



# The Potter Yachter

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

Sept/Oct 2022

## Lead story *Report: Half Moon Bay* **'What a Wonderful Location!'**

by Phil Marcelis

I pulled into the [Pillar Point Harbor](#) parking lot around 10:30 am on Friday, August 5<sup>th</sup> and temporarily parked near the harbormaster's office so I could see about getting a slip. The slips in Half Moon Bay are offered on an "as available" basis and can't be reserved ahead of time, so I anxiously made this my first priority. As a backup, I had been communicating with the [Half Moon Bay YC](#) and they made arrangements to have us dock up to four of our small boats on their floating dock (with the caveat that we may need to move if the winds picked up). I can't say enough good things about the folks at HMB YC! Their webpage says they don't offer dockspace because the anchor-points are stressed enough by their Cal 20s, but when they heard that we sail Potter 15s and 19s, they made space and offered us free dockage.

However, to hedge against the possibility of needing to move my Catalina 22 off their dock, I requested a slip from the harbormaster. The alternatives are getting a mooring ball or anchoring in the protected outer harbor. Luckily, the harbor wasn't busy and I was assigned a slip next to one of the many fishing and party boats, and got the added benefit of 30-amp power my heater at night and keep my fridge/freezer going.  
(Story continued pg 4)



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

Mail a check to Goose (see [Potter Yachter Membership](#), page 13)

or send by [PayPal to your friend](#)

Include your name, email address, and "Potter Yachter dues" in the notes.

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

Burgees	\$25.00
Bumper Stickers	\$ 2.50
Patches	\$ 2.50
Info Packets	\$20.00 (Primarily P-15 information)

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 Phil Marcelis

There's a lot on my mind this month. It's becoming challenging to keep it all organized in my head, but maybe it will help to just write it down and share it with you.

First, people should know that we're still doing the Zoom Happy Hour Friday at 5pm. Perhaps every Friday is a bit much, but that's what the "regulars" have been doing. Joining is easy, just click [HERE](#) or type this into your browser: <https://bit.ly/3PTLSWb>

Let's see, another thing on my mind is creating the Sailing Calendar for next year. I'm calling on all members to think of places you'd like to sail and email those suggestions to me. If enough people suggest the same place, I'll see if we can get a sailhost and it'll go on the schedule. I've been looking through the old newsletters and finding places we haven't been to in a very long time. Half Moon Bay turned out to be a real gem. What will we re-discover next?

Although it wasn't mentioned as "first" here, officer nominations are probably foremost in my thoughts. I'm happy to continue as Commodore for another year, but we will need members to come up through the ranks to fill the roles of Commodore, Vice-Commodore, Secretary, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. If you have an interest in supporting the club in one of these roles, please send me an email or give me a call to discuss it. Or click the link above to join the Zoom meeting and I'm sure the topic will come up.

With the club bylaws completed, approved, and filed, I turned my attention to the somewhat arduous process of securing tax-exemption for the Potter Yachters. The application has been filed and now we wait. Currently, they're working on filings from February, so it'll be a while. I'll sure be happy when we get our approval letter.

Then there's home remodeling and boat maintenance... big news! I finally fixed the water ballast tank on my Santana 2023c *Napili Breeze* and it's poised to go to its new owner. With Alan Koepf as crew, that boat picked up 2<sup>nd</sup> place at the Cruiser Challenge in Monterey this year. (If the times were all added together, though, we took 1<sup>st</sup>!)

And last, but probably not last because I'm sure I'm leaving something out, we need to gather photos for the yearly calendar which we'll offer for sale at the annual meeting. If you have any nice pics of Potters sailing, please send them to me or Sharon, the newsletter editor. We need to have the photos by Oct. 31 at the latest.

Regards,  
Phil — 

### Club Events on the Horizon

[potter-yachters.org/calendar](https://potter-yachters.org/calendar)

**October 28-30**

**Delta Bridges**

**Bud Kerner**

*Depending on wind and tides, this can be an intermediate sail. Launch in Benecia and sail to Napa. Two nights at the Napa Valley Marina, a visit to Napa on Saturday, followed by a sail back to Benecia on Sunday.*

**December 11**

**Annual Meeting, Oakland Yacht Club**

**Phil Marcelis**

*The meeting starts at 9:30 am, ending around 1:30 pm. They are no longer requiring vaccination cards, but they aren't open for Sunday Brunch yet. The club is working on food. We will meet to elect officers and discuss the sailing calendar.*

*Upcoming: Launch in Rio Vista; Oct 29/30, 2022*

## **Delta Bridges Sail and Overnight**

*Sailhost: Bud Kerner*

Come join the Potter Yachters for the 11<sup>th</sup> or maybe 12<sup>th</sup> annual Bridges sail, but who's counting? This year the sail will start in beautiful downtown Rio Vista at the Delta Marina. On the first day, Saturday, October 29, we will leave the Delta Marina and sail up the Sacramento River past the Rio Vista Bridge. We will follow the Sacramento River past Walnut Grove with openings at the Isleton and



### **Directions West on Route 12:**

Just after crossing Sacramento River, immediately turn right toward Rio Vista. Make first right to go under Route 12. Just after first stop sign (Main St.), turn left into launch ramp parking.

### **Directions East on Route 12:**

Before crossing the Sacramento River, turn right at Chevy Dealer (N. Front St.) Turn right at the stop sign (N. Front St.) Just after the next stop sign (Main St.), turn left into launch ramp parking.

Walnut Grove bridges.

Where the Sacramento meets Steamboat Slough, we will turn to port and enter Steamboat Slough under that bridge. We will follow Steamboat Slough until we reach the Sacramento river again and head back to Delta Marina for the night.

The sail is approximately 22 nautical miles with 5 bridges.

On Sunday, October 30<sup>th</sup> we will leave Delta Marina and sail down the Sacramento River and around Decker Island, and back to the marina. This is one of the Rio Vista Sailing Clubs' favorite sails. The distance is about ten nautical miles.

Saturday's sail will require considerable motoring. You should have plenty of gas and be able to motor at 3 knots or better. Sunday's sail should be a sailing day.

Dinner is optional and will be at The Point restaurant which is located at the marina. We will have dinner there Friday evening for

the early arrivals, and Saturday after the sail.

The Delta Marina charges \$1.25/foot for the guest dock. Launching at the marina is \$15 which includes one day of parking. Parking fees for additional days are \$5/day

The Rio Vista City launch ramp fees are \$14, including vehicle and trailing parking. Additional days are \$5.

There is a credit card/cash machine in the parking lot. It is much easier to launch at the city ramp. It is located about a quarter of a mile upriver from the marina.

See you on the water.


Bud — 



Photo: David Meyers



(Half Moon Bay continued from page 1)

The launch fee was \$17 (payable only by credit card at the machine) and the slip was \$1.50/ft per night including 30-amp power and parking, which I paid the harbormaster in person.

Although Stan Butler wrote (PYN Sept-1982) that the ramp & harbor at Half Moon Bay looks “very good for our type of sailing,” when sailing out of Pillar Point, the signs at the ramp, warnings from the yacht club members, and collective Potter Yachters memory of Don Craig’s accident (PYN April-1978) are best heeded. After all, this area is known for Mavericks Beach, where experienced surfers go “to wrestle with the sea”.



### Half Moon Bay - Aug 2022

#### Attendees:

- Pete Evans – *Hisako*, WWP 15
- Phil Marcelis – *Merri Time*, Catalina 22 crew: Alan Koepf
- Eric Zilbert – *Riptide*, WWP 19 crew: Evan Erskine-Zilbert

With all that in mind, we were pleasantly surprised by the extremely calm sea state and mild wind. The swell wasn’t much more than 2-feet every 8-seconds, and we were able to make 2-4 knots in the steady winds. When I finally got around to launching at about 1pm on Friday, the sky was clear and blue, and I spent about an hour or so having a glorious sail. Eric and Evan showed up just after I launched and was able to bring *Riptide* into the same slip as me. The fog bank rolled in as the evening wore on, but it didn’t bother us since we had walked over to the yacht club for drinks and dinner by then. I made my usual call into the [Zoom Happy Hour](#) (yes, we still do those), and Alan asked if he could drive over the next morning and crew with me, since it sounded like our great sailing conditions were going to continue, but he wasn’t ready to drive the boat down. (Continued next page...)



Tasty Rib Dinner



The [Chart](#) is currently freely available on Garmin's ActiveCaptain:  
<https://activecaptain.garmin.com/en-US/Map>



Half Moon Bay Yacht Club

We awoke Saturday morning to the same clouds but it was a surprisingly warm morning. My heater never even hit its low-temp setting so it stayed off all night. We leisurely waited for Alan to arrive and for the wind to pick up a bit, and finally around 10am we headed out to sea.



The PillarPoint buoy & Alan

I will say this one bad thing about our experience: those flies at the breakwater are the worst. We picked up more than a dozen going through the breakwater entrance, even motoring at 5 knots. And once they're aboard, when you get further out there and start sailing, they have nowhere to go. We spent the first part of our sail just whacking them with a towel, one-by-one.

Pete, who drove up from Southern California, was rigging



Saturday's Happy Hour at HMB YC

around 10am and joined us after launching. The yacht club was having an informal race in the inner harbor, so there were many colorful sails there. There were no sailboats to be seen outside the breakwater, although the flat water drew a multitude of fishing boats of all description. In a repeat of Friday, the blue sky came out in the afternoon and it was a beautiful day. The club didn't offer dinner on Saturday, but it was active at the bar and the members were very welcoming. As we did on Friday, we docked at their float and took the electrically operated cable ferry to land. We got fairly adept at the intricate dance of approaching shore as the swells came in and then stepping off as the water receded. They also took people out for tours of an anchored trimaran which belongs to a single-handed sailor who was just about to set out on an around-the-world cruise. It was all very festive!


And then we decided to walk over to the harbor for a pleasant dinner at [Ketch Joanne's](#). As we left the yacht club, the rear commodore invited us to visit again soon. What great people and a wonderful place!

Alan headed home after dinner, and Pete spent the night at the yacht club dock.



Eric & Evan on *Riptide*

On Sunday morning, with somewhat less wind predicted, I leisurely packed up the boat and drove away by noon. *Riptide* stayed another night, hoping that traffic leaving Half Moon Bay wouldn't be so bad on Monday as it was certainly going to be on Sunday afternoon.

I'm really pleased that it was such an enjoyable weekend and I'll have happy memories of Half Moon Bay to fall back on when it's blowing 40 knots the next time I launch there. In any case, even if I leave the boat in the parking lot, I'll definitely visit Half Moon Bay Yacht Club! — 





**Call for photos: Did you take any good sailing pictures this year? Please send us pictures for the 2023 Calendar!**



### **Listen when your trailer talks to you**

From: Kevin Crowder

Finally I was able to get my boat out this year. Went to Union Valley reservoir. Lost a dust cap off the driver side wheel hub. No problem, I have a spare. Jim struggled to put it on. But finally got it on. Got home and noticed the cap was missing. Ok, last spare. I dimpled it and struggled to get it on the hub, but got it seated all the way. Next trip-Monterey. Al is with me. We tow from my house to the store. When we leave and I turn sharp out of the lot I notice the cap has fallen off. So we get to Oakdale Tractor Supply and they have the dust caps. I buy 2 at 3 times the cost of my other sources. But they had them. Plus a roll of duct tape. Al fished around the hub looking for a rock or something. Thought I might have found some debris. So I put the new cap on and wrapped it with duct tape. We arrived at Moss landing and the dust cap was still there. Yes, being held in place by the duct tape-it fixes everything. Ready to head home Al hammers cap back on tight. When we got home the cap was still there but only because of the tape.

So the next weekend I park my boat at my neighbors level parking off the street. Jack up the trailer. The wheel and hub are sloppy on the spindle. So I pull the hub. Grease seal falls out with main bearing. Also when I removed the castle nut the keeper washer was worn and deformed. I was a short trip from complete bearing failure. Upon inspection the spindle was fine. The bearings looked good. The bearing races had scoring marks. So new bearing and races. Put it back together. No wobble in the wheel. Put a new dust cap on with dimples and a slight bit of loctite. Drove around the block. Still there. Put Aurora away ready for our next adventure. So you see my trailer kept saying there is something wrong. Don't just duct tape it.

PS. I had serviced both hubs last winter with new bearings and races. But on the slope of my driveway. Thank you for the safe level workspace Ed.

Kevin Crowder



I took a crash course in sailboat racing this year. The Reader's Digest condensed version looks like this:  
"They're draining Huntington Lake!"

"Oh no! Where will we have the Cruiser Challenge?"

Time passes. Newsletter deadline nears.

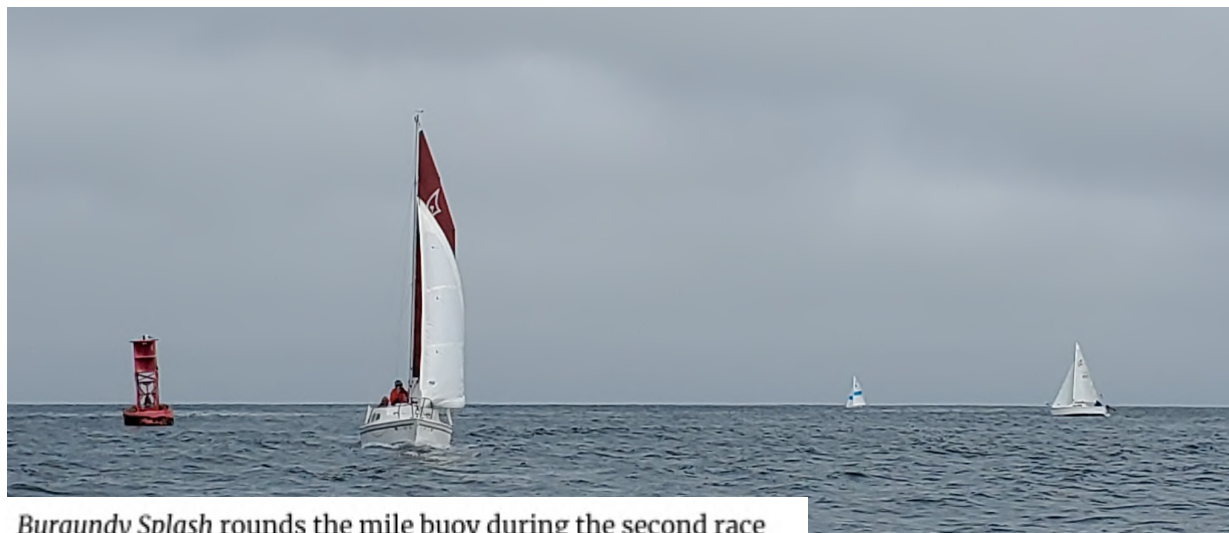
Me: "So Phil, I could call the Monterey Harbormaster and see if they can help us that weekend."

Phil: "Thank you, Sharon, for taking on the Cruiser Challenge."

There were more words involved, but that's my basic recollection.

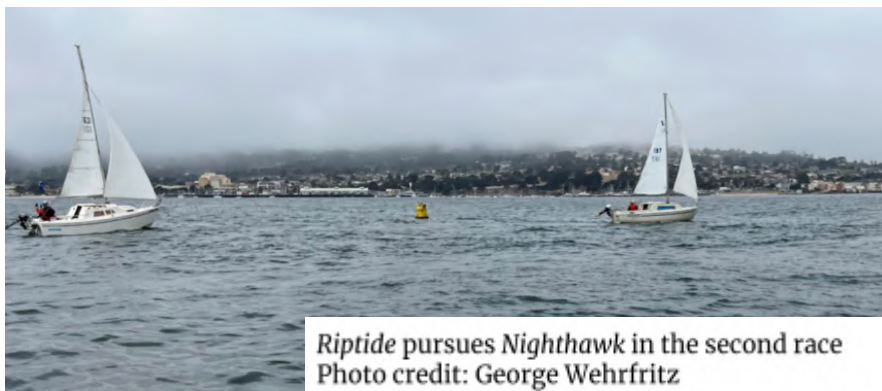
During our July trip, we laid out the course—you know the course—we've done the course for years. Start down by the Tides motel. Go around the Mile buoy. Finish by the Commercial Wharf. We've sailed it many times and it generally has an upwind leg to the mile buoy which may take several tacks, followed by a downwind leg to the finish—usually wing and wing.

So that was the plan. We wanted to make things as simple and informal as possible—no need for a Race Committee or a Committee Boat. We tested the "take a picture" start and finish plan and it seemed to work—mostly. Our original thought was to take a photo of the buoy with something else lined up in the background. That turned out to be far more difficult than we thought, so it turned into "just get close and take a picture as you go by." We also thought, originally, that people might want to start and finish the course at whatever time they chose, but at the skipper's meeting, we decided it would be more fun to all gather around at a given time and start together-ish so that it would feel more like a race. We would still do the photo start and finish though. (Continued next page)





What we didn't count on was the wind. It was blowing just fine, but rather than its usual westerly direction, it had swung more to the south. It was the first time I've ever seen it where you could simply head directly towards the mile buoy—no tacking necessary. And instead of having that great downwind leg to the finish, we found ourselves on more of a close reach. We had inadvertently created a drag race. It was still a lot of fun. We ran the course two times and there was a little bit of strategy involved since the wind gets silly right at the mile buoy and tends to shift ahead forcing you farther and farther away from the mark. The funny thing was that it did this at the finish buoy too, only there it would force you to the wrong side and you would have to tack to make the rounding.



*Riptide pursues Nighthawk in the second race*  
Photo credit: George Wehrfritz

After watching Ron on the first race, we decided the trick was to head inside the lay line so you had room to fall off before rounding the mile buoy. This kept you closer to the buoy so you didn't overshoot too much. The tactic on the next leg was to stay high so you could make the finish buoy without having to tack. With the wind moving ahead as you closed in on the mark, if you took the straight line route you'd end up too low.

As we neared the finish mark *Napili Breeze* was ahead but looked to possibly be too low. We were on a higher course and knew if we could make the mark without having to tack we would cross in first. We played every crazy gust and pinched. And pinched a bit more. We really thought they were going to be able to slip inside and we tried to stay wide in case they made it, but at the last second, they tacked and ducked behind us and we crossed the line first.

But that was it. The whole "tactical advantage" was whether or not you were able to stay high and make nice clean roundings. There were no tacking duels, no going inside vs going outside, no cranking up the centerboard and poling out the jib for that extra little ounce of speed. And that, Virginia, is why *real* sailboat racers, *serious* sailboat racers, who know what flag signals mean and don't need someone to say "go" on the VHF, don't announce the course until they are out on the water and can check to see which way the wind is blowing that day.

After the racing finished, the group convened on the docks and we took down everybody's start and finish times. One lesson learned was to state, before any racing, what the winning criteria would be. We decided at the

skipper's meeting that the fastest single round would determine the placings. We didn't think about breaking ties, so...oops? As you can see by the times, the second round was much faster than the first and the times for each round were very close. After a round or two of gin and tonics, we got curious about how using overall time would have changed things and now Phil gets to brag about how he really won on overall time. If we had had a true upwind/downwind course, the times would have been more spread out and the results might have been more interesting. (Continued next page)



*George Wehrfritz finishes on Betty Sparrow*





Boat	Make	Class	Round 1	Round 2	Place
<i>She Said No</i> Ron Dietel	Precision 165	Medium	39 min	34 min	1st
<i>Burgundy Splash</i> Mike Swartz and Robert Harrison	Potter 19	Medium	54 min	36 min	2nd
<i>Betty Sparrow</i> George Wehrfritz	Sparrow 16	Medium	50 min	38 min	3rd (tie)
<i>Riptide</i> Eric and Evan Zilbert	Potter 19	Medium	42 min	38 min	3rd (tie)
<i>Nighthawk</i> David and Sharon Soule'	Balboa 21	Large	42 min	31 min	1st
<i>Napili Breeze</i> Phil Marcelis and Alan Koepf	Santana 2023	Large	40 min	32 min	2nd
<i>Aurora</i> Kevin Crowder and Alan Roberts	Compac 19	Did not race			

Still, it was fun to argue and rehash it all in true Potter Yachter fashion. Awards (lovely printed certificates—we went all out here!) were handed out. Sometime during our dock party, Kevin and Al finally made it in from Moss Landing on *Aurora*. With the crazy wind direction, Kevin announced that they were “blown halfway to Santa Cruz” before making any progress towards Monterey. After Happy Hour, we had dinner at the pub followed by a good time wandering around looking at all of the interesting cars (it was car week) and getting ice cream on the pier.



Happy hour crew arguing over finish times



Cars on the plaza

## Report: NOT Tomales

Story and photos by: Eric Zilbert



Jon Barber and Goose Gossman on Ol' 44

Well, this year's Tomales Bay sail fell prey to two of my favorite sailing maxims: "Wait for weather," and "All departures are voluntary, all returns mandatory." The last time we ventured out on a September weekend to enjoy Tomales, complete mayhem ensued. Only two boats participated (Jim Hunt's *Blue Moon*, and my boat, *Riptide*). The wind and waves were so bad on Saturday morning I did not even launch. Jim came in with an injured Kevin Crowder (shoulder), and we decided to abandon the sail and head for my place in Davis.

This all came flooding back to me as I monitored the weather leading up to the weekend of Sept. 17-18. By Thursday morning the situation was clear: Winds to 20, gusts up to 35 mph. Looking at the forecasts for possible alternative spots, Richmond and the east bay looked like good sailing, at least until Saturday evening. I posted the cancellation of the Tomales trip on the Trailer Sailer forum and suggested a change to a Friday/Saturday sail out of Richmond. Four boats showed up. Ed Hultgren in *Alma Stenbaum*, Mark Sabin with *Half Fool*, John Barber with *Old 44*, and myself in *Riptide*. Goose Gossman came over from Benicia on Saturday to crew for me, but wound up crewing for John instead.



Mark Sabin on Half Fool

On Friday we headed out at about 11:00. The wind in the Potrero Reach was just about perfect, around 12 knots. With the flat sea state behind the jetty, the boats moved along nicely. Out in the bay it was pretty choppy. I elected to sail toward Angel Island, directly upwind. The sailing was good behind the island, though bumpy. To the south going into the slot between Alcatraz and Angel Island, the wind and waves picked up substantially, making for uncomfortable sailing. Rather than reef, I elected to stay behind the Island and eventually reached it. Mark crossed the slot and headed for Treasure Island with a reef in his sail. He said it was a challenging trip, and he took a wave through a port, dousing his bunk in the process. (Continued next page)



Ed pretty much did the same course I did, though he spent some time in Racoon Strait.

We all headed in around 4 and found that John had arrived. We had dinner on shore at Anh Vietnamese restaurant which never disappoints.

The next day we headed out again in the morning around 9:30. Conditions were better than on Friday with less wind and chop. We easily made it over to Angel Island and proceeded to Racoon Strait to check out the possibility of a circumnavigation. As we entered the strait we were becalmed. I fooled around for about 10 minutes

before starting the motor. It was frustrating because you could see the wind only a hundred meters away, but there was no getting through under sail. The west side of the island was reasonable in terms of wind and waves, and there were a lot of boats racing, including lots of kids in tiny prams and sloops. We managed not to mow anyone down, and all four boats made it around safely. I had a great run back to Richmond (hit 6.8 knots on the GPS). We had a short dock party, then packed up and pulled out by 3 as the clouds gathered and the wind increased. I was the last one out at 4:00.



Overall, it was a very pleasant outing. Both the time on the water and on the dock were great fun. I really appreciate how easy it is to arrange for a guest berth at Richmond, and like the protection of the outer and inner harbors when one is concerned things could get nasty. Hopefully, we can do Tomales another day! — 🚩

### Richmond (Not Tamales) 2022

#### Attendees:

- Eric Zilbert - *Riptide*, WWP 19
- Jon Barber - *Ol'44*, Montgomery 17
- Ed Hultgren - *Alma Stenbom*, Monty 17
- Mark Sabin - *Half Fool*, Compac 16

### Officer's Club

Commodore:  
Phil Marcelis  
Catalina 22, *Merri Time*

Vice-Commodore:  
Jon Barber  
Montgomery 17, *Ol' 44*

Newsletter Editor:  
Sharon Soule'  
Balboa 21, *Nighthawk*

P-15 Fleet Captain:  
David Bacon  
P-15, #2636, *Ah Tiller the Fun*

P-19 Fleet Captain:  
Eric Zilbert  
P-19, #629, *Riptide*

Webmaster:  
Phil Marcelis

Secretary/Treasurer:  
Jim "Goose" Gossman  
P-19 *Regale*

Website:  
[www.potter-yachters.org](http://www.potter-yachters.org)

Facebook:  
[PotterYachters](https://www.facebook.com/PotterYachters)



'Goose' Gossman  
865 West I Street  
Benicia, CA 94510

## 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

