



The Potter Yachter

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

May 2024

After Action Report:
Alameda to Alameda?
Story and photos by Jim Hunt



The designated Richmond to OYC sail of April 13-14 was going to possibly have upwards of 6 boats: Eric, Mark, Jon, George, Alan, myself, and possibly the Soules—or so I heard. I had kept a weather eye out and was not sure, but the forecasted rain was looking like it was going to be lighter than expected, but windy. Since I bailed out on the Stockton Sailing Club sail, I thought Richmond might be ok. George W had a back issue, the trip for the Soules over the pass wasn't good, and I hadn't heard anything about Alan. I called Jon and said I was on the bubble, but I might go. The next thing I heard was Eric called it off and Jon went to the Stockton Sailing Club. (Story continued pg 5)

Please renew your [membership](#). (Dues \$50/family)

Mail a check made out to Potter Yachters to Potter Yachters, 3710 Lone Tree Way, Suite 493 Antioch, CA 94509

Ship's Stores for sale. Order from Potter Yachters:
Show your colors! Fly an official Club Burgee on your next sail!

- Burgees \$25.00
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Or head over to the 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 Jon Barber

The cool weather here in N. California is nearly over and with that, a new sailing season at last begins in earnest.

I will be attending the Moss Landing sail on May 4 and I hope to encounter all kinds of marine wildlife, enjoy the company of the Potter clan, and spend a warm and comfortable evening afloat. And possibly even get out there and part the waters of Monterey Bay. I hope to see you there, too.




Another sail upcoming is our trip to Napa. This trip calls for careful consideration—the tides rule! We will sail with the ebb downstream from Benicia to the confluence of the Sacramento and Napa rivers, arriving at slack. We will then make our way up the Napa with the flood to Napa. It's all quite complicated. Fortunately, Goose has again agreed to curate our travels.

Come join the fun!

Time and tide wait for no man!

See you, "On the Water"

Regards,

Jon — 



| Club Events on the Horizon | | potter-yachters.org/calendar |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| May 4-5 | Moss Landing | Bud Kerner |
| Come join the Potter Yachters for two days of whale watching and sailing. Both days we will sail out of the Elkhorn Yacht Club in Moss Landing. Monterey Bay is not a bay—it is the ocean. This time of year, it can be very sporting. Intermediate to experienced. | | |
| May 16-19 | Westpoint Harbor--Boat Show | Non-Potter Event |
| Pacific Sail & Power Boat Show | | |
| May 18-19 | Benicia to Napa | Goose Gossman |
| Depending on wind and tides, this can be an intermediate sail. Launch in Benicia and sail to Napa. Stay overnight at the Napa Valley Marina followed by a sail back to Benicia on Sunday. | | |
| June 8-9 | New Melones Reservoir | Kevin Crowder |
| Come sail in the foothills of the Sierra. Launch at the Glory Hole launch ramp. We will anchor out overnight by the islands near the Tuttle Town ramp. Good for beginner to anchor overnight. Winds light to moderate. | | |
| June 17-24 | Catalina Island Sail (SoCal Potters) | Gary Nitta |
| Sail to Catalina Island with the SoCal Potters. | | |

Upcoming Event: Benicia to Napa Sail

Sail Host: *Goose Gossman*



The annual cruise to Napa begins by launching at Benicia Marina's 5th Street ramp on Friday 5/17, getting guest slips overnight, dinner out, and leaving for Napa by 9am Saturday morning to ride the flood tide upriver. Boats can also launch at the 9th Street ramp and meet us on the water. This year we are staying at Napa yacht club, in the heart of downtown. Make reservations at dockwa.com. The cost is \$50. We'll find a good restaurant in Napa for dinner, but you can also eat aboard if you wish. Sunday we'll cast off from Napa after breakfast and make it back to Benicia by early afternoon. Tides and currents are always interesting on this sail, and it usually takes 4-6 hours in each direction. Carry extra fuel, water, and food, as this is a "real" cruising adventure through beautiful wine country. Call me with any questions.

Goose



Directions to 9th street ramp, Benicia

From I-80:

Exit onto I-780 East towards Benicia

Exit at Military West

Take an immediate right on K street along the water

Proceed 2 stops and turn right at 9th Street Park Launch

From I-680:

Exit onto I-780 West towards Benicia

Exit at Southhampton and turn left on 7th street.

Proceed down the hill past the jog at Taco Bell

Turn right on K, Left at 9th

Directions to 5th street ramp at the Benicia Marina

To Marina Ramp:

Exit 5th St, go south to the end, turn right into the lot

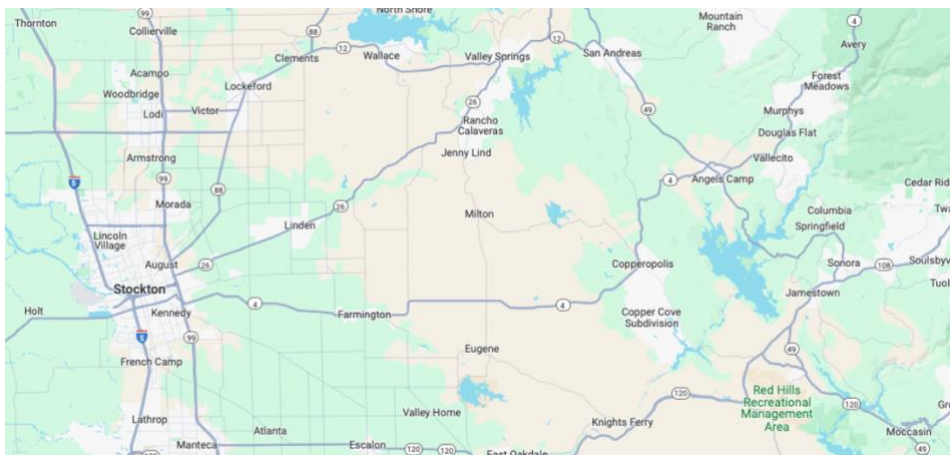


Upcoming Sail: New Melones Lake

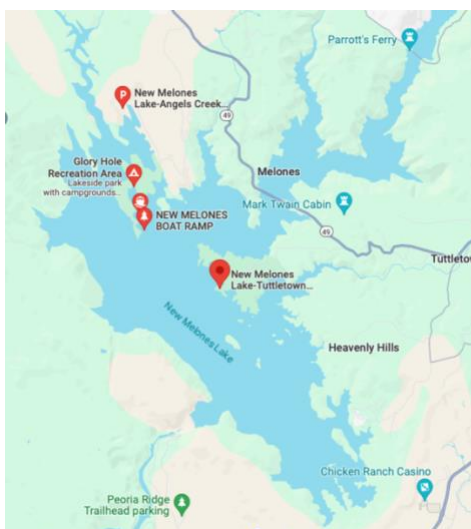
Sail host: Kevin Crowder



Sail beautiful New Melones Lake. Right now, the lake is full of water and surrounded by green hills. We will meet at the Glory Hole Launch ramp at around 10:00. Sail off south and end up at the islands. I will point to the islands when we are at the launch ramp. Or follow GPS to 37.968763-120.497532. Depending on the wind I will suggest places to explore. We will boat camp overnight. You can either beach or anchor. The holding is mud with grass, no sand.



To get here drive up to Highway 49 to the gold country. From Angels Camp drive south on 49 to Whittle Rd. The sign says Glory Hole Recreation Area. At the unattended gate use the electronic ranger—it costs \$10 to launch. If you come up highway 120 to Sonora, take Highway 49 North. Left at Whittle Rd. There is a gas station and store there—last chance for beer.



Winds are usually 5-10 knots and there is plenty of room to sail. There is a [marina](#) next to the launch ramp if needed.

At 12,500 acres, New Melones Lake is the 4th largest reservoir in California. The elevation is 1100 feet, so in early June, the temperature may be pretty warm. Campfires are not permitted on shore and there are no restaurants nearby, so plan on a real campout experience overnight.



(Alameda continued from page 1)

Kevin and I had my boat semi ready, and we were fed up with snow, so we thought we'd give it a shot. I called the Oakland Yacht Club for reservations and Adam and Ben dialed us in so rather than sailing across from Richmond, we went down to OYC directly so we could bail if it got bad.

Alameda Participants:

- Jim Hunt and Kevin Crowder – *Blue Moon*, Santana 2023



Dinner with the big yacht owners at the OYC!

After a lovely evening we set up *Blue Moon* and moved her over to 2 dock and spent a wet night, finding all the leaks that keep plaguing me. Saturday was raining so we went to breakfast and went over to see the *USS Potomac*, Franklin Roosevelt's "Floating White House," but she was in dry dock. The United States lightship *Relief* was nearby, but by appointment only, so we went to Svendsen's Marine's open house and had a good time.



After her tenure as the presidential yacht, the [USS Potomac](#) passed through multiple owners (including Elvis Presley) and was eventually seized from a drug smuggling ring. She sank at Treasure Island, was raised, then dumped in the Estuary. She was days away from being scrapped when the Port of Oakland purchased her. She was restored and has been open to the public for tours and events since 1995 and is a National Historic Landmark.



Dinner with the Potters at Brotzeit Lokal

After we cleaned up the boat, we heard from my girlfriend Becky that she had missed her flight, so we made plans to meet her at Brotzeit Lokal across the Estuary for dinner. Shortly Eric called and said he and Mark were on the way too. I invited an Alameda friend as well and we all had a great German dinner and drinks. (Continued next page)

Sunday was a promising day, so we ate on the boat for breakfast and took off to catch the wind and tide right. We sailed nicely up to the bridge and lost wind, then motored past the Ferry Building to catch it and the tide. We sailed out past Alcatraz, crossed the slot and shot straight to the mouth of Richardson Bay. A few tacks later we were around Angel Island and the wind and tide flipped so we ran down to Clipper Cove. We motored through the bridge, caught a nice breeze, and flew down the Estuary for a stop at OYC and the truck for the haul out.

All in all, a nice Spring Shower weekend.

Jim Hunt



Sunday was a better day for sailing. There weren't a lot of boats out, but *Blue Moon* wasn't alone on the Bay.

| Officer's Club | | |
|--|--|---|
| Commodore: Jon Barber Montgomery 17, <i>OI' 44</i> | Vice-Commodore: Eric Zilbert P-19, #629, <i>Riptide</i> | Newsletter Editor: Sharon Soule' Balboa 21, <i>Nighthawk</i> |
| Small Boat Fleet Captain: Bud Kerner P-14, <i>Splash</i> | Large Boat Fleet Captain: Jim Hunt Santana 2023, <i>Blue Moon</i> | Webmaster: Phil Marcellis |
| Secretary/Treasurer: Phil Marcellis Catalina 22, <i>Merri Time</i> | Website: www.potter-yachters.org | Facebook: PotterYachters |

Renamed Poker Regatta Draws Consensus on Three of a Kind...or Four

Story and photos by Mike Kennedy

Much like the original Potter Yachter Poker Regatta last year in May, the Inaugural Tom Snyder Life's a Gambol Poker Run Regatta and Masquerade, hosted by the Stockton Sailing Club, March 23, 2024, was the best of times at the worst of times. Fortunately, and unlike an Oktoberfest, it was not the wurst of times nor was law or sausage observed being made. Like the prior year, the day dawned, revealing an ominous and lowering sky.... though for that matter, the sky appeared to be about the same height as usual just darker with a promise of moisture.

The heavy mantle of Commodore of the Potter Yachters had officially been strapped onto the brawny shoulders of Jon Barber in January. True to his blood oath of office, Jon felt the necessity to brave the threatening climactic changes to set an example for sailors reclining in their Barcaloungers by a roaring fire. He represented the embodiment if not souliment of all Potters. To flesh out his crew he brought along Ernie McCleary, a veteran of last year, and Gary Fickin to sail the first leg of the course on Jon's Montgomery 17, *Ol' 44*.



In total, four boats entered and completed the regatta by hitting all 3 marks, collecting a playing card at each, and returning to the SSC finish by the appointed hour. The appointed hour, 18:00, was moved by consensus of all participants to 19:30 as all registered participants were still convened at the bar at the Stockton Rod and Gun Club as the appointed hour came and went. The consensus was achieved with alacrity and even more spirit.

The rest of the intrepid competitors (registered participants with money on the line) were as follows: Mark Niemeyer as Captain and William Humphrey as Lieutenant Commander of *Abemelia*, a Beneteau 23.5, sporting a new self-tacking jib and a gorgeous Stack-Pak. There was another consensus, quickly reached as well, that it was the Stack-Pak of any intelligent sailor's dream. Mark and William represented for the SSC.

Also representing for the SSC was Mike Kennedy on *Shakedown Street*, a Com-Pac 19 that debuted at last year's event but was back in better form with a 110 jib instead of the allegedly self-tacking handkerchief it had on the first go. In the brisk conditions it proved a Com-Pac 19 can sail out of its own way. Kennedy, despite his four digit membership number with SSC, claimed and even feigned dual allegiance to the Potter Yachters and had another card to prove it. Because Kennedy is uniquely positioned to record the history of these regattas, not just as initiator but also as perpetrator and myopic historian, the official count of four boats, even though, technically, there were only three, shall stand until the results of the challenge to the cease and desist order is made known by the appellate court.

There were many highlights of the actual regatta and certainly not least was the uncannily canny replication of, both the real and the imagined, weather from last year's event. Ominous portents and round the clock predictions of threatening, disastrous, unspeakable, unprecedented horrors of a black 'morrow never really materialized. About the time the armchair sailors were throwing another faggot (What? Still too early for that term?) on the fire and topping off the third Irish coffee with a dash of fire water, the storm that was apoplectically promised eventually came through from the west and blew us back up river. Foulies were much in evidence on all boats but almost unnecessary. (continued next page)

Very much like last year, in the afternoon conditions emerged balmy and very agreeable sailing weather produced a fine scattering of clouds and blue sky. The wind did pick up as sunset became imminent and the four boats left the dock at the Rod and Gun Club to make it back before dark. It made for a nice but relatively short beat back to the club house.

Another memorable highlight occurred at Windmill Cove where Jon, Ernie, Gary and Mike met the Captain and creator of an honest to gawd steam boat. She is gorgeous...as gorgeous as a state-of-the-art Stack Pak, but gleaming of polished brass and varnish. It was a melding of a hull, an engine and 10 or so years of indomitable will and due diligence. "I learned everything I needed to know about steam engines from watching that Steve McQueen movie, *The Sandpebbles*." said the Captain. Part of the hard part was finding the engine in a PNW logging boat and transporting it to Cali for the transplant. Now the hard part consists of navigating with the six-foot draw of the steel hull. The boat's name was something like *Perseverance* but for privacy considerations and the inability of the author or others present to recall the actual name we will skip that formality. The captain and his crew got somewhat steamed a bit later and chugged off to Tower Park. He was heard to hoot a hoarse but shrill hail and farewell blast on the whistle upon entering the channel.

This year's event did take longer to complete the course and it may be due to tide and the unusually high run off current from a series of storms. It could be argued the additional stop at the Rod and Gun Club was a factor, though no one went near the shuffleboard or pool tables. I, myself, attribute it to the Garlic Fries and Potato Skins at Windmill Cove. They took forever to prepare but were so worth it the author returned the following week for more of the same.

At any rate, properly hydrated and thoroughly rested and commiserated, the race back to the club got underway with all boats leaving the Rod and Gun Club dock cleanly, fairly and with alacrity though varying degrees of the elusive 'boat speed'. There is no need to talk further about what is a foregone conclusion to readers familiar with *Ol' 44*. The wind was brisk and on the nose as a lovely, cloud studded sunset was developing. Again, a day much like last year and pretty much any day it isn't raining, or the state is not on fire. *Ol' 44* caught a lift and quickly claimed the lead, convincingly and consistently stretching out to be first back to the



Poker Regatta Participants:

- Jon Barber, Ernie McCleary & Gary Fickin – *Ol' 44*, Montgomery 17
- Mark Niemeyer & William Humphrey – *Abemelia*, Beneteau 23.5
- Mike Kennedy – *Shakedown Street*, Com-Pac 19
- Was there a 4th boat? Mike will have to enlighten us in a future newsletter...

dock and well secured for nightfall by the time the rest of the pack arrived. *Abemelia* finished second and by all accounts of her captain and crew was a much-improved vessel with the new and properly fitted self-tacking headsail. Mike Kennedy finished last, tying for third and fourth.

(continued next page)

Conviviality, bon homme and self-congratulatory praise prevailed back at the SSC bar. The fifth and common-to-all-hands card was cut by a non-combatant, Mark Letendre, and revealed to some surprise (but not the author's) that Mike Kennedy was high.... (wait for it).... with a pair of aces. Feeling he should not have won as he was an organizer (along with able assists from Real Descent, Mark Sailer, William Humpreys, Marvin MacDougall, Mike Leonard, Chris Magro and David Theis) Kennedy then offered to cut for high card with Jon Barber who had the second highest hand. Kennedy won again and declared all proceeds from the event go to support the Junior Sailing Foundation.

Another consensus was reached that the event was a good and worthwhile experience, particularly for the cruisers among us or couples who may not care for the pressures of competitive sailing in close quarters. It should be noted that, like most consensus resulting in a suggested course of action, this consensus was reached by group of folks who would consider themselves neither cruisers nor couples... though all are allegedly involved in conjugal affairs in other aspects of their life. But the Poker Regatta is an excellent opportunity to expand your sailing horizons, mix with other adventurous and like-minded folks and contribute in a meaningful way to the Sisyphean task of attracting new young sailors to buy our old boats.



If you delight in the challenges of small boat handling and cheating at cards, it is a pretty good time for a very good cause (Full disclosure: I have several boats that need a new owner.) and again a consensus resolution was quickly achieved to do it again "sometime soon". The next Phil N. Zblanke Life's a Gambol Poker Run and Masquerade is already scheduled as soon as a coterie of SSC movers and shakers determine the date and ask me to make the necessary arrangements. Actually, I think a Phil Hendrix Life's a Gambol Poker Run is long overdue and am willing to Shake my Spear in that direction.

In closing let me say the dream/illusion of a follow-up after-the-regatta-soiree Masquerade is still in my to do wheelhouse. It was an honor to honor Tom Snyder and his lively Gamboling ways and I only wish I could hear his off screen commentary as the day unfolded. Through no competitor came in costume, looking at the photos there were a few Gloucester Fisherman impersonations. Myself, I prepared the appropriately grubby couture of Charlie Allnut but that was mostly for Tom's appreciation. At one point the thought of combining the swap meet with a poker regatta was discussed and perhaps that notion deserves reconsideration. Clearly the best way to improve participation is to select a more favorable weather window as the fair-weather sailors are more inclined to make the effort.



The author on board his Com-Pac 19, *Shakedown Street*. No word on who or what he is planning to shake down...
Photo Credit: Jon Barber



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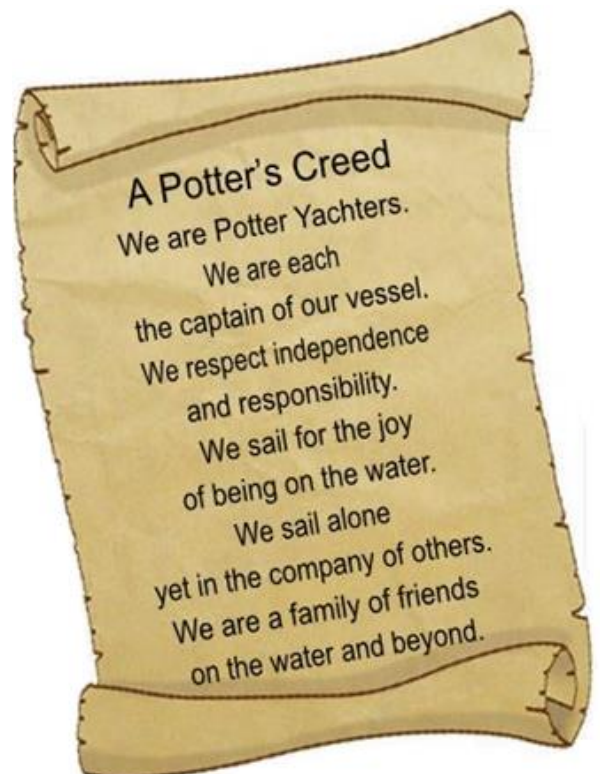
With a Grain of Salt

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.