



# The Potter Yachter

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

Nov / Dec 2017

## Report: Dodging the Delta's Water Hyacinth 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Bridges Sail

by Bud Kerner



David Myer (P15, *Salty Dog*) and Don Person (P15, *Sarah Anne*) glide past tufts of water hyacinth.

Photos by Phil Marcelis

Well, the Bridges Sail is now history. We had 17 sailboats and three stink pots participate in the two-day sail. Over half of them launched Friday, the day before the sail. Each year we seem to get more people coming in on Friday. Maybe we should have an optional sail on Friday afternoon. (See *Bridges* continued on page 4)

### Ship's Stores for sale. Send orders to Pat Brennan:

Show your colors! Fly an official Club Burgee on your next sail!

- Burgees \$25.00
- Bumper stickers \$ 2.50 (just shows the burgee; no text)
- Patches \$ 2.50 (Both round and burgee shaped)
- Info Packets \$20.00 (Primarily P-15 information)

Or head over to our CafePress website and buy a Cap, Stein, or T-Shirt with the club logo on it.

Visit: <http://www.cafepress.com/potteryachters>

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# The Commodore's Corner

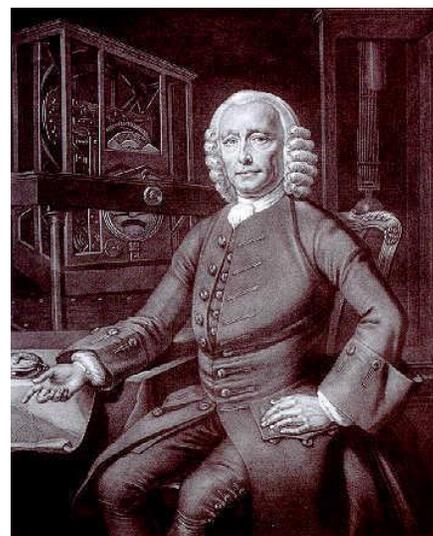
By Eric Zilbert

Some end of the year musings on sailing, enjoying life, and the passage of **time**.

I mean, it is all about time, isn't it? Physicists tell us that without **time** there can be no change, no progress, no movement, no life, and hence, no sailing! At this **time** of year we think things like, "Where did the **time** go? What did we accomplish? What do we hope to accomplish in the coming year?" and "Will I be spared?" We also think about the new friends we have made, and the old friends we have lost.

In general I am no longer a great fan of the passage of time (has to do with approaching 60). I think that in another one of these essays I shared the assertion that: "The secret of life is to enjoy the passage of **time**," and that sailing is one of the ways I find to do that. I also always find it pleasing to think about how sailing has been so inextricably connected to the technological progress of our species. The measurement of **time** is really important in sailing. This can be demonstrated in part by the fact that I spent a Saturday recently taking the finishing **times** of small boats racing in my home port of Lake Washington, Sacramento. Some were pleased with the passage of **time** I recorded, others less so.

About 310 trips around the sun ago, a fellow no-one remembers won a prize from the British government of 20,000 pounds (it would be about \$4 million today) for the invention of a clock. His name was John Harrison (see drawing). Now, why would the British government offer such a large prize for a clock? Well, the reason was that the prize was actually for finding a way to measure longitude. Sailors had been able to measure latitude using the height of the sun at noon for many years by 1707; however, the measurement of longitude was crude at best. What Harrison realized was that if you had a clock that could maintain the **time** at the location from which one departed, comparison of local **time** with the **time** at ones point of departure would, along with some astronomical observations, allow one to determine ones longitude with precision.



John Harrison, marine clockmaker

Harrison set out to solve the problem by producing a reliable clock that could keep the time of the reference place. His difficulty was in producing a clock that was not affected by variations in temperature, pressure, or humidity, remained accurate over long time intervals, resisted corrosion in salt air, and was able to function on board a constantly-moving ship. He did it, got rich, and now we know where we are!

So you see, sailing, **time**, and enjoyment of life, are all very important and interrelated. I hope that all of us find pleasure in looking back on our adventures this past year, and that we will all find the **time** to enjoy more sailing in the coming year! I know I am looking forward to many happy sails in 2018 with all of you (should I be spared).

Eric — 

**Attend the Annual Meeting - Jan 28!!**

## Club Events on the Horizon

[Event Calendar](#)

Sunday Jan 28      Potter Yachter Annual Meeting at the Oakland Yacht Club  
*Brunch around 9 am followed by the meeting at 10 am sharp (Potter Time) in the Regatta Room. We'll discuss next year's sailing schedule, review club finances, and nominate officers. A limited number of Official Potter Yachter Calendars will be offered for sale at the meeting. If you're inclined to take part in a gift exchange after the meeting, bring a small wrapped gift.*



Upcoming: Sunday, January 28, 2018 - Breakfast and Meeting  
**Annual Club Meeting at Oakland Yacht Club**

The Potter Yachters' Annual Meeting will be held on **January 28<sup>th</sup>** from around 10 a.m. until 1pm in the Regatta Room of the Oakland Yacht Club, 1101 Pacific Marina, Alameda. As usual, OYC offers a tasty breakfast starting at around 9 a.m. (The [breakfast menu](#) can sometimes be found, with [directions to the club](#), on their website: [www.oaklandyachtclub.net](http://www.oaklandyachtclub.net))

Any members who joined within the last year (and prospective members) are specifically invited to attend this meeting. Sometimes we get a little caught up in sailing off in different directions and don't get to meet new members at the monthly sails. This is the perfect opportunity to introduce yourself, meet like-minded sailors, and let the rest of us enjoy your company. It's also when we sit down to get a treasurer's report, nominate officers, and discuss the future sailing schedule. Regardless of when you joined, please make every effort to attend.

As mentioned elsewhere, the Official 2018 Potter Yachter Calendar will be available for \$10 at the meeting. A limited quantity was printed, so you're advised to reserve your copy early by emailing Pat ([pat-brennan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pat-brennan@sbcglobal.net)). If you wish to have one mailed via USPS, you can [send \\$15 to Pat using PayPal](#) (and put "for calendar" along with your address in the "comment" section) or send a check for \$15 to Pat Brennan (1305 Webster Street C205, Alameda, CA 94501).

Membership dues are based on the calendar year and it's been \$25 per family for many years, but we still vote on the amount at the annual meeting. You may [use PayPal](#) or pay the treasurer directly following the meeting.

As is our custom, there will be a voluntary exchange of nautical gifts after the meeting for those wishing to participate.

See you there! —

From the North on 80/880 S (Berkeley, Bay Bridge) take Broadway/Alameda exit, turn right on 5<sup>th</sup> at Broadway head to Alameda (see Tube below)

From the North via 980 (Walnut Creek) take Jackson Street, turn left under freeway turn left on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, then left on Webster Street follow directions from the Posey Tube (below)

From the South (San Jose, Castro Valley) take 880 N to Oakland and exit Broadway turn right onto Broadway, then right on 7<sup>th</sup> Street turn right on Webster Street for the tunnel

From the Webster Street/Posey Tube keep left and turn left at Marina Village Pkwy turn right at Independence & left at Triumph Street the club is located at the end of the street. parking is in front of the club house



**Officer's Club**

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www.potter-yachters.org  
fb.me/PotterYachters

This year the early arrivals all had dinner Friday night at the Point Restaurant, there were seventeen of us for dinner. Having this sail so close to Halloween does make for some interesting people.



Guest Dock at Delta Marina

Everyone, with the exception of Harry, was on the water and ready to go at the announced time of 10 am on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Gerry Nolan, in the pontoon boat, and Goose, in his modified 19, stayed behind to wait for Harry. Gerry was going to take his P15 but engine trouble forced him into the *It's a Hoot* pontoon boat.

This year's sail had the least wind of any of the previous sails. In October you don't expect a lot of wind, but we had almost zero. When I launched *Cats Meow* I was talking to a fisherman who has lived in the area for the last forty years, he said he has never seen it so calm.

The flotilla motored sailed down the Sacramento River to the Three Mile Slough Bridge. We waited for Gerry, Goose, and Harry and all went into the Three Mile Slough together.



Three Mile Slough Bridge

There was some water hyacinth on the Sacramento River as well as the Three Mile Slough but nothing like what we encountered on the San Joaquin River. There were times when you had to carefully pick your path thru the growth.



Mokelumne River Swing Bridge

Another obstacle we encountered was fishing boats; the rivers, especially the Sacramento River, were full of them. You do have to avoid anchored boats, and pay attention to their fishing lines. I passed the bow of an anchored fishing boat on the San Joaquin River. The captain thought I was too close and would catch his anchor. I could tell by the angle of his anchor rode there would not be a problem, but it did upset him.

## The Potter Yachter

We left the San Joaquin River sailing onto the Mokelumne River and almost immediately stopped at [Moore's River Boat](#) for a break. Moore's has lots of dock space and this time of year it is almost all available. We were able to dock the fleet without rafting up.

Being totally refreshed we continued up the Mokelumne River to the Mokelumne River swing bridge.

When we were all gathered at the bridge, I requested an opening and we sailed thru and then turned onto the Georgiana Slough.



Dinner at Oxbow Marina



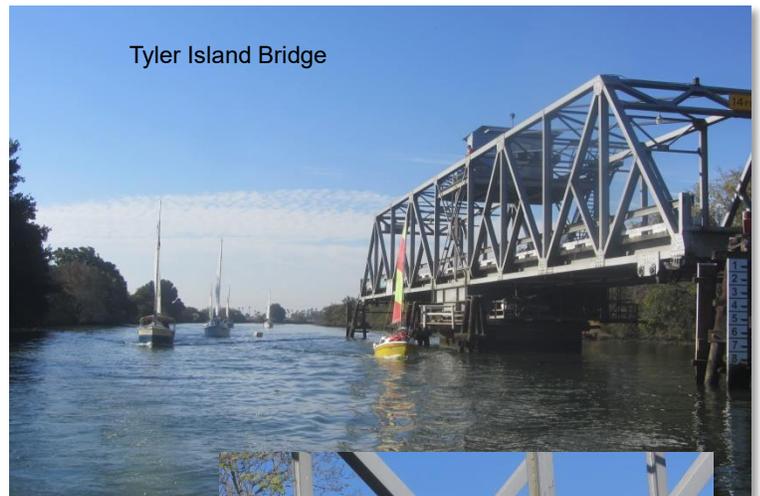
Several miles up the slough we came to Oxbow Marina, our destination for the overnight.

The club provided pizza which my wife Bobbi delivered. Bobbi brought salad and dessert; many folks brought drinks and snacks to munch on.

Sunday morning the marina provided us with a continental breakfast. By 9:20 am we were underway motor sailing up the Georgiana Slough.



Georgiana Slough Swing Bridge



On this slough we encountered two bridges. The first was the Tyler Island Swing Bridge followed by the Georgiana Slough Swing Bridge. Just after passing the Georgiana Slough Swing Bridge, we entered the Sacramento River. From here we sailed down the river where we encountered our last two bridges.



Helen Madere Memorial Bridge



Isleton Bascule Bridge

The first was the Isleton Bridge. The last bridge was the Helen Madere Memorial Bridge (known as the Rio Vista Bridge before it was renamed in 1998). After passing the last bridge, the boats headed for their launch sites; either the city launch ramp, or the Delta Marina.

This year, there were six bridges, next year seven. — 

### Delta Bridges Photos



Photo: Dave Kautz

Phil Marcelis taking photos on the Delta



Photo by David Myers

Isleton Bascule Bridge



#### Clipper Cove Expansion:

[Latitude38](#) reported that the Treasure Island Development Authority (TIDA) is once again considering a proposal for a luxury marina at Clipper Cove. [Treasure Island Sailing Center](#)

said this compromise plan will still be detrimental to sailboat racers and cruisers. Devoted solely to large yachts, it increases the marina footprint by 357%. At right, the development plans for the private marina overlay an aerial view of the existing cove. The plan makes it harder to access the beach and sharply reduces the available anchorage. Already endorsed by TIDA, the plan heads to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.



Report: Moss Landing to Monterey Sail

## Great Weather Made for a Fantastic Weekend of Sailing!

by: Phil Marcelis

I enjoy all of the time I spend with club members on sailing days, so it's hard to pick out my favorite. Clipper Cove is a perfect one-day, picnic cruise, the lakes and reservoirs are often relaxing, and Tomales Bay is proving to be an incredible family getaway that just keeps getting better every year.

But if I were pressed to identify one sailing venue – the one place where I sail, lounge, laugh, and rest better than the others – I'd have to say it's Moss Landing. It's a great place to get out and sail a little bit and then come back after an hour for some drinks and camaraderie at the yacht club, but it's also a good launching ground for the "destination sails" that I enjoy so much; the type of sailing that takes several hours, sometimes out of sight of land, before you end up at a completely different harbor and spend a night or two. Moss Landing is all of that, with plenty of parking and easy launching.

With relatively benign seas and just the right amount of wind, this past sail to Monterey was a truly enjoyable trip. Officially, we were all to meet in Moss Landing at around 8am on Saturday Oct. 14th, but my habit with this place has increasingly been to arrive earlier and do a little sailing or "pottering" around the harbor. It started by arriving *Friday night* so I could be rigged and ready without waking up too early on Saturday, then I would arrive around noon to beat the hectic, Friday-night Bay Area traffic, and has culminated in *Friday morning* arrivals. At this rate, I'll soon be arriving Wednesday afternoon for these sails.



Dave Kautz with the unmistakable twin smokestacks of the Moss Landing power plant making an easy landmark

### Attendees (aka [The Suspects](#)):

- *Cats Meow*, Bud Kerner
- *Family Time*, Phil Marcelis
- *Jean Alden*, Mike Higgins
- *Ke Aloha*, Pete Evans
- *Old 44*, Jon Barber
- *Riptide*, Eric Zilbert
- *Shiksa*, Dana Suverkrop
- *Trailer Trash*, Dave Kautz
- *Wee Boat*, David White

and meeting us in Monterey were:

- *Manatee*, Harry Gordon
- *Midget*, Mike Trueman



And that would suit me just fine – they have a very nice group of members at the [Elkhorn Yacht Club](#), and they like us Potter Yachters. Their membership coordinator even suggested we join their ranks.

We left the harbor promptly at 10am with calm seas and good wind, which was an auspicious start to the trip. After passing the MLA buoy, we close-hauled at roughly 200° headed directly for Monterey. There were the usual number of harbor seals and otters floating about, but it seemed like more birds were flying than usual. It's possible that there was a bit more wind than there usually is at this hour. From there, the wind picked up enough to nudge my knot meter up to about 6 knots at times. We were all able to kick up the motors out of the water and not need them the rest of the way to Monterey.



With the Moss Landing buoy in the foreground, the camera makes *Cats Meow* look small in the distance.



When we arrived, I looked back and was surprised to see the power plant all the way in Moss Landing from the harbor entrance in Monterey. It was hard to believe that it could be so clear here, when the Napa and Sonoma County fires were still belching smoke south over San Francisco and San Jose. But it seems the wind was keeping all the smoke offshore and out of Monterey Bay.



Harry came out on *Manatee* to give us a nice greeting out on Monterey Bay. Once we got to the docks, we met Dana and Mike. I brought my banjo out to the end of the main walkway and set up an umbrella with my camping chair... and a cooler to keep the refreshments cold. (Come on, we've got to have ice for our drinks!) That easily morphed into the obligatory dock party with dinner at the [London Bridge Pub](#) afterwards.

It was perfectly clear the next morning and we had another gorgeous day of incredible sailing weather. The sea life was abundant... birds, whales, and dolphins were all easy to spot in the crisp, clear air.



Harry Gordon came out from Monterey to meet us.

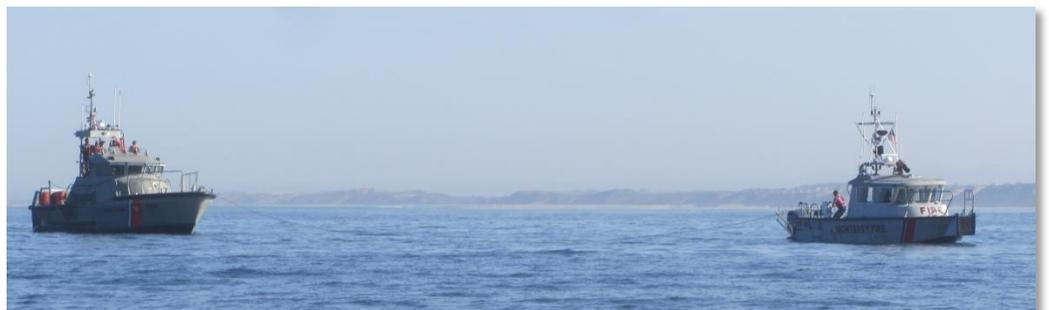


Dock party out of the way between 'B' and 'C' tiers



Mike, Dana, David W, Pete, Bud, Dave K, Jon, Eric

We even saw the typical Coast Guard cutter out there, engaged in a rather atypical activity: they were being towed by the slightly smaller Monterey Fire boat.



Then, before we knew it, we were back in Moss Landing, where Elkhorn Yacht Club members always make us feel at home and Linda Mae knows what I'm drinking even before I order it.

And to think, as Bud reminded me, it wasn't long ago that I was nervous about making the "long trip" to Monterey. — 





In the Mailbag

**Svendsen's Moving to Richmond:**

Another [report in Latitude38](#) informed us that, after 54 years of operation in Alameda, Svendsen's Boat Works will relocate to Richmond at the beginning of 2018. You may [recall an earlier report](#) that Svendsen's Boat Works, Chandlery, and Marine International were acquired by Bay Maritime Corporation back in 2016.

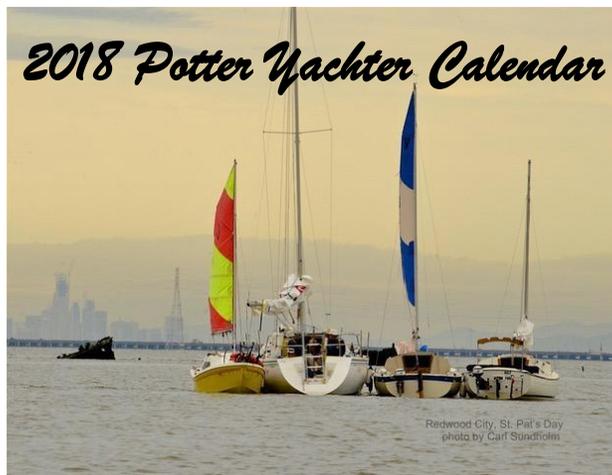


**Get Your Official Potter Yachter Calendar for 2018**

The Calendar Committee collected over 1,000 photos from members throughout the year and painstakingly reviewed them to select just 13 of the best places and photographers in the club.

Calendars will be available at the [annual meeting](#) for \$10 each, or \$15 (prepaid) mailed to you. In either case, please contact [Pat Brennan](#) to reserve your copy. Once supplies are exhausted, that's it!

All year long, you'll be able to enjoy and admire the various sailing venues that the greater Northern California area has to offer. Get a calendar. And be sure to thank the committee for the hard work: Don Person, 'Goose' Gossman, Carl Sundholm, Rob Sampson, and Phil Marcelis.



This trip report was posted to the Trailer Sailor by **Mike**, who sails the beautiful *Jean Alden*:

**A Weekend on Tomales Bay** - The Potter Yachter event this year was confronted by a NOAA forecast of strong winds as a cold front passed through the area. Fortunately, the winds fell short of the projected highs of 20+ knots. Instead we enjoyed mostly clear skies and reasonable temperatures with strong but not over-powering winds.



I launched from the Miller Boat Ramp a little before 2PM on Friday and headed downwind in a nice breeze. The wind was strong but not so strong as to require a reef, which usually means the gusts are less than 20 knots.

The skies were overcast with occasional patches of blue peeking through. Eventually I noticed a gaff rig sailing to

the west of Hog Island, so I headed back upwind to investigate. It was Don sailing his nicely built Stevenson Project Weekender, *Anthy A*, with his son Dustin.

We tied up together and talked about the charms of boat building and Tomales Bay. Eventually they headed back to the launch ramp and I settled in for the night. By anchoring in a sheltered cove with a high bluff to the north, I found myself floating in a millpond while a gusting Northwesterly continued to trouble the waters out in the bay.



I believe that cooking is fundamental to cruising. To me, starting with fresh ingredients and making something edible is as central to cruising as getting to the anchorage in the first place. I usually cook a beef stew on the first night out, while the meat is still fresh. On Friday, I followed the customary stew with a green salad and a dessert of chocolate and grapes. All of this was prepared and eaten with a great view.

Tomales Bay provides a beautiful setting for a weekend cruise. The management of the bay by the National Park Service is not without controversy. However, the area has seen marked

increases in wildlife and the overall quality of the access to nature on this unique body of water. The cove that sheltered my anchorage was home to egrets and gulls. Both brown and white pelicans flew over from nearby Hog Island to fish in the area. A curious seal or two poked their heads above the surface. I even heard the melancholy call of loons, something that I had not experienced before in this area. When I checked my anchor later that night, after the moon had set, the Milky Way was in full glory – a rare treat for a city dweller like me.



The sun came up on schedule the next morning. Not expecting to see the rest of the fleet on the water for several hours, I went for a long row along the shoreline. The flat-iron skiff I tow is a minimal boat intended for a much smaller person, like my boat's namesake. However, with care, I feel comfortable using it in any water in which I would be willing to swim. The park prohibits landing in this part of the bay; however, there was plenty to see from the water. I lost count of Tule Elk grazing on the nearby hillsides.





Around 8AM I pulled the anchor up out of the muck and headed down the shoreline to the beach where the gathering would be. The wind was strong and steady so the trip south was fast and fun. Eventually I reached No Name Beach (so named on the park map) and found three boats from our group. George and Rebecca had sailed their Montgomery 15, *Upbeat*, down from the ramp the afternoon before and spent Friday night camping on the beach. Phil and his family arrived that morning in *Family Time*, their Potter 19. David had pulled his Potter 15, *Salty Dog*, up on the beach.



I needed some exercise so I headed up the dirt road that came down to the beach. That road led to the main road running along the spine of the peninsula making up the northern end of the park. After a few hundred yards this road passed an open gate providing access to a plowed field heading off to the west. I tramped across the loose dirt enjoying a sweeping view of the Pacific Ocean. In the distance I watched a lone coyote make a quick exit from my view. The barren surrounding hillside must be beautiful when covered with green grass and wildflowers after the spring rains.

Upon reaching the top of the hill, I found the dramatic sight of an elk silhouetted by the deep blue Pacific. Through the clear wind-swept air, it seemed that Japan could have been seen if the earth didn't curve. My only regret was that I had only my iPhone camera to capture this vision.

Back at the beach, more of the group had arrived. Rich's *Minnow*, a Potter 15, and Carl's *Dagmar*, a Potter 19, were pulled up on the beach. The wind had picked up some and it looked like good sailing so I headed off towards the south end of the bay. The town of Marshall, on the east shore, has a marina that used to have an interesting collection of boats. I headed over for a look. After the downwind run I headed back towards No Name Beach, enjoying a spirited beat to windward in perfect conditions. By the time I reached my destination, two other boats have arrived. Eric and Lisa were anchoring *Riptide*, their Potter 19. Judy and Dave motored down from the launching ramp in their slick Corsair Trimaran. A launch-ramp accident had prevented them from stepping their mast. The last to arrive was Steve with two friends sailing a Sanderling catboat with the enigmatic name, *Parson's Ghost*.

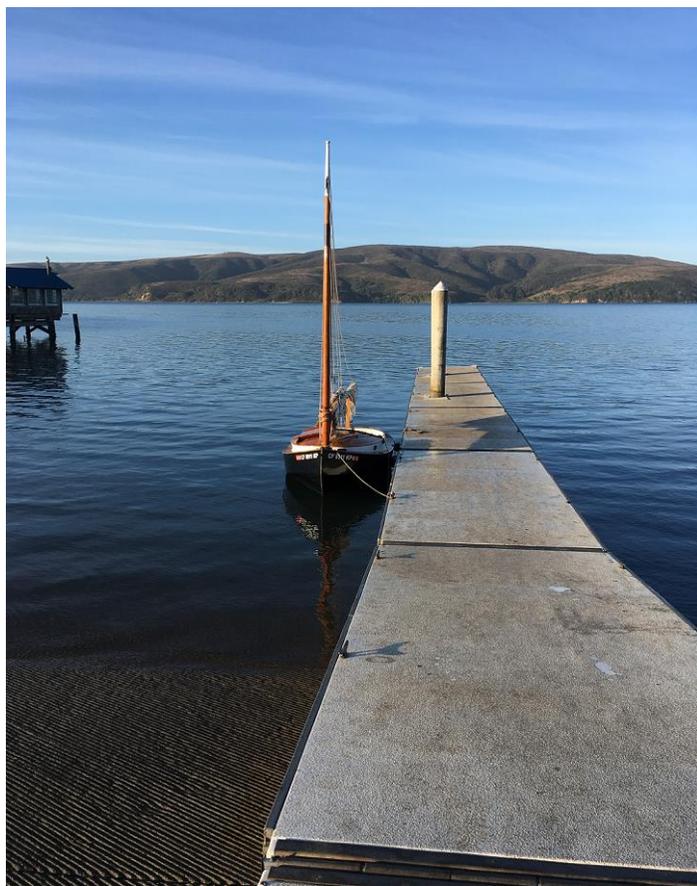


The Tomales Bay weekend is a family event with a large number of spouses and kids. It was fun watching the kids enjoy the beach in the ways that the rest of us use to. As the sun set a beach fire was started and Steve fired up his propane cooker, making the best bouillabaisse I have ever eaten. Oysters, pork ribs and giant zucchini slices were grilled over the fire. It was a generous meal accompanied by the music of Phil's banjo, Carl's guitar, and Eric's cornet. There was hardly room for s'mores by the end of the meal.

The offshore breeze continued well into the night. At one point I had to borrow George's tender when Rich noticed that my skiff had blown off the beach and was heading towards the far shore. Moments later, one of the tents lifted off the sand and flew into the water. I was a little concerned about sleeping aboard as I watched my catboat dance around on her anchor line. However, once aboard I found that the motion was smooth and hardly noticeable down below and snug in my sleeping bag.

The sun was up the next morning before I was. A nice wind was blowing out of the Northwest. After the usual hassles with a mud-and-weed clogged anchor I was soon underway, sailing close hauled towards the ramp on the far shore.

The wind died completely, about 1000 yards short of the ramp. Therefore, I had to fire up my noisy Seagull outboard and motor the rest of the way to the dock. Still, it was a nice ending to a perfect weekend. — 



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## THANK YOU!

Since this is the “Thanksgiving Issue” of the newsletter, I’d like to give a big THANK YOU to all of the readers who have contributed articles and sent emails or in other ways expressed admiration for the job I’ve done on the newsletter. If you [look back at the newsletters on the website](#), you’ll see that we’ve had a lot of contributions from local members as well as people from Canada, England, and other far off places.

I hope everyone continues to enjoy the newsletters.  
Have a great winter! See you on the water! -Phil

**Attend the Annual Meeting - Jan 28!!**

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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 can join us on sails in person or vicariously through our stories. Annual dues are \$25 per family.

Make checks payable to “Pat Brennan”, or use PayPal to [pat-brennan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pat-brennan@sbcglobal.net), or try this link: <http://www.paypal.me/WPatrickBrennan/25> and include “Potter Yachter Dues” in the notes.



Or see us online at:  
[www.potter-yachters.org](http://www.potter-yachters.org)

Send your payment (with your name and address) to: Pat Brennan  
1305 Webster Street #C205  
Alameda CA, 94501

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**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.**



Patrick Brennan  
1305 Webster St., C205  
Alameda, CA 94501

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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*

