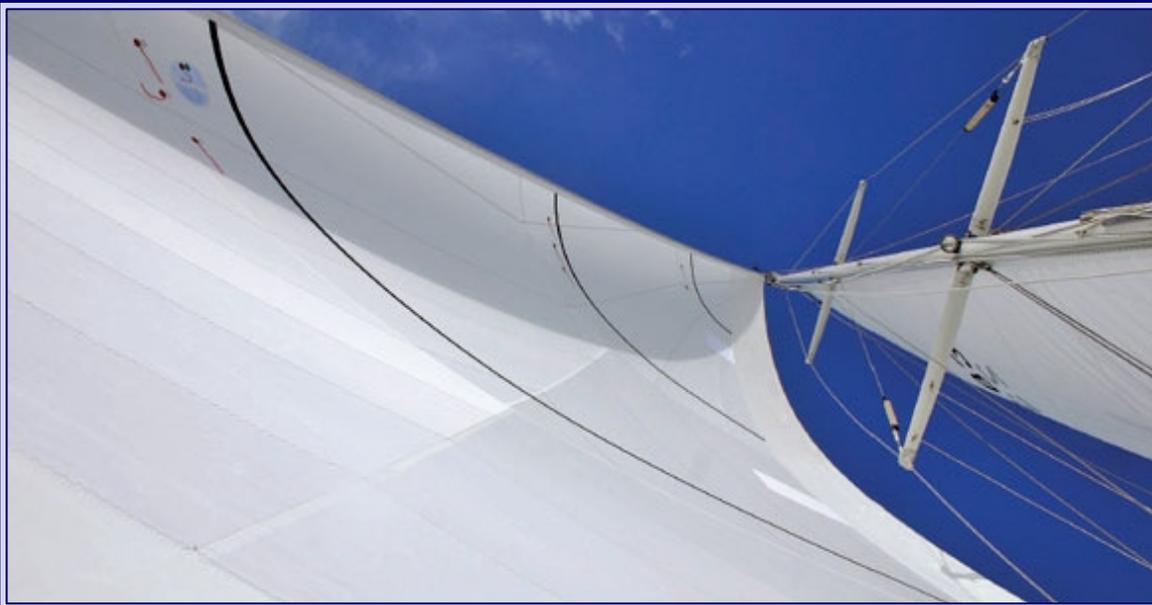
FLEX LIFE: A measure for a yarn's ability to resist flexing & folding. Lower numbers indicate less loss after 60 cycles.

UV-RESISTANCE: Amount of time it takes for a yarn to lose 50% of its initial modulus. UV tests are normally conducted with artificial UV exposure.

ELONGATION: Elongation at break is a measure of a yarn's ability to resist "shock" loads.

Data Courtesy of Dimension Polyant Sailcloth

(Sails, continued on page 10)



Above: Nice draft shape on a genoa with draft stripes to accentuate the shape. Note how far forward the draft is designed to be. Also note how the leech twists to leeward near the top.

by coating it with a hard finish (melamine resins typically). But the hard finish breaks down relatively easily when folded. Race sails with thinner thread diameters and hard resin finishes are very stable, but cannot be flaked or folded without damaging the cloth. Hard finished woven Dacron sailcloth is not durable enough for cruising.

Full Battens:

The second common upgrade is to use Full Battens instead of partial battens. Full battens help stabilize the sail shape, and help the sailcloth last longer and stretch a little less. Also, they help keep the draft forward when gusts hit, which becomes significant as the sails get older and the cloth loses its strength.

The sails last longer because the full-length battens prevent flogging - the violent snapping back and forth that happens when you're tacking, reefing, hoisting or lowering your sail. Flogging is the prime culprit in sail wear-and-tear, especially at the front of the partial battens. (One good way to reduce wear and tear at the front of partial battens is to reinforce the area with extra reinforcement.)

Full battens maintain a wing shape in even the lightest zephyrs. So, they can get you moving when the wind is so light you can barely feel it. Full-length battens also help to keep the draft of the sail from moving aft in heavy air when sailing upwind.



Above: Nice draft shape on a mainsail. It's shallower than the genoa pictured

(Sails, continued from page 10)

The full-length battens at the top of the sail hold out the leech of the main giving you more projected sail area. So the designer can build a sail with a larger roach, making it more powerful both upwind and downwind.

Disadvantages of Full Batten mainsails:

You can't luff a full battened sail. It always holds its wing shape. That can be a pain if you want to do a dead stop with the boat, especially in high winds. You can't easily control the overall shape of the mainsail, the full length battens lock in the draft depth and fore-and-aft position.

In my opinion, if you want to learn how to trim your main well, you shouldn't start out with full batten mainsails. There's no feedback when the airflow over the sail is turbulent - the sail looks the same. It stays the same shape no matter how badly you have trimmed it. You can't read them as easily if you don't have an experienced eye.

Sailing schools usually don't put full battens on teaching fleets because the students don't learn as much about sail trim. Despite the higher initial cost, sailing schools would actually save money if their mainsails had full battens, because they wouldn't put as many holes in the sails. Students flog sails a lot practicing. They luff, tack or gybe frequently and the sail cloth flogs repeatedly. Charter boats usually have full batten mainsails because they extend the life of the sail and reduce maintenance costs.

Advantages of Full Batten Heads

One or two full battens at the top of the sail gives you the best of both worlds – longer sail life plus a performance boost. A full batten at the top reduces flogging, but leaves you with good control over the overall shape of your mainsail, especially the draft's depth and fore-and-aft positioning. The mainsail is easier to trim than a full-batten main since the leading edge of the sail is free to luff. And it's lighter and less expensive than a full batten mainsail because it uses shorter battens and doesn't need any special hardware on the luff to reduce friction when hoisting and striking the mainsail.



Judy Blumhorst owns a 1985 West Wight Potter 19, Redwing, and is a former Commodore of the Potter Yachters. She is also a representative for Hyde Sails, one of the world's most prestigious sail lofts.

Hyde Sails USA is donating two fabulous door prizes for the Havasu Pocket Cruiser Convention in Arizona, February 14-21, 2011. A lucky Potter skipper will win a Performance Mainsail for a P15 or P19. Hyde is donating a headsail as a door prize for the non-Potter skippers attending. Judy will be there too, with Redwing, her family, and some Hyde sails.

For more information about the Havasu Pocket Cruiser Convention: contact www.sailhavasu.com. For more information about Hyde Sails USA, contact judyb@hydesailsUSA.com or call 925 997 0786



Delta Sail

Saturday, November 20

Come join us for the last Potter Yachter sail of the year. We will launch at Buckley Cove in Stockton, and sail down the mighty San Joaquin River to Windmill Cove for lunch. Departure time is 10:00AM. After lunch we will sail on the river. There is a parking fee at Buckley Cove. I haven't been there in a couple of months, but parking shouldn't be more than \$10.

To get there exit Interstate 5 at March Lane in Stockton and go west. March Lane ends at the boat ramps parking lot.



~Bud Kerner



Get ready for some *fine* Delta sailing!

~Ed



Last month I was sent soooo many pictures from the ATUS Messabout, I didn't know what to do with them all. This week Dan Phy sent some more, and I could do nothing more than share them with everyone. Here are more of my favorites. ~Ed





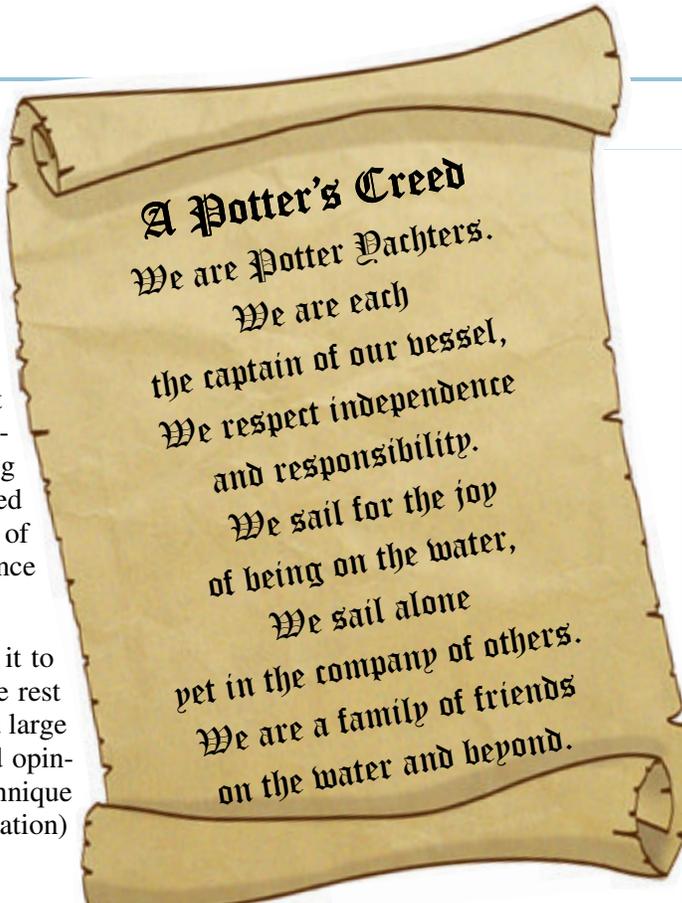
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With a Grain of Salt

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*



A Potter's Creed
We are Potter Yachters.
We are each
the captain of our vessel,
We respect independence
and responsibility.
We sail for the joy
of being on the water,
We sail alone
yet in the company of others.
We are a family of friends
on the water and beyond.