



The Potter Yachter

Newsletter of the Longest Lasting West Wight Potter Club in the World

November 2014

Report: From Oct. 18th/19th

Delta Bridges Sail (aka: Hyacinth Dodge)

by Bud Kerner



This was the third annual Delta Bridge Sail. Unlike the last two years when we sailed through the East Delta, this year we sailed the West Delta. This became apparent immediately when we turned right out of Rio Vista away from the Rio Vista Bridge. The bridge separates the East and West Delta.

I actually launched my West Wight Potter 19 on Friday, the day before the sail. When I got to the City launch ramps, I found them completely clogged with water hyacinth. My first reaction was to go to the Delta Marina in Rio Vista to launch, however since the majority of the sailors would be launching at the City ramp the next day, I decided to give it a try. It was not as difficult as I thought it would be. I was able to pull the boat along the dock, pushing the hyacinth in front of the boat. As the hyacinth reached the end of the dock, the tide took it up river.

Six boats launched at the Delta Marina on Friday. The rest launched Saturday at the City ramp. In total we had 16 sailboats and 1 tugboat. The flotilla left Rio Vista at 10:30 a.m. and sailed wing-on-wing down the

Sacramento River. *(continued on page 6)*



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The Commodore's Corner

Water Hyacinth - Beauty or the Beast?

By Carl Sundholm

As a result of sailing in the San Francisco Bay area, we see a lot of things other folks don't see. For example, in Bud Kerner's recent Delta Bridges Overnight Sail (which had an outstanding turnout and was a fantastic success), the Potter Yachters saw an unprecedented glut of water hyacinth in the Delta.

A little research on the non-native invasion by water hyacinths reveals this problem is not unique to the delta.

The water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) is a free-floating aquatic plant native to the Amazon basin of South America. It has become problematic as a very aggressive invasive species in other freshwater habitats, including the California Delta.

Water hyacinth has been recognized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature as one of the 100 most aggressive invasive species and one of the top 10 worst weeds in the world, and has been labeled by some as the worst water weed on earth. (*Water Hyacinth – Can It's Aggressive Invasion Be Controlled?*, UNEP Global Environmental Alert Service, April 2013, pg. 1).

It creates problems by (1) reducing local biodiversity by outcompeting native species and causing secondary effects on fish and other species that make an area unique; (2) physically covering the surface of estuaries and waterways clogging irrigation channels, posing a navigation hazard, and making fishing difficult; (3) lowering oxygen levels in the water by retarding the transfer of oxygen from the air to the water surface, decreasing oxygen production by other plants, and depleting oxygen content when the plant decomposes; and (4) decreasing water flow increases habitats for mosquitos.

For small boats like our West Wight Potters, it can stop progress by jamming against centerboards and rudders, and can cause outboard motors to stop. I know from personal experience trying to force my way through mats of water hyacinth in the Delta, that it can rip the prop right off your outboard motor.

Water hyacinth is a successful invader because it adapts and reproduces at an amazing rate. It is a plant that flowers throughout the year and releasing as many as 3000 seeds annually. It additionally reproduces by horizontally growing stolons that break off into new plants. Because its roots are free-floating, it is not limited to shallow water.

The California Delta is not alone in having a water hyacinth problem. Sites on the east coast of the United States also have problems with it, and it is even found in places on the Great Lakes. It is found in most of the world's tropical and subtropical regions as well. It has become a problem in Africa, colonizing the Incomati River in Mozambique, the Zambezi River in Ethiopia, and rivers and lakes in Rwanda, Burundi, Tanganyika, and Kenya. It has colonized the Niger River in Mali and the Nile River of Egypt. In Europe it has become established in the Azores, Corsica, and is becoming a problem in waterways in Spain. It has been found in Belgium, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. In Asia, it is widespread on the Mekong Delta, in the rivers of New Guinea, and it has been found in the Sundarbans mangrove forests of Bangladesh, and has found its way into the wetlands and rivers of India. In Mexico, it has infested inland lakes and waterways.

Methods of remediation are essential to stop water hyacinth infestation and include physical removal, slice and dicing, chemical spraying with herbicides, and biological release of natural enemies of water hyacinth, including plant pathogens, South American weevil beetles, and water hyacinth moth species, and other insect species that are host specific to water hyacinth.

So next time you see those beautiful purple flowers floating on the water, know that it's an invasive, destructive pest that can be dangerous and destructive as well as beautiful. – 



Club Events on the Horizon for 2014

Nov. 15 (Sat) Richmond Marina-Estuary Sail (weather permitting)
 Let's set sail at 10am in Richmond where Ken Lange will launch International Marine's new production model Voyager 20. See it at: http://youtu.be/nhFA_CtDQHg

Packing a Potter

by Dick Herman



Without doubt, Potter Yachters are a dedicated bunch of small craft sailors. They love their microcruisers, and are constantly solving problems that bedevil the P15; mainly making it go faster and the lack of space. The way Dave Bacon tunes the Potter defies the laws of physics, and years ago, Bruce Hood published an article on how to pack a Potter that remains an essential reference for cruising. But the basic problem of small size that affects the boat in so many ways still remains.

Many, mostly in a desire to sail with more than one friend, have gone over to the dark side and upgraded to bigger boats. But a few ingenious skippers refuse to give up, and have dedicated themselves to maximizing what the small craft can offer. My heart filled with joy on the recent Delta Bridges Sail, ably led by Bud Kerner in Cat's Meow. The way Bud mustered seventeen boats after a five-hour journey to sail under the Three Mile Slough Bridge into the Sacramento River was rare proof that cats can be herded. But I digress. Where was I? Oh, my heart filled with joy when I saw the problem of how to entertain on a Potter solved.

Kudos to Frank and Pennie Chwalowski who are newcomers to the Potters and were sailing Dave Candey's borrowed P-15 "Paloma." On Saturday, they arrived in good order with the rest of the Potters, aptly demonstrating they were veteran small craft sailors, at Tower Park Marina on Little Potato Slough. Paloma was squeezed into the northern end of the dock in the lee of a huge houseboat, away from the water hyacinths drifting down the river and into the marina. The hyacinths are a mess but present a fun challenge to motor through. But I digress.

Don Person, the venerable Council of Elder, ensconced himself on the dock in the shade of the houseboat and next to Paloma for the obligatory Happy Hour, again raising the age-old specter of the vicious slander that we are a drinking club with a sailing problem. But I digress. Soon, Potters gathered around the august personage and the popping of popped wine bottle corks echoed over the dock, attracting yet more Potters. As space was limited, Pennie and Frank invited a few Potters to join them on Paloma. Soon, the cockpit of the sturdy little craft was packed with seven souls. It was a congenial group. They had to be.

After a few hours, the Potters retired en masse to Rosa's for dinner. Conversation flowed like good wine, and, afterwards, the Potters retired to their craft. But the Paloma Potter Pod were reluctant to call it an evening and gravitated back to the Paloma. Again, they settled aboard the small craft.

Jim "Goose" Gossman immediately sensed it was an historic moment and captured the scene for posterity, documenting the six souls on board.

Clockwise from Frank Chwalowski (in the red shirt), Sharon Soule, Dave Candey, Bruce McDevitt, Pam Griggs, and Pennie Chwalowski. (Please note the space for one more Potter Yachter.)

Well done! - 



Report: Santa Cruz to Moss Landing

Potter Yachters on Monterey Bay

by Phil Marcelis

There was some discussion on the forum about whether folks should launch at Santa Cruz or Moss Landing for this sail. Host Mike Swartz decided on Moss Landing, so I went there on Friday, October 3rd at around 5 p.m. I joined up with Bud & Linda Newhall, Dave White, and Bud Kerner, who were already tied up to the dock and relaxing in Elkhorn Yacht Club.

The first thing I noticed when I got out of the car was that it was about 20 degrees cooler here than in Fremont, where it was around 90 °F. Whew!

I rigged up the boat, and the next order of business was to pay for parking. There are a dizzying array of options... what exactly do you put in the envelope if you want to launch on Friday night and park the vehicle and trailer until

Sunday? I stuck \$17 into the "iron ranger" for launching and one night of parking (I'd figure the rest out later). Some of the folks found space in Elkhorn Yacht Club's parking lot instead.

Dave kindly helped me raft up to his boat and then we went back to the yacht club for some drinks with the others, where Eric Zilbert and his son eventually joined us.

Kevin Crowder had pulled in late Friday night. Saturday morning found him rigging his Com-Pac 19, *Aurora*, but I was anxious to get out on the water, so at around 8:30 a.m., I pulled away from the guest dock and Bud's P-15, *Noble Maiden*, Eric's P-19, *Riptide*, Bud's P-19, *Cat's Meow*, and Dave's P-19, *Wee Boat*.



There was wildlife everywhere; even a whale within 10 feet of my boat. And, whew! What a fishy smelling stench when he surfaced and exhaled.

Weather reports predicted 4-foot swell every 17 seconds with East wind of 5 to 10 mph becoming West in the afternoon. At 11 o'clock in the morning, though, the only waves that rocked us around were the wakes of the whale-watching boats.

Noble Maiden didn't venture very far out of the entrance, but still had some great whale watching opportunities because the whales came so close to shore.

Eric had promised his son a trip to Santa Cruz, so at about 4 miles away from Moss Landing, I waved "bye-bye" to them as the wind picked up and we all started heeling over and approached hull speed.

Shortly thereafter, a bunch of kelp knocked about 3 knots off my speed. I heaved-to and tried yanking it with the boat hook but ended up dropping sail so I could winch the daggerboard up, which solved it. But in the meantime, the radio had crackled to life with a call from *Riptide*, checking to see if there was a problem, and from *Wee Boat* who said he was heading my way just in case I should need help.

I really admire that about the Potter Yachters; independence is encouraged and we strive not to need anyone's help, but assistance is happily rendered when it's required. In fact, *Wee Boat* had some battery trouble at the dock in the morning and was on the verge of having to go home for lack of a voltmeter to troubleshoot the problem. I lent him my voltmeter without even batting an eye. ("Wait, you actually HAVE a voltmeter?" he asked incredulously.)

And not two minutes later, Eric came over looking for some Teflon tape so he could fix his fuel line. "Funny you should ask," I quipped, as I held up the "spares box" which I hadn't yet put away. Unfortunately, "Teflon" is about the only kind of tape I don't have. Just as I was about to say, "Sorry, Eric", Dave popped out of *Wee Boat's* companionway holding some Teflon tape in his hand.



photo: Dave White



I like the ease with which everyone helps each other, knowing that we should be able to “go it alone” when we get out on the water. It reminds me of the Potter's Creed printed on the back of every newsletter; “We respect independence and responsibility. We sail alone yet in the company of others.”

We continued toward Santa Cruz but knew we weren't going to make it there and back by dinner. We had agreed by VHF to start heading back around 2pm, and still had about 8 miles to go to reach Santa Cruz by the time Dave and Bud turned around close to shore and Kevin and I did the same a little further out.

The ride back was pretty bumpy as we tried to keep the sails off to one side with the swell right on our sterns and the wind from the same direction. Eventually I heard a call from Dave saying that he was getting fluky winds and was turning on his engine. I doused my sails and got my engine going, let Kevin know that I was doing the same. He said he was going to follow me and I motored away as I kept checking behind me, but he sat adrift for a long time. I finally tried to hail him on the VHF, but he didn't answer, so I immediately spun around and headed back to him at full throttle. As I got closer, he started moving, so I spun around again and let him catch up. It turns out that he had raised his motor so high that the locking lever had jammed and he had to get out some pliers to force it off the mechanism.

Elkhorn Yacht Club gave us a warm welcome and a hearty dinner on Saturday night. Their gracious hospitality continues to be praiseworthy.

All in all, it was a great weekend on Monterey Bay with some truly wonderful folks! - 



Dinner at EYC. Pulled pork, potato salad, chili... all made by an incredible chef. They had a live band inside, which we could clearly hear outside at this table.

Upcoming: November 15, 2014

Richmond Debut of Voyager

Okay, folks. We have a last minute addition to the sailing calendar. Launch before 10 a.m. from the usual Richmond Inner Harbor. Low tide is about 2.2' at around 1:15 p.m., so keep that in mind and refer to your charts.

The [NOAA Chart for the area](http://www.charts.noaa.gov/InteractiveCatalog/nrnc.shtml) is available online for free: <http://www.charts.noaa.gov/InteractiveCatalog/nrnc.shtml>

Bring a \$10 bill to feed the machine at the entrance to the marina parking lot.

Ken Lange of International Marine is bringing the [production model Voyager](#) out for a spin and he's invited all of us to celebrate this momentous occasion.

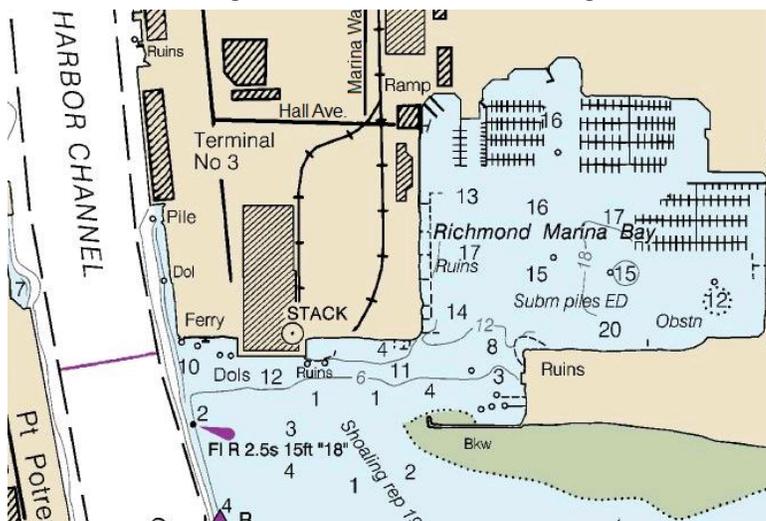
Sounds like a great excuse for some sailing!

FOR THE FUN OF IT

We launch at [Marina Bay Yacht Harbor](#):
1340 Marina Way South, Marina Bay, CA
Phone: (510) 236-1013

Directions to Marina Bay (www.mbyh.com)
From San Francisco/Oakland (I-580 West):
Exit at Cutting Blvd.
Turn Right onto Cutting Blvd.
Turn Right onto Marina Way South

From Sacramento (I-80 West):
Exit at Cutting Blvd.
Turn Right onto Cutting Blvd.
Continue past at least 8 signal lights.
Turn Left onto Marina Way South



Marina Bay Launch Ramp

(*Delta Bridges' continued from page 1*)

Our first bridge was the Three Mile Slough Bridge. We sailed through Three Mile Slough to the San Joaquin River; and then went up the river to enter the Mokelumne River, where we



stopped at Moore's Riverboat for a beer break.

Shortly after the rest stop we encountered our second bridge. This was the Mokelumne River Bridge which carries Highway 12 traffic.



After passing the bridge we entered our second and last slough for the day. Although I didn't see any, the slough is named "Little Potato Slough". The distance to our overnight was approximately five nautical miles. There was quite a bit of Water Hyacinth along the way, however, it did not present a navigational problem to our little boats.

Just before we arrived at the Tower Park Marina we encountered the last bridge of the day. It was the Tower Bridge and at high tide it has a clearance of 35 feet, so we all could sail under it without it being opened. We arrived just before 5 p.m. The area that was assigned to us had a fair amount of hyacinth floating around. I plowed through the plants to the dock

and was quickly surrounded by an island of greenery. We had our traditional dock party at one end of the dock that afforded us shade. Don brought along his kit that contains all sorts of good stuff, like cheese, salami, and of course wine.



It is a little known fact that the Potter Yachters – at unannounced times – will stage emergency drills; such important activities as man overboard, kidney stones, falling off a dock, etc. We do this to ensure that our group is up to handling such emergencies. We had one of these unannounced drills on Saturday, and I am pleased to announce it was a success; the subject lived.

After a restless night's sleep (the band played loud and long), we awoke to a chilly damp morning. Breakfast at Rosa's – like dinner the night before – was very good.

10 a.m. we were all underway again heading down the Little Potato Slough.

I sailed the route in June just to make sure it was doable. I did it at low tide and saved my route to use

for the club sail. In June there was no water hyacinth. It turns out hyacinth likes deep water. When we approached areas with lots of hyacinth, it was always blocking the way to the deepest water. The plants presented a challenge: how to get through or around them. The nice thing is they float right on top of the water, and it is usually not hard to plow through them. If they do gather around your prop they are easy to get off. [However, they can rip a prop off your motor in certain circumstances. See Commodore's Corner, page 2. – Ed.]



Potato Slough took us back to the San Joaquin River. We sailed down the river towards Three Mile Slough. Early afternoon it got quite warm and sunny. I put up my bimini, though others had different solutions. We all gathered just before the Three Mile Slough Bridge, who says you can't herd cats, and I radioed the bridge tender. As a group we sailed back onto the Sacramento River to Rio Vista.

With the exception of a lost gas cap, and a few minor engine problems we all came through unscathed.

Until next year, I'll see you on the water.

Bud - 



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Potter Yachter Membership

Join the *Potter Yachters* – the club that has been around since 1978 and, with your participation, will continue to withstand the test of time. We're really a bunch of nice folks who would just love to have other nice folks join us. Your dues help support club activities and publish the newsletter, so you'll be sure to know when we're out sailing, whether that's in the San Juan Islands, Monterey, the SF Bay, or elsewhere. Annual dues are \$25. Make checks payable to "Pat Brennan".

Send your payment (with your name and address) to: Pat Brennan
1305 Webster Street #C205
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See us online at: www.potter-yachters.org

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



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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*

