



# The Potter Yachter

Newsletter of the Northern California West Wight Potter Club

October 2005

## Sail Calendar 2005

April 13-17 Sail Expo, Jack London Square (FYI, not exclusively a Potter event.. But the Potter Factory folks will be there)

April 16,Sat. Daysail. Cruise on the Estuary , Launch at Grand St. Alameda.

April 30,Sat.,May 1 Sun. The Delta Cruise, overnight. Launch 9:00am, at Brannan Island, sail to Lundborg Landing, overnight at Lundborg.

May 7,Sat. Daysail. "Shifty Winds" at Del Valle Reservoir, Livermore.

May 11- 26 Usual Suspects head North to Puget Sound. (FYI, recommended for experienced sailors only..)

June 4,Sat. June 5th Sunday, Woodward Reservoir, Annual overnight campout near Oakdale, CA.

July 1,2, 3 Eagle Lake Campout, Susanville CA.

July 16,17 ,The Cruiser Challenge, in Monterey. Annual fun race/social weekend, sponsored by Potter Yachters ,MPYC, and Small Craft Advisor Magazine

July 30 Richmond Daysail

Aug.20 Richmond-Loch Lomond

Sept. 10th, 11th, Tomales Bay weekend

October 1,2, Monterey Overnighter

October 8 fleet week, Estuary to T.I. Cove

October 29 Buckley Cove to Windmill Cove

## Reefed Down Fun at Tomales Bay

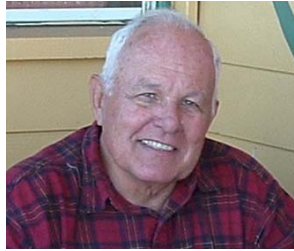


*Above, Don Person and "Sarah Anne" roaring along under reefed maindown the west shore of Tomales Bay. Below .left, Steve Potter with Rich McDevitt close behind, enjoy some of the typical energetic wind and waves on Tomales*



*The Commodore's Corner*

In sharp contrast to some of the exciting high wind sailing at the Coyote Point, Ballena Bay to Oyster Point, and Tomales Bay sails, recently here in San Francisco, we've seen some typical fall clear skies, sunshine, and sometimes even very light air in the South Bay, and on the Estuary. For many of the Grand Street Sails which Don Person, Pat Brennan, Dave Bacon, Dave Kautz, Pat Malone, Rich McDevitt, Terry Gotcher, and others gather for on a regular basis, the early morning fog has been lifting quickly for a pleasant day of easy sailing. I must confess I enjoy the typical lunch stop Camaraderie as much as the fun of sailing with these good friends in the Potter Club.



At this writing Potter Sailor Dave Lawson is very ill, and all of our good thoughts go out to him, and we have missed having him with us on some of the recent sails

I have made a reservation for our annual business/social meeting for Sunday January 8th, 2006 at Oakland Yacht Club. The reason I mention this, is that it is not too early to begin to ask my fellow club members to think about volunteering to serve as new club officers. I will be ending my term as Commodore and Newsletter Editor in January and will not be available to serve in 2006. Meanwhile I will also be soliciting recommendations for "Potter Yachter of The Year", so be sure and send me any recommendations for that award you would like to make. I am glad to have this space to commend Pat Brennan, club treasurer, and Don Person, along with all the other Grand St. sailing friends, for all the help and support they so generously give to me... it is their enthusiasm that keeps re-igniting my own! **Bruce**



At left, Pat Malone and the Commodore, and Pat Brennan sailed out in beautiful light air conditions on a Sunday sail from the Encinal Launch Ramp on Alameda. Encinal ramp has the advantage of putting boats right into the South Bay.

**The Officer's Club**

2005

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*Tomales Bay 2005... This year, an ideal mix of conditions with ten boats attend-*



*Above, Steve Potter carefully anchors his P-15 well up the beach at Tomales Bay. The Potter Yachters annual sail here involves dealing with a wide range of winds and tidal rise and fall. Story on page four.*

## October Sails:

**Fleet Week, Sat. October 8th**, Launch 9:30am from Grand St. Alameda on the Estuary, Sail to T.I. Cove. Bring outboard fuel in case wind is light. This sail can take 3 hrs to get to Treasure Island , and 3 hrs. to return to Grand St. Plan on a full day on the water.

**Buckley Cove to Windmill Cove in the Delta, Sat. October 29th**, launch time 10 am. A river run of about 3 miles to Windmill Cove. Take I-5 to Stockton CA, take March Lane Exit, follow March Lane West until you reach the Marina and Launch ramp at the end of March Lane.

# *Tomales Bay 2005*

*Story by Don Per-*

*Grilled Oysters on the Beach, Bugling Elk in the Night, Classic Wooden Boats on Display and a Flotilla of Potter Sailors and Friends sailing in fresh breezes, make for another outstanding Potter Yachter Weekend...*

For any who haven't been there, Tomales Bay is a Shangri-La only twenty miles from very busy civilization. Forty miles north of San Francisco and twenty miles west of Highway 101. It is pretty isolated because getting there is a trip, in the sense that the twenty miles is over very narrow, very winding, very bumpy very old roads which are inhabited by bicycles. There are three or four different routes, all equally difficult. The good news is, the destination is worth the effort. Rounding the last curve, three miles past the hamlet of Marshall (pop. 56) at the northern end of the bay, the launch ramp area suddenly appears. It has good parking, ramp, staging area and a devilishly recalcitrant cash/credit machine to issue permits.

At noon Friday, Dan Phy, Brad Evans, John Wheeler, Dick Herman and several empty trailers were there when I arrived. Turns out the Wooden Boat Assn. was having a weekend sail also. Six, Mosey, Old #2, Muddy Duck and Sarah Anne were uneventfully launched and headed west across the bay. It was overcast (fog) with a good sailing breeze as we headed for (forgot the name of the cove) our anchorage. The Bay is about 15 miles long and a mile wide, lying right on top of the San Andreas earthquake fault which was quite quiet during our visit. The Wooden Boaters had reserved "our" beach but graciously invited us to join them. There was a nice area at the north end where we Potters could all anchor. It was a cool, calm evening and our craft hardly moved in the gentle wavelets. Dave Lawson, a most integral part of the group is in the hospital recovering from an extremely tough round of heart problems and surgery. On trips, he provides a civilized and thoughtful presence. He also, being English, treats us to sherry, an excellent selection of hors d'oeuvres and "two buck chuck" both red and white... in his honor these potables plus other contributions were produced and enjoyed.

To walk off our repast, we toured our neighbors' wooden boats. Many were works of art, varnished to a glassy finish. All were interesting. Sizes were from 10 to 20 feet. Almost all had stations for rowing. Most were stepped for sailing, with rigs from catboat to ketch to yawl. Types ranged from two small Pelicans to a sleek Chesapeake Bay Crab Skiff. Most had tanbark or Egyptian Cotton sails. At the end of the evening the leftovers were carefully packed, but left forgotten, on the beach. Of course the raccoons didn't let that go and finished them up nicely.

The sun sneaked up under the fog Saturday morning, along with a breeze which was to continue building through the day. Restocked with coffee and oatmeal, off we went to the northwest end of the bay. On the way we were joined by Dave and Theron White and Wee Boat. They had arrived late in the evening and anchored in the cove next to us.

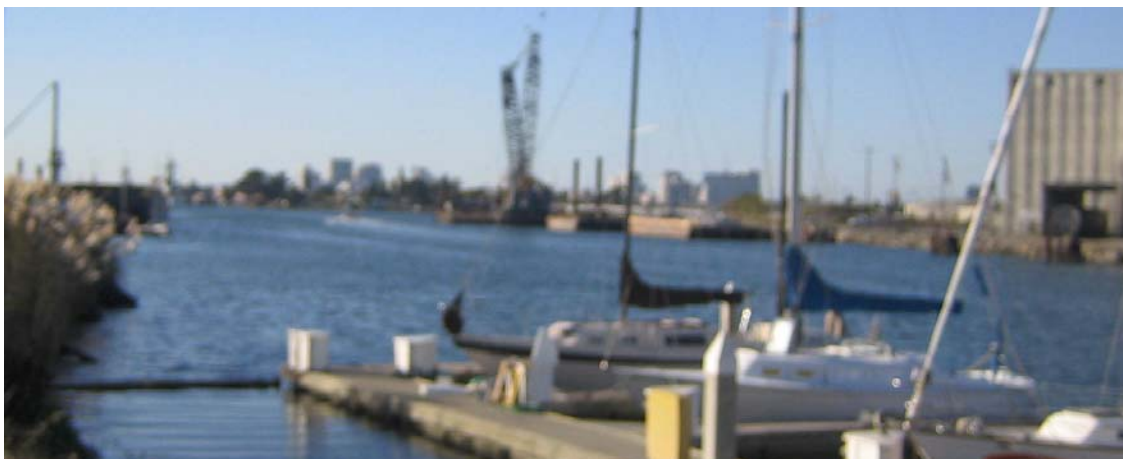
With "just right" NW winds, the trip was a tacking treat. Rich McDevitt in Minnow was waiting for us in a cove not far from the bay's outlet. Mike Westfield's story of the midnight bugling elk, on the '01 trip, was confirmed when Rich pointed out the elk on the nearby hill. There were three groups, about 30 in all, on the hill and in the meadow at the head of the cove. One big bull entertained us with his calling. Other Potter sails were appearing from the ramp area. Pat Brennan and Eaglet, and Steve Potter in Stars and Stripes came charging across the water. The wind was really picking up so most of us were taking sails down a reef. Even reefed we were making hull speed and paying close attention to our mainsheets.

Reaching down to our beach, Dick Herman brought us into line for a "fly by" of the wooden boats. Fortunately we performed well, and were a credit to Potterdom. The woodies were already sensibly beached except for a Pelican, sailing on main only, who followed us in. The wind was now strong enough that making headway to our upwind beach was too frustrating so the trusty Honda's did their thing. According to Rich, watching us getting the bow and stern anchors out in the choppy conditions was as much fun as a launch ramp full of weekend sailors.

As for Rich, a big cheer. He had gotten up early to get two dozen fresh oysters from the Tomales Bay Oyster Co. These were produced from a cold pack, along with Mary's delicious sauce. The Whites dug a fire pit and supplied firewood and in the nick of time the Eric and Lisa Zilbert in Riptide came in with a grate and a big pot of very tasty stew. We hung out yarning with, among other topics, an interesting discussion of mordants, used in the dye industry, until the fire died at about ten. The waves on our relatively unprotected beach were still a problem so Dan, Brad and Dick motored out to anchor a little south where they hoped the water would be a little quieter. Fortunately, as Brad had predicted, the wind died and we all had a very restful night. Morning found most of us well beached. It was an unusual tide and the low stayed low through a cycle so lots of pushing and shoving went on. Theron White is a retired caber tosser so pushing off a beached P19 looked easy for him.

A high fog was present Sunday morning as we set out. The wind gradually picked up, but not near reefing force, and it was excellent, relaxed sailing for the next few hours. Many in the flotilla were looking at a long drive home so they were soon hauled out, and ready to go by about one O'clock and the rest of us soon followed. Thanks to all who came and made the event such a success and condolences to those who didn't make it. Be sure and show up next year! **Don Person**

***“A collision at sea can ruin your whole day”*** Told to me by an instructor at Navy OCS



By Pat Brennan

*The Estuary west of Park Street Bridge – Tide = 5.5’*

It was a beautiful day so, as I headed back down the Oakland Estuary towards the Grand Street ramp, I decided to extend the sailing a bit longer. I continued on a run down the Estuary in my Eaglet accompanied by Don Person and Bruce Hood in Sarah Anne. Just before the Park Street Bridge I turned around and started tacking back up the channel. There was a nice breeze blowing so I was making over three knots on a port tack. I had the jib sheet in hand preparing to tack as I approached the south side of the channel. There was a muffled bang and the boat stopped dead. I was more than 50 feet from land in open water as I looked around to try to see what had happened. The boat pivoted around something and started drifting back down the channel and then I saw a dark shape under the water with what looked like a large pipe sticking out of the top and extending almost to the surface. I did not have my centerboard tied down and it had not kicked up so whatever was under water must have struck the hull.

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Although there was no obvious damage done and the bilge was dry it seemed like a good idea to get off the water ASAP. I dropped the sails, started the motor and headed back towards Grand Street. A peek into the bilge after a few minutes revealed no water. Another peek after a few more minutes; now there was some water and it was rising rapidly. By the time I got back to the ramp the water had risen to the level of the cabin sole. I got the boat onto the trailer, and after I hauled out I could see a hole in the chine near the port bow. When the bilge drain was opened water poured out for about five minutes.

Now it was time to get the boat fixed and back on the water. The next day, after he inspected the boat, the yard manager at Svendsens’s Boat Yard suggested that I should probably find out what another boat would cost; the minimum cost of a repair would be between \$2,000 and \$2,500 and could be much higher. It would be necessary to cut through the hull liner and open up a large section of the hull, back up the hole and then finish the patch from the outside. This, of course, might require new gel coat for the entire hull.

Mariner Boat Yard was a bit more encouraging. Their approach would be the same as Svendsen’s except that only the patch would need gel coat, Mariner would match the color as best they could. The estimate was for 10 to 12 hours of labor at \$88 per hour or about \$1,000. I don’t have a boat insurance policy, but I called my homeowner’s insurance carrier, USAA, and was told that property damage would be covered up to a maximum of \$1,000. Good; the boat went to Mariner the next day where the yard manager wrote up the official estimate - \$1,000 in labor, \$9 per

foot to remove and replace the boat on the trailer, \$126 to cut an access hatch through the hull liner, a bit more for fiberglass, resin, gel coat and tax – a total of \$1,347 and it would take about a week and a half. I told him to go ahead, left the boat and went home to submit a claim to USAA. And now the good news – the repairs were completed in a week and the cost was less than \$450. Mariner decided that the repair could be done without accessing the inside of the hull and there was no need to take the boat off the trailer.

A question still remained. What had I hit and why wasn't it marked with a warning buoy? The City of Alameda responded to a call to the Public Works Department by saying they were aware of the obstruction, that it was dangerous and should be marked but that it was the Coast Guard's responsibility. The City gave me a name and number for the Coast Guard. When I called it I was told I had the wrong section; I should talk to Aids to Navigation. The message on the Aids to Navigation phone said that the person in charge would not be available for the rest of the week. By this time the nature of the obstruction was obvious. It was a sunken wreck that is very visible at anything other than at high tide.



*Tide = 3.0' Now the sharp obstruction can be seen at center left above...*

Looking back at what happened I can't see how it reasonably could have been avoided. Charts do not show an obstruction, a depth sounder would not have shown shallow water until it was too late since the wreck rises vertically from the bottom, and there was no way to see the wreck until you were almost directly over it. Short of never sailing in unfamiliar waters (and what fun would that be?) there doesn't seem to be a way to assure that accidents like this won't happen. As to what to do after the fact, the decision to get off the water immediately was the right one. In addition I should have let Don and Bruce, who were sailing near me, know why I was leaving in such a hurry. Also, when I first saw water rising in the bilge I probably should have put out a distress call rather than take the chance of being able to make it back to the ramp.

Actually, my navy instructor wasn't entirely correct. It was a good day of sailing in spite of the accident!

***At Right: Pat Brennan and Eaglet are back sailing, and happily recovered from the underwater collision. Within a week Pat was back on the water at Tomales Bay.***

***Pat is the treasurer for the Potter Yachters and does an outstanding job***





***Some days the winds on the Bay can be light and mellow... and there is time for friendly conversation between skippers..***

In the picture above, Pat Malone in his beautiful white P-15 Festina Lente, with the Commodore as crew, enjoys a chat with Pat Malone in “Eaglet”. This was on a Sunday and we had light breezes of only 5 or 6 miles per hour... just enough to move the boats gently. The day before, the Rolex Cup yachts had been speeding around the bay in 28mph winds on the city front in 3 foot whitecaps! As a variation on a theme, the “usual suspects” who often launch at Grand St. ramp or across the bay at Redwood City, had been reminded by Past Commodore Rich McDevitt, that the old Encinal Launch ramp allowed getting out on the open water of the South Bay without the necessity of a long sail out the estuary which is necessary for when setting out for the Bay from Grand St. Consequently some very pleasant sails have been made from the Encinal launch site on the West side of Alameda in recent weeks. The Encinal ramp and dock are not in particularly good shape, and the water is initially very shallow , but once clear, it is possible to sail South and make a lunch stop at the Deli in the Ballena Bay Yacht harbor. As the day progressed Pat Brennan and Don Person sailed almost all the way to Candlestick Park, then on the way back made a tour by the Aircraft Carrier Hornet... where they got hooted at to clear away. There are in service Navy vessels right along side the Hornet, which is now a museum and open to the Public.



# The Potter Yachter

October, 2005

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## Inside the Potter Yachter

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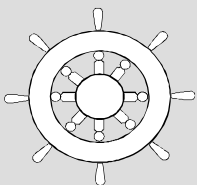
**Page 3 Beached at Tomales... And Sail Calendar info.**

**Page 4 Tomales report**

**Page 5 Underwater collision!**

**Page 6 ...Pat's boat damaged..**

**Page 7 Ballena Bay photos**



## 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 ex-

perience 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*

