



# The Potter Yachter

Newsletter of the Northern California West Wight Potter Club

Sept/Oct 2002

## SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE

### CRUISER CHALLENGE

### HAWAII IN A P19

### Sailing Calendar

**September 14-15:**  
Tomales Bay

**September 28 (Launch 10:00 AM):**  
Richmond Marina to Angel Is.

**October 5-6:**  
Monterey Bay

**November:**  
To Be Decided

## TOMALES BAY SEPT. 14-15

### Launching

We will be launching from the ramp at Miller County Park near Nicks Cove, located on the east side of Tomales Bay, off Highway 1, north of the town of Marshall. The fee is \$5.00 to launch plus \$5.00 for overnight parking. The tides are forgiving on this weekend so we should have little difficulty with the at times notoriously shallow ramp. We will be launching in the morning on Saturday, and those interested in getting together for a pot-luck dinner should plan to meet at Marshall Beach at about 5:00 p.m. We can have a fire,

so a barbecue is possible. Marshall Beach and the other camping beaches have pit-toilets. Communicate on VHS Ch. 72.

NOTE: You **MUST** have a PORT-A-POTTY on board for over night stays on Tomales Bay. I have been inspected by the rangers previously.

### Accommodations

Boaters may anchor out, or camp on the beaches north of Marshall Beach

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## MONTEREY BAY OCTOBER 5—6

Monterey Bay is my *favorite* sailing destination in Northern California, because of its combination of stunning scenery, sunshine, warm wind (usually less than on cold and blustery SF Bay, but you may still need to reef and reduce headsail), smooth seas (definitely smoother than SF Bay's sometimes horrendous chop!), and choice of dining, art, museums, etc, all within walking distance of the Marina.

You can arrive at anytime, but the later you arrive, the more likely that you'll have to park in the overflow parking lot rather than right near the Monterey Marina Ramp. We suggest you arrive before 9 am, so you're on the water by 10:30 or so.

When you arrive, register at the Harbormaster's office for a slip (\$15 last year), dock key (\$25 deposit required) and overnight parking (\$15 last year).

Be sure to return the key by 5 pm on Sunday if you want your deposit back.

It's a VERY good idea to have a chart of Monterey Bay. If you don't already have one, plan to arrive a half hour early, so you can walk to the nearby fishing supply shop to buy one.

The less skilled skippers will want to stay "inside" Pinos Point; the rollers are typically 3-4 feet high inside the Point, whereas they might be 5-8 feet past the Point. The waves on Monterey Bay are usually very round and gentle, with a long period between them, and it's FUN to sail in them.

-- Judy Blumhorst

PLEASE RSVP BY SEPT. 16 TO  
COMMODORE JUDY B [Commo-  
dore@potter-yachters.org](mailto:Commodore@potter-yachters.org) or 925 997

0786 IF YOU WANT A RESERVED SLIP. Please give your dates of arrival and departure, Boat name, and your Boat model (e.g. Potter 19 or whatever).

Directions from Highway #1 (North):

1. Take Del Monte Ave exit (to Monterey/Pacific Grove).
2. Continue on Del Monte Ave. Turn right at the fifth stop light, onto Monterey Wharf #2.

Directions from Highway #1 (South)

1. Take Casa Verde Ave exit.
2. Turn left at bottom of ramp (onto Casa Verde Ave) and go under the freeway overpass.
3. Turn left at the first stop light, onto Del Monte Ave.
4. Turn right at fourth stop light, onto Monterey Wharf #2.

Park in the public lot (left turn) just prior to driving onto the actual wharf .

## CHUBBY COMMUTES TO HAWAII: A TECHNICAL DISCUSSION

By Bill Teplow



### EDITOR'S NOTE:

Bill Teplow sailed his WW Potter 19 "Chubby", from Berkeley, CA to Hilo, HA, launching on July 21 and arriving 24 days and 2142 nautical miles later on August 14.

### From Dream to Plan

As a consulting exploration geologist, my work life tends to consist of periods of intense work punctuated by periods of intense unemployment. True to form, I completed my last work assignment on July 8<sup>th</sup> and I found myself with a month and a half of enforced leisure before my next gig. Since the coming job was located on the Big Island of Hawaii, an old fantasy of mine started to materialize as an actual plan. In early July, while looking at my West Wight Potter 19 "Chubby" sitting jauntily at her berth at the Berkeley Marina, tugging at her dock lines and proudly showing off her new bottom paint, it dawned on me that I could use her to commute to my next job. On July 9<sup>th</sup> I started serious preparations for the trip.

Just as I was getting heavily into the outfitting, my client on the Big Island called and asked me to show up on July 16<sup>th</sup> at a coordinating meeting for the project startup. I flew over to Hilo a day early and went straight to Radio Bay, the small boat harbor located in the far eastern corner of Hilo Bay, tucked in behind the big commercial docks. I chatted with the very friendly and accommodating Harbor Master's staff and got all the information needed for proper check-in and for renting a space at the harbor. I also got a chance to see the particular style of anchoring and stern tie that is used at the 10' high cement sea wall. The daily fee for keeping Chubby at Radio Bay is \$8.50. There is a 30 day limit that can be extended if there is room. When I arrived four weeks later in Chubby, there were two boats tied up, leaving room for perhaps 15 more, so space was not an issue. There is a locked restroom with shower at the dock for the exclusive use of cruisers, and a market and laundromat one block away. The friendly atmosphere and secure tie-up for my destination port gave me the final push to commit to the voyage.

Upon return home to Oakland I found myself with four days to make the final preparations for the trip. I had committed myself to a July 21 departure which was the latest possible date that would assure my arrival in Hilo prior to start of work. Also that date had a mild afternoon ebb to aid my escape. With such a short period of time to prepare the boat, things got pretty hectic. But when it came time to push back from the dock, Chubby was pretty well prepared and upon arriving in Hilo, I was still of the same opinion.

### To Reality

The following is a discussion of the technical aspects of preparing Chubby and sailing her from Berkeley, California to Hilo, Hawaii. The actual distance sailed was 2142 nautical miles and the voyage took 24 days, almost to the minute, to complete. The voyage in general went very smoothly with no

## The Officer's Club

### Commodore:

Judy Blumhorst  
228 La Pera Circle  
Danville, CA 94526  
(925) 820-0800  
[Commodore@potter-yachters.org](mailto:Commodore@potter-yachters.org)  
P-19 #266, *Redwing*

### Vice-Commodore:

Bruce Hood  
1418 Scottsdale Court  
Chico, CA 95926-7739  
(530) 894-7343  
[vice-commodore@potter-yachters.org](mailto:vice-commodore@potter-yachters.org)  
P19 #1176, *Catrina*

### P19 Fleet Captain:

Jerry Barrilleaux  
2724 Richard Ave.  
Concord, CA 94520  
(925) 685-4577  
[P19captain@potter-yachters.org](mailto:P19captain@potter-yachters.org)  
P15 #564 Breezy, HMS18 #48, *Sunshine*

### P15 Fleet Captain:

Mike Westfield  
33 Union Sq. #1212  
Union City, CA 94587  
(510) 675-0994  
[P15captain@potter-yachters.org](mailto:P15captain@potter-yachters.org)  
P15 #2248, *Watertoy*

### Secretary/Treasurer:

Greg Yu  
33855 Juliet Circle  
Fremont, CA 94555  
(510) 790-1228  
[Secretary@potter-yachters.org](mailto:Secretary@potter-yachters.org)  
HMS18 #63, *Sampan*

### Webmaster:

Kent Crispin  
[Webmaster@potter-yachters.org](mailto:Webmaster@potter-yachters.org)  
P19 #855, *Peregrine*

### Historian:

Dory Taylor  
PO Box 6443  
San Jose, CA 95150  
(408) 971-8016  
[Historian@potter-yachters.org](mailto:Historian@potter-yachters.org)  
MKII #610, *Petite Liege*

### Newsletter Editor:

David Blumhorst  
(925) 820-0800  
[Editor@potter-yachters.org](mailto:Editor@potter-yachters.org)  
P19 #266, *Redwing*

### Education Captain:

David Meredith  
877 N. Rancho Road  
El Sobrante, CA 94803  
(510) 223-6291  
[Education@potter-yachters.org](mailto:Education@potter-yachters.org)  
P15 #1060, *X(plore)*

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on the west side of the bay (a boat in camping permit must be obtained from the Bear Valley Visitor Center near Olema on the south end of the park). There are no car camping areas in the park, but there is a private campground/trailer park near Olema (no access to water). You can stay and launch at the Golden Hinde Inn and Marina (415-669-1389) located at the very south end of the bay on Sir Francis Drake Blvd., rooms range from \$60-\$150 per night. The ramp and marina should be serviceable on this weekend.

Good anchorages are at White Gulch, Pelican Point, Tomales beach and to the south of Marshall Beach. The bottom is sand and mud. I think I will probably anchor out in the cove south of Marshall Beach unless the wind is from the south. In that case I will probably elect White Gulch. Each of these spots can handle quite a few boats if they all cooperate. White Gulch does not have a toilet as I remember. If Lisa can come (she may have work) she will likely want to stay on shore. We would then go somewhere close to Marshall Beach. South of Marshall the chance of grounding is pretty good, especially along the eastern shore. The tide will be good so people will likely be able to sail all the way down to Inverness (usually a run with the prevailing NW wind), but tacking back up is not advised. Better to motor up to Marshall and then start sailing again.

Because it is an enclosed bay the swell tends to be minimal. There can be whitecaps if the wind blows hard from the north or south. Generally there is a steady 10-15 knots. The south end can be totally calm (as well as very shallow), so the better

sailing is toward the north. It is not a difficult place to sail, though people should not attempt to go out of the Bay and out into the Pacific. Huge sleeper waves from across the Pacific have been known to break on the entrance bar. Jerry B. told me about a Potter that was lost in this area many years ago. It is also very shallow to the north and west of Hog Island.

The most difficult thing is probably anchoring/beaching. The tides are good on this weekend so people are unlikely to get stranded. The lack of a marina means having to use the pit toilets or on-board facilities. Overall it is nice sailing.

### Dining

There are a number of restaurants on Hwy 1 south of Miller Park (the restaurant at Nicks Cove was closed when I was there in April). It is possible to dock and dine in Marshall, though I have never done so. The restaurant, Barnaby's, at the Golden Hinde is only open for dinner, and I don't think you are supposed to dock in the Marina unless you are renting a slip. I generally treat a trip to Tomales Bay as a camping trip.

### Directions:

You can get to the ramp on HWY 1 from either the North or South. The roads in this area tend to be winding and narrow. Also somewhat steep in places.

From the south:

If you are going directly to the ramp, go up 101 to Novato, Take Novato Boulevard to Point Reyes-Petaluma road. Turn right and go about ½ mile to Wilson Hill Road. Turn left and proceed to Marshall-Petaluma road. Turn right and proceed to HWY 1. Go North on 1 to Miller Park.

If you want to go to the Bear Valley Visitor Center, Olema, or Inverness (Golden Hinde), take Sir Francis Drake Boulevard from 101 to Olema. Turn right on Hwy 1, then left on Bear Valley Road. The Visitor Center is on the left.

From the north:

Get off at Petaluma on Chileno Valley Road. This road turns into Marshall-Petaluma Road and you can go out to HWY 1, then north to Miller Park. If you want to go to the visitors center, take Point Reyes-Petaluma Road from Petaluma to HWY 1. Turn left on 1 and go through Point Reyes Station. Turn Right on Sir Francis Drake Blvd., then left on Bear Valley Road. The Visitor Center will be on your right.

From the Visitor Center To back to HWY 1 and proceed north to Miller park.

Email ([ezilbert@cde.ca.gov](mailto:ezilbert@cde.ca.gov)) or call to let me know if you plan to attend. – Eric Zilbert, p-19 #621, "Riptide", Davis, not-by-the-sea, California.

For more information you can call:

Eric Zilbert: 530-757-6783

Miller County Park: 415 499-6387

Golden Hinde Inn and Marina:  
415-669-1389

Bear Valley Visitor Center:  
415-663-1092

Recorded Weather & Information:  
415-663-9029

## CHUBBY COMMUTES TO HAWAII: A TECHNICAL DISCUSSION

major mishaps. I arrived in Hilo feeling fit, rested and happy. For those who enjoy reading about ordeals at sea, I am sorry to disappoint. Nothing that was supplied by International Marine, the Potter manufacturer, broke during the voyage. Chubby generally behaved quite well in the open ocean and the trade winds even though she is designed to be a trailer sailor and coastal pocket cruiser. I want to stress that I do not want this article or my generally pleasant experience in sailing Chubby to Hawaii to be construed as an endorsement for using the Potter 19 as a blue water cruiser. It was designed to be a safe and competent trailerable coastal pocket cruiser and it fulfills its stated goals admirably.

### Safety

Of the modifications I made to the otherwise stock Potter 19, most were aimed at increasing the margin of safety for this already safe and stable design. In order to increase the rate of drainage of the cockpit in case Chubby was pooped, I added two additional 1-1/4" diameter cockpit drains located just above the cockpit floor at the base of the transom. I also raised the overall freeboard of the cabin by installing a hinged and latched lower companionway door. Weather stripping for the door made a water-tight seal. This increased the cabin freeboard by about 8" and raised it above the height of the transom. Theoretically this would allow the clearing of water from the cockpit while preventing significant volumes of water from spilling into the cabin.

I installed two types of jack lines. I ran a conventional nylon webbing jackline around the perimeter of boat and anchored them through the fore and aft pairs of deck cleats. The jackline was used as an anchor for my tether and harness. The perimeter arrangement allowed me to clip into the jackline in the cockpit and then go to the foredeck for headsail changes in my usual manner which was to swing outboard of the shrouds. If I got bucked off the foredeck, I would theoretically slide along the jackline to the stern and would be able to climb aboard the boat using the swim ladder. A critical extra bit of safety equipment for this jackline system was the tiller pilot trip line. It appeared to me that if Chubby was gurgling along at 5 kts and I was being towed at the end of my tether, it might be very difficult to pull myself up to the swim ladder against the flow, even if the distance was only the 5 or 6 foot length of the tether. I therefore rigged a small block attached to the tiller just above the tiller pilot armature. I then ran a 3/16" line from the armature, through the block and over the transom. The line trailed astern to a distance of about 8 feet. A light tug on the line would release the tiller pilot and allow Chubby to round up and stop, giving me time to grab the swim ladder and get on board. The system remains untested. Incidentally, I wore the harness and tether at all times while in the cockpit and on the foredeck. This was one of two of my wife Naomi's conditions for allowing me to take the voyage. The other condition was to carry an EPIRB.

I ran two additional jacklines which were specifically for securing cargo. These jacklines were made of 1/8" 7X19 stainless cable. One was run around the inside perimeter of the cabin sole and was secured to the storage compartment walls with through-bolted U-bolts using backing plates. The heaviest cargo loads including the generator, water bottles and inflatable kayak were secured to the cabin sole by means of the interior jackline using heavy-duty nylon webbing and cam locks. The webbing which passed over the top of the keel served as a backup to the factory installed keel hold-down fittings which keep the keel in place in the event of capsizing. The hatches for the storage compartments were also secured to the interior jackline to prevent scattering of the cabinet contents in the event of a knockdown or roll.

All the canned goods were stored in plastic tubs in the storage compartments. They were secured to the bottom of the hull by wedging empty water bottles and extra life jackets in the space between the tubs and the top of the storage bins. The resulting stowage and tie-down system assured that even if Chubby turned turtle, all the objects of significant weight stowed inside the cabin could not be dislodged from their proper location.

A similar cable jackline was installed around the perimeter of the cockpit sole. This was used to secure the tanks for the outboard and generator fuel. All the fuel was stored in the cockpit so that any spillage could be drained and would not fill the cabin with fumes.

Chubby's flotation capacity was enhanced to compensate for the added load. This was done as mentioned above by stuffing the void spaces in the storage bins with empty one-gallon water bottles. I also carried inflatable flotation bags with



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several hundred pounds of buoyancy and a large capacity air pump so that they could be filled in a matter of minutes.

For extreme emergency situations I carried an EPIRB with built-in GPS and a complete suite of handheld flares and a flare gun. I also carried two handheld VHF radios in addition to the fixed 25-watt unit. Rounding out the safety equipment was an offshore type first aid kit.

### **Navigation**

My primary navigation tool was a Garmin 12XL handheld GPS. I had an identical unit in reserve, stored in a waterproof container. Also, I carried a Garmin 76 which served in lieu of a printed light list. All three units were programmed prior to departure with the Jimmy Cornell route discussed later on and a few critical waypoints for the departure from the Golden Gate and for the approach to Hilo Bay. I kept a paper chart of the entire voyage on which was plotted each noon position. I made a portable nav station for the paper maps by sandwiching them between two pieces of 20"X24" Plexiglas.

I also took a sextant, and during the initial calm periods that plagued the first half of the voyage, I learned and practiced celestial navigation. By the time I got to the trade winds, I was able to get a decent position using sun sights. In the trade winds the sights were much more difficult because of Chubby's sharp motion caused by the short, steep following seas. However, even then I was able to get sufficient accuracy of +/- 2 to 3 miles, which was plenty good enough to hit the Big Island from 1000 miles out.

### **Electrical**

Chubby's electrical system was powered by two group 24 12V batteries which were original equipment when I bought the boat. The batteries were used primarily to power the tiller pilot. The batteries were charged for about 1 hour daily using a Honda EU 1000 gasoline generator coupled with a 3-stage battery charger. The generator burned 1-1/2 gallons of gas in 24 days. I had started with a total 4 gallons of gas reserved for the generator. Other than the tiller pilot, there were no significant electrical loads placed on the batteries. There was no backup power source for charging the batteries.

### **Electronics**

Electronics consisted of a 25-watt VHF radio with a cabin mounted antenna. Two contacts were made with passing ships using the VHF, one on day 10 and one on day 21. In each case I was able to have a fax sent to Naomi with my position, condition, and my ETA in Hilo. I also carried a short wave receiver with SSB capability but did not have much luck receiving any meaningful broadcasts. Wind speed was measured using a handheld wind meter.

### **Provisioning**

I took 40 days worth of food and water. Generally I relied on canned goods to supply the bulk of my meals. Each can was protected in double Ziplock bags to prevent rusting. Pinhole leaks in cans caused by rust and corrosion can be lethal to the unsuspecting mariner. I used a small camp stove to heat the canned meals. The stove I used was suspended from the cabin ceiling by 4 light cables. Pots were locked onto the stove using the suspension cables and a sliding sleeve. In addition to the normal stews and chillis, I brought a lot of ready-to-eat stuff like peanut butter, crackers, roasted almonds and energy bars. This was kept readily within reach so I would have a rich source of calories during periods of high wind and waves that might prevent me from cooking. That particular scenario never developed during the trip. Even in 16-18 kt trade winds, I was easily able to prepare hot meals.

I also brought considerable fresh food including apples, peaches, bananas, bread, cheese, and olives. The bread and cheese lasted two weeks, the apples lasted 20 days and the olives stayed good for the duration.

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I started the voyage with 26 gallons of water and arrived in Hilo with 12 gallons remaining. That works out to a consumption rate of a little over 2 quarts of water per day. In actuality, I drank desalinated water during two days of calm so my per-day consumption of bottled water was closer to 3 quarts per day. I carried a PUR Survivor 35 reverse osmosis, hand-pumped water maker. I was able to make a gallon of drinking water in 45 minutes. I drank the heinous stuff when becalmed because I felt uncomfortable consuming my bottled water when we were not making any progress. The bottled water was purchased in square shaped 1-gallon plastic bottles. This shape has the advantage of packing tightly and not rolling with the motion of the boat. Also, the carrying handles on each bottle facilitate tying the bottles down to the cabin sole. It is possible to pack 15 one-gallon bottles into the space between the cabin sole and the cockpit sole just aft of the companionway.

The total weight of consumables was probably around 320 pounds. Of that, 216 pounds was water and the remainder canned and dry foods. With 40 days of food and water, Chubby was far from overloaded. She felt lively and easily achieved hull speed in any wind over 12 kts even the first day when carrying her full load.

### Spare Parts, Miscellaneous Equipment and Tools

I carried the following spare parts, tools and other odds and ends:

1. Prop for the motor.
2. Wire rope along with a swaging tool, thimbles and collars to replace the shrouds and stays if needed.
3. Rudder and tiller. The spare rudder was the original folding rudder that came with the boat which stores easily in the quarter berth when disassembled.
4. Spare boom.
5. Spare gooseneck (I've broken two in the last 3 years).
6. Duplicates of each headsail and main.
7. Storm trysail and storm jib.
8. Spare Raytheon ST 2000 tiller pilot
9. Tool bag with hacksaw, bolt cutter, hand drill, rivet gun, grommet kit and assorted hand tools and fasteners.
10. 4' X 6' piece of hypolon for use as a collision mat.
11. Spare pins for all rigging attachments.
12. Two spare handheld GPS units.
13. Two spare handheld VHF radios.
14. Inflatable kayak
15. Two 150' nylon warps for streaming during heavy weather.
16. Two anchors with chains and rodes.

### Routing and Weather

Starting a week before the planned departure, I checked the weather maps two or three times a day. Fortunately, the Pacific Cup race was being run during the week prior to my departure and the race website gave very valuable information about the routes and relative wind strengths. The early starters in the race were running at or near record paces which indicated that the normal wind patterns were well-established.

It appeared to my novice weather eye that the East Pacific High was poorly formed in June and early July, but further into July the classic summer wind pattern emerged and the early starting Pacific Cup racers made good use of it. Based on the return of the normal winds, I chose the standard route as described in Jimmy Cornell's *World Cruising Routes* and programmed that route into my GPS.

Unfortunately, two days before my departure, the West Coast weather pattern deteriorated with the westward migration

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of a low pressure system which is normally parked over the Nevada desert during the summer months. This low herniated westward and established itself just off the coast stretching from Santa Barbara to San Francisco. It brought with it light and variable southwesterlies. In other words, for the first three days of the voyage after leaving the Golden Gate, I had light winds on the nose or no wind at all. The NOAA weather reports promised that the low pressure would dissipate by the July 24, three days after my departure. In the meantime I found myself either beating toward Hilo or mired in glassy flat calms. My strategy at this point was to tack WNW and look for the normal northwesterlies farther off the coast. This was a departure from my original plan of taking a southerly course for the first three days in lieu of a shake-down cruise.

The planned shakedown which was to take place a week before my departure to Hawaii, had to be scrapped because of various work commitments. I was left with only a week to prepare and provision the boat but no time to do an offshore shakedown. Taking the southerly line would have allowed me to return to any number of Southern California ports on a beam reach in the event that I did not like the way Chubby or her skipper were behaving after three to five days at sea. After three days of foul wind or no wind, I was well to the north of the Jimmy Cornell route. But finally the northwesterlies started to fill in and I was able to ease the sheets and make some southing. During day 5 Chubby ran off 139 nm bearing SSW which put us within 15 miles of the original planned route. At that point I committed mentally to Hilo as my final destination even though I still had 2 days of sailing before I passed my original point of no return. Beyond the point of no return, which I defined for myself as 30 N, 130 W, I would have had to cross the main hurricane corridor out of Mexico in order to reach Turtle Bay or Cabo San Lucas and I did not consider that a feasible option. Five days later, my assumption proved to be very correct as the benign remnants of Hurricane Elida crossed my outbound path precisely at that location. Had I diverted southeastward at day 5, I might have run into 30 or 40 kt winds from the death throes of Elida, which on July 24 was a very proud category 5 hurricane with 140 kt winds about 1000 miles to the southeast.

My first hint of a possible hurricane came on day 8 when I found myself becalmed for 12 hours in an area where the pilot charts shows a 2% probability of calms. This was followed by a rapidly dropping barometer from 1016 to 1011 in one night and a cross swell coming out of the SE. This swell combining with the normal swell from the north produced a very uncomfortable, confused sea. On day 10 I hailed the tanker Selendang Ratna out of Manzanillo, Mexico bound for Korea. The officer of the watch asked me if I had been hit by the hurricane. My reply was "What hurricane?" He gave me the last plotted position of Elida, her course and speed. The officer complained about getting hammered by high seas and winds a couple of days earlier. After hearing that and plotting the last position of Elida, I stopped complaining to myself about the calms I was encountering. The officer of the watch was able to send a fax for me to Naomi, in which I gave my ETA in Hilo as 15 days hence. That turned out to be a pretty good guess because ultimately I arrived in Hilo from that position in 14 days.

As far as heavy weather is concerned, Chubby was never challenged. Aside from the 25 kts. which Chubby beat through to exit the Gate, no winds over 20 kts were encountered during the entire voyage. The trade winds averaged 12-16 knots (Force 4) just as advertised on the Pilot Chart for August. Seas averaged 4-8 feet with abundant whitecaps. The trade wind swell tended to be relatively steep with a short wave length. The wave pattern almost always consisted of two wave trains, a dominant one coming from the NE and a smaller one caused by the local squall winds that came out of the east. This crossing pattern produced a relatively sharp and chaotic motion for Chubby. The steep quartering sea tended to tip Chubby back to windward just as the crest of each wave passed. This tipping resulted in a stiff bounding of the flat rear quarter. This was probably the most uncomfortable of Chubby's open ocean hull characteristics. On the other hand, once Chubby left the Golden Gate, she never took any significant spray into the cockpit in the remaining 2100 miles of sailing. My clothes, the cabin, its contents, and I arrived completely dry in Hilo which was a welcome departure from the soggy mess that I imagined the voyage might be. Clearly my imagination was traumatized by three wet, cold years of sailing in the Slot.

The final weather insult came at a distance of 12 miles outside Hilo Bay. At that point just before dawn, the trade winds quit and a land breeze sprung up at 12 kts on the nose coming right up the rhumbline. That, combined with a strong current setting Chubby north along the Hamakua Coast, meant that after 2135 miles of sailing and with the safe harbor in sight, we were starting to lose ground. By then I had contacted Naomi by cell phone and found out that, instead of being

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at home, she was waiting for me in Hilo. Armed with the happy news, I did not hesitate to mix up a batch of two stroke gas using the gas reserved for the generator. I topped off the outboard tank and started bashing into the chop at full throttle. The wind waves from the land breeze were coming out directly opposed to the incoming trade wind swell, thereby creating a nasty standing chop. Powering in against the chop, wind and foul current, I could only make 3.5 knots until we got inside the breakwater. Within three hours though, I was standing on the dock holding Naomi in my arms, or more correctly she was holding me up, while my wobbly sea legs tried to get accustomed to the concrete.

### Performance, Sails and Self Steering

When there was any kind of steady wind at 8 kts or higher, anywhere beyond 60 degrees off the bow, Chubby would easily do over 100 miles a day. Her two best days were 139 and 122 nm and she ran off a total of 13 days of over 100 nm out of the 24-day voyage. Dead calms made up 94 hours or nearly four days of the voyage. All speeds and distances run were enhanced by the constant 0.5 kt current that runs right down the rhumbline to Hilo. Two boats out of San Francisco Bay, a Columbia 8.7m *Alchemy* and an Islander 28 *Kiss*, had preceded Chubby to Radio Bay by a few days. Their passage times were 19 and 20 days respectively. Chubby, with her 16' water line, had nothing to be ashamed about for her 24 day passage.

I ran two basic sail configurations for the downwind portions of the voyage. Initially in the lighter trade winds, especially in the absence of squalls, I ran a pair of jibs or genoas, wing and wing, hanked onto the forestay and poled out. With the pair of winged-out genoas Chubby would make 2-3 kts in barely perceptible zephyrs. This configuration salvaged a few miles out of otherwise abysmal light-air days. Rigging the two headsails was accomplished by using a short pendant at the tack of one headsail to create an offset between the pairs of hanks. The two heads were joined with about 8" of 1/4" line. The jib halyard was shackled to this line which served to evenly luff tension in both headsails. I ran a preventer on both whisker poles when running the genoas because if one went aback, it would break the whisker pole fitting mounted on the mast. The smaller jibs did not require the preventers when winged out. The advantage of the winged-out jib configuration is that it tended to track straighter going dead down wind and therefore it put a minimum stress on the tiller pilot.

I used the more conventional dead-down setup of poled-out jib and prevented mainsail in the latter part of the trade wind segment. Due to squall activity and the accompanying wind shifts, I found it more convenient with this setup to go from dead run with the whisker pole to a broad reach without having to remove one of the head sails. The winds accompanying the squalls would generally clock about 20 degrees from northeasterly to easterly. These shifts most often happened at night and four or five sail adjustments were not uncommon in any given night.

One great advantage of the Potter 19 is that most sail adjustments and reefing can be made without leaving the cabin. On a typical squall-induced wind shift, I would literally stand up in my bed, remove the whisker pole, sheet in the jib on broad reach, reef the main, lean out and adjust the autopilot and go back to sleep without ever taking off the wool socks I wore while sleeping. All of the above could be accomplished in about 2 minutes. If I were lazy in the middle of the night or was involved in a particularly vivid dream when the squalls came up, I would simply drop and furl the main, and continue to make 4 kts on the jib alone and get back to sleep in a minute or so.

The trick in using the tiller pilot is to reef down the main and balance it with the appropriate jib. This would minimize the demands on the tiller pilot and hence on electrical consumption. This cost a little raw boat speed but resulted in a straighter course and fewer roundups which somewhat compensated. With a quartering sea, Chubby would tend to round-up occasionally, typically once or twice an hour. In only one case was the autopilot unable to recover the roundup on its own. Normally in a roundup, the poled-out jib would go aback and force the bow back down wind, thereby aiding the tiller pilot to recover. The Raytheon ST 2000 tiller pilot performed flawlessly throughout the 24 day voyage, just as it had during the entire previous year of sailing on San Francisco Bay.

I used a custom made mainsail from Pineapple Sails in Oakland. The sail was cut flatter than the stock sail in order to better accommodate the relatively stiff winds of San Francisco. Also, the sail had three reef points, two that were identi-



## **CHUBBY COMMUTES TO HAWAII: A TECHNICAL DISCUSSION**

cal to the stock main, and one very deep reef that reduces the main to near storm-trysail size. I used the third reef occasionally during the trip with winds above 18 kts because it seemed to balance the #2 jib better than the much larger second reef.

Because of the anomalous wind patterns during the first half of the voyage, Chubby found herself hard on the wind on many occasions. This brought out one of Chubby's weaknesses in that she would not tack through less than about 110 degrees. This characteristic was discussed by Bill Combs in a very interesting and entertaining account of his trip from Florida to the Bahamas. I am conjecturing that this is due to the slab shape of the keel. The slab shape probably loses lift and stalls out at a greater angle of attack than a typical faired fixed keel. This accounts for the generous leeway that the Potter 19 experiences and is probably inherent in any retractable keel boat design.

Another observation that I shared with Bill Combs was how comfortable the boat was when loaded with water and food, all stowed and tied down on the cabin sole. This enhanced ballast made Chubby very stiff and relatively smooth riding, particularly in the 25-kt breeze on the nose we encountered while beating out to the Golden Gate.

Though I never had occasion to practice any heavy weather tactics, I did notice one characteristic of Chubby that might indicate her capability of running off before a gale while trailing warps. Occasionally during sail changes, Chubby would find herself under bare poles for a few moments. With the autopilot set for running dead down wind, Chubby seemed to run a very straight course with the following sea square on the stern. She'd make 1-1/2 to 2 kts in 16 to 18 kts of wind in this configuration. I am conjecturing based on this experience that she might do passably well in a gale sailing directly down wind while trailing warps and running the tiller pilot. This remains to be tested. Chubby also heaves-to very easily and I did this several times during the voyage either to make repairs or take in a reef in a fresh breeze.

### **Sleep**

I slept primarily at night. I seemed to naturally wake up about once every hour at which time I'd check the wind direction, boat speed, course, and scan the horizon for traffic. I slept athwartship between the two cabin seats. The center portion of the cabin between the two seats was filled in with the inflatable kayak and extra life jackets arranged to make a passable bed. I avoided using the V-berths because it is awkward and slow getting out of the V-berth in the event that I had to get out into the cockpit in a hurry. The advantage of the sleeping in the aft part of the cabin as I did, is that I could instantly access all the control lines just by standing up in my bed. Also, I could check the wind vane by simply sliding back the hatch cover and looking straight up from where I lay. I arrived feeling reasonably well rested and never felt that I was suffering from sleep deprivation.

In the shipping lanes and in the final hours of the voyage as I neared Hilo, I used a kitchen timer to wake myself up at 30 minute intervals so I could give a quick horizon scan.

### **Clothing**

During the first 10 days of the trip, temperatures were cool, generally in the the 50's and 60's (F). For this segment I wore heavy fleece pants and shirt and my foulies. This combination was very warm. At night I would add wool socks and sea boots if I had to exit the cabin to make sail adjustments, particularly on the foredeck. For sleeping during the cool weather, I would cover myself with light sleeping bag. The need to be able to exit the cabin quickly at night to tend to the sails precluded the option of actually crawling into a zipped sleeping bag. South of latitude 30 N, I was generally in shorts and long-sleeved shirt during the day and would sleep in the fleece at night. I always wore a broad brimmed hat during the day and used sun block so I never suffered any sunburn.

### **Loose Ends**

As I explained to my neighbors who were expecting twins after years of discussion and deliberation, leaving on a voyage is like deciding to have a baby. If you wait until you are 100% ready, it will never happen. Therefore, there are always a

## **CHUBBY COMMUTES TO HAWAII: A TECHNICAL DISCUSSION**

few loose ends remaining when one pushes away from the dock. Half way through my voyage, and of course unbeknownst to me, my neighbors gave birth to twins. And true to my assertion, none of us were completely ready to embark on our respective adventures. In my case the loose ends can be listed as follows:

1. I did not check the condition of the two batteries that provided power for the tiller pilot. I was still using the same batteries supplied originally by International Marine but after 3-1/2 years, they were near the end of their usable life. By the time I got to Hilo, they were reluctant to take a full charge. If the voyage had lasted another few days, I might have been doing a lot of hand steering.
2. I did not have time to contact my doctor to secure a supply of antibiotics. This left me vulnerable to uncontrolled infections and tooth aches. Luckily, nothing of that sort occurred.
3. I had no backup power source other than the Honda generator. If the generator got swamped with salt water during a knockdown or malfunctioned for mechanical reasons, I would have been condemned to endless hours at the tiller.
4. I had no radar detector.
5. I did not invest the time to experiment with my SSB receiver and therefore never got any weather reports during the voyage.
6. I could have checked with a professional weather router before my departure. He might have dissuaded me from sailing into the series of calms that plagued my first 12 days at sea. Also, I did not look into the possible impact that the incipient El Nino might have on the normal trade wind patterns. Ignorance is bliss.
7. I could not get insurance coverage for the voyage or for the boat in Hawaii.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Jerry Barrilleaux for all the patience, time and sage advice he gave to me on the phone helping me to configure my Potter 19 prior to placing the order. Jerry made his final adjustments to my boat just three months before my departure to Hilo. I met up with him in Ayala Cove and he noticed that my mainsheet was rigged incorrectly. He quickly remedied the problem, thus fixing a problem I was unaware of for the past three years.

A big thanks to Bruce Chase, the shop manager at International Marine. Bruce was very generous in his support of my project though he had no idea what it was all about until after I left. He was able to supply me with several key items including two genoas on very short notice.

A special thanks to Joseph Oster of Wingo.com, Naomi's website designer and blue water sailor, who very generously created a link on his website to provide updates about my voyage. He gave much appreciated moral support and information to Naomi and friends regarding the progress of my voyage. He also notified the Potter Yachters and Latitude 38 regarding the voyage, all on his own initiative.

Many thanks to Pamela Johnson, my sailing buddy for many a voyage on and outside the Bay, for her skilled hand in helping to prep the boat and for photographing my departure from the Golden Gate.

Thanks to Dr. Judy Blumhorst for her generous technical assistance through her website and for her spirit of innovation in bringing out the full potential of the Potter 19. She also gave much needed moral support to Naomi through her e-mails to Joseph Oster concerning the rugged construction and unsinkable characteristics of the Potter 19.

And most importantly, thanks to Naomi for her reluctant yet full support for my voyage, for all her help in the last minute purchase and packing of food, and for her audacious surprise of being at Radio Bay to catch my dock lines. What a gal.

# SPECIAL CRUISER CHALLENGE SECTION

## COMMENTS FROM THE REGATTA

### *Cruiser Challenge -- Comments*

#### *Bard Johnson Potter 19 "Passing Wind"*

I suppose you can already guess that I had a great time: got a little hardware and some neat gifts for my best Potter race finish to date. First and most important was the wonderful job [Judy] did in putting this event together. Thank you so much! ... Thanks also to your helpers. Small Craft Advisor's continued support is also appreciated... The folks at MPYC were also super: every one of their members and staff were friendly and helpful, just really neat people that made us all feel at home.

Because everything went so well, it really gave everyone a chance to enjoy the event and the people. I remember:

- Getting there early enough (mid-day Friday) to get the boat rigged, visit with sailing friends, go for a leisurely sail and return to the marina without the usual time-crunch rush. That had to be a first for me.
- Not being rushed on race day, with only the regatta to enjoy.
- The two race format, a shorter one in lighter air and the longer afternoon race in heavier conditions, was a good test of sailing skills and enough distance to make up for a bad start or other other minor problems and goof-ups we all seem to have during a race.
- Discovering what a wonderful tool a GPS can be.
- Jerry Barrilleaux and others congratulating us on a good race finish felt really good, even better than crossing the finish line and looking back at the bow of Sunshine and Red Wing chasing me, even though I had been looking at the stern of Jerry and Cambell Montgomery's Montgomery 17, Alina most of the race.
- The candid presentation by Bill Teplow and his forthright responses to everyone's questions was also a highlight. I think we all took a little bit of him away with us. Thanks Bill.
- The wharf, seals and sea lions barking, fog, sun, friends, friendly people and new sailors met, food and more food, etc., etc., etc. What a venue. I love Monterey.

#### *Subject: 2002 SCA Cruiser Challenge Top Ten List* *Bob Campbell Montgomery 17 "Alina"*

....Thank you for organizing the premier small cruiser event. This year's SCA Cruiser Challenge was first class in every way.

Here's my Top Ten List of things that made this year's SCA Cruiser challenge so terrific.

10. The turn-out was excellent.
9. The weather offered great variety for testing sailing skills.
8. The venue (Monterey, CA) was breathtaking.
7. The camaraderie was wonderful.
6. The dinner was fantastic!
5. The desserts were even better!!
4. Our hosts were gracious.
3. The seals stayed out of my boat. (This one's for you Josh & Anika) :)
2. We didn't get a parking ticket!
1. THE SAILING WAS FUN!!!



*Catalina 16 "Myoho"*

# SPECIAL CRUISER CHALLENGE SECTION



## RESULTS: BIG MINI-CRUISERS (20+ LOA)

### First Race Finish Order (Short Race, under 5 kts with lulls)

1. Just Right, Vagabond 20+,Pipkorn
2. Kira's Joy, Santana 2023,Pillsbury
3. Victor E, Victory 21,Rickert
4. Jioa, Santana 2023, Hilpert

### Second Race Finish Order (Long Race, 10-15kt winds)

1. Victor E, Victory 21,Rickert
2. Just Right, Vagabond 20+,Pipkorn
3. Jioa, Santana 2023, Hilpert
4. Kira's Joy, Santana 2023,Pillsbury
5. Tellie II, Venture 22-2, Slamon

### Big Mini-Cruisers - Overall Winners

1. Pipkorn, Just Right, Vagabond 20+, 0 points
2. Rickert, Victor E, Victory 21, 2 points
3. Pillsbury, Kira's Joy, Santana 2023, 4 points
4. Hilpert, Jioa, Santana 2023, 5 points
5. Slamon, Tellie II, Venture 22-2

### What I learned at the Cruiser Challenge

Dan Rickert Victory 21 "VICTOR E." N.E. Calif Lakes

Things I learned at the Cruiser Challenge.

- 1) I am NOT as good a sailor as I thought. A little humble pie goes a long way. We got taken bad in the first race, mostly due to skipper errors (that would be me).
- 2) The Potter Yachters ARE as nice as they seem.
- 3) Everyone I have met from the TSBB has been as great in person if not better than they seem.
- 4) The ocean is a great place to sail on, but it is very different from a high mountain lake.
- 5) Monterey Bay and the MPYC are fantastic.
- 6) Seals will do tricks for incoming boats for treats, there was this sea lion that swam just off the bow coming back in to the harbor doing all sort of tricks hoping we



- would throw something it's way, unfortunately we didn't have any fish.
- 7) I must get back next year!!
- 8) Most important, there is still a lot I have left to learn.



# SPECIAL CRUISER CHALLENGE SECTION

## MID-SIZE MINI-CRUISERS (16—20FT LOA)

**First Race Finish Order** (Short Race, under 5 kts with lulls)

1. Alina, Montgomery 17, Cambell
  2. Joy Jib, Montgomery 17, Rhodes
  3. Myoho, Catalina 16, Fusco
  4. Passing Wind, Potter 19, Johnson
  5. Full Monty, Montgomery 17, Moore
  6. Flight, Montgomery 17, Yingst
  7. Redwing, Potter 19, Blumhorst
  8. Sunshine, Potter 19, Barrilleaux
  9. Lynn Marie, Potter 19, Keller
  10. Sampan, Potter 19, Yu
  11. Burgundy Splash, Potter 19, Lines
  12. Bobs Along, Dory Typhoon 18.5, Armstrong
  13. WightCap, Potter 19, Norris & Taylor
  14. Cat's Meow, Potter 19, Kerner
  15. Rubber Ducky, Potter 19, Porter
  16. Muddy Duck, Compac 17, Herman
  17. Cutting Wind, Potter 19, Pavlovich
  18. Tag Along, Compac 16, Mendoza
  19. Pepe Le Peau, Potter 19, Ward
- DSQ: Riptide, Yuuki, Sally II

16. Sampan, Potter 19, Yu
17. Sally II, Potter 19, Hubbard
18. Tag Along, Compac 16, Mendoza
19. Burgundy Splash, Potter 19, Lines
20. Rubber Ducky, Potter 19, Porter

### Mid-Sized Overall Winners

1. Campbell & Jerry Montgomery, Alina, Montgomery 17, 0 points
2. Johnson & Wes Montgomery, Passing Wind, Potter 19, 4 points
3. Rhodes, Joy Jib, Montgomery 17, 5 points
4. Fusco, Myoho, Catalina 16, 7 points
5. Barrilleaux, Sunshine, Potter 19, 9 points

(Judy and Dave Blumhorst, sailing their Potter 19, Redwing, tied with Barrilleaux for 5th place with 9 points total. However, the longer second race was weighted more, so the trophy goes to Jerry and Carol Barrilleaux, sailing Sunshine)

**Second Race Finish Order** (Long Race, 10-15kt winds)

1. Alina, Montgomery 17, Cambell
2. Passing Wind, Potter 19, Johnson
3. Sunshine, Potter 19, Barrilleaux
4. Redwing, Potter 19, Blumhorst
5. Joy Jib, Montgomery 17, Rhodes
6. Myoho, Catalina 16, Fusco
7. Full Monty, Montgomery 17, Moore
8. Bobs Along, Dory Typhoon 18.5, Armstrong
9. Flight, Montgomery 17, Yingst
10. Muddy Duck, ComPac 17, Herman
11. Riptide, Potter 19, Zilbert
12. Yuuki, Potter 19, Steffen
13. Cat's Meow, Potter 19, Kerner
14. WightCap, Potter 19, Norris & Taylor
15. Cutting Wind, Potter 19, Pavlovich





# SPECIAL CRUISER CHALLENGE SECTION

## SMALL-SIZE MINI-CRUISERS (<15FT LOA)

**First Race Finish Order** (Short Race, under 5 kts with lulls)

1. Vagabundo, Montgomery 15, Fowlkes
2. Midget, Montgomery 15, Truman
3. Scamp, Montgomery 15, Eshleman
4. Minnow, Potter 15, McDevitt
5. Lil Becca, Montgomery 15, Reynolds
6. Jean Alden, Higgins 14 Catboat, Higgins
7. Breezy, Potter 15, Hood
8. Cool Hand, Potter 15, Luke Sayer
9. Akala, Potter 15, Chris Sayer
10. Sarah Anne, Potter 15, Person
11. Manatee, Lateen Potter 14, Gordon
12. Eaglet, Potter 15, Brennan
13. Wee Venture, Potter 15, Wales
14. Water Toy, Junk Rig Potter 15, Westfield

**Second Race Finish Order** (Long Race, 10-15kt winds)

1. Vagabundo, Montgomery 15, Fowlkes

2. Midget, Montgomery 15, Truman
3. Lil Becca, Montgomery 15, Reynolds
4. Scamp, Montgomery 15, Eshleman
5. Jean Alden, Higgins 14 Catboat, Higgins
6. Minnow, Potter 15, McDevitt
7. Breezy, Potter 15, Hood
8. Cool Hand, Potter 15, Luke Sayer
9. Akala, Potter 15, Chris Sayer
10. Sarah Anne, Potter 15, Person
11. Eaglet, Potter 15, Brennan
12. Manatee, Lateen Potter 14, Gordon
13. Water Toy, Junk Rig Potter 15, Westfield

### Overall Winners

1. Fowlkes, Vagabundo, Montgomery 15, 0 points
2. Truman, Midget, Montgomery 15, 2 points
3. Eshleman, Scamp, Montgomery 15, 5 points
4. Reynolds, Lil Becca, Montgomery 15, 6 points
5. McDevitt, Minnow, Potter 15, 8 points



## OTHER AWARDS

### First Place: Novice Sailor

Bud Porter, Rubber Ducky, Potter 19

### Guts and Glory Award

Danny and Herman Ward, Pepe Le Peau, Potter 19

*Re: I don't know the real story, what I saw...*

*Rich McDevitt P-15 Minnow*

In the small boat race, wind was similar to what Judy posted, except we did have a little more wind for the start of the first race. I spent most of the race looking at the sterns of Monty 15's. In both races, Bruce Hood who was sailing Breezy kept me on my toes. Bruce has sailed P-15's for quite a few years, but only had a few hours of tiller time on Breezy and since it was a borrowed boat, I suspect he did not push it. I on the other hand, was so excited to get two great starts was taking it to the limit. The second race I took some water over the waist and had to bail with my feet and a towel ... or else Bruce would have caught me. I had the best tacking duel I have ever been a part of with Bruce in the second race and it lasted about an hour. INTENSE!! Bruce and I would cover each other and sometimes split tacks, but every time we crossed tracks we were still within 10-20 yards of each other.

It was so much fun I can't believe it was legal.

# SPECIAL CRUISER CHALLENGE SECTION

## COMMENTS FROM THE REGATTA

### *The Second Race for mid-sized cruisers.*

*Judy B, 1985 WWPotter-19 #266 Redwing, SF Bay,*

The first race... well, let's just say there wasn't much wind. Just getting across the starting line was a lesson in patience. I don't really have a lot of comments on the first race, other than we didn't do a great job...seemed like the mid-sized boats just sat there sometimes in a dead calm waiting for the small-sized boats to catch up, even though they started 5 minutes later.

The second race felt a lot more "real" to me. It was real ocean sailing, in some steep swells and good wind, The winds were steady, ranging from 10-15 knots. It was borderline "small craft advisory" weather. I was impressed with how all the skippers handled their "small craft" so very well in those conditions . . .

Dave and I got our best start ever in a race, only about 15-20 seconds late over the line, on starboard tack and in clean air with no boats blocking our path. It was about 2.2 miles from the start to an upwind mark at Lover's Point. For the first 3/4's of the upwind leg, we were right on Jerry Montgomery and Bob Campbell's transom (M17 Alina), maybe 5 - 10 boat lengths downwind. Whenever we tacked, Jerry and Bob covered us. It was a fun tacking duel!

The first half of the upwind leg, we could see Jerry and Bob hiking out, climbing around the boat, trimming the winches, really working the boat. They were an impressive team to watch. They made quite a contrast to what was going on just behind us, where we could see Jerry and Carol Barrilleaux (Potter 19, Sunshine) sitting calmly, drinking wine (?). Dave and I were somewhere in between, working hard on every tack because we don't have genoa winches and it was a bear to trim the genoa....

About half way through the upwind leg, Bard Johnson (Potter 19, Passing Wind) and Jerry Barrilleaux (Potter 19 Sunshine) decided to split the course, and headed way outside... Alina decided to stay on the left side of the course, closer to shore, and so did we. The wind was stronger further off-shore, but so were the swells. The swells were steeper and taller (6-8 feet), some with a little cresting on the top, and they could cost you a lot of boatspeed if you mis-steered.

A about 3/4 through the upwind leg, Dave and I blew a couple of tacks and Jerry and Bob gained an additional 15 boat lengths on us. Two tacks (1/8 - 1/4 mile?) before the upwind mark, we saw Sunshine and Passing Wind coming back towards shore on a rhumbline to make the upwind mark. They slipped in front of Redwing. It was a pretty tight pack of four boats, with Alina perhaps 10-15 boat lengths upwind of Passing Wind and Sunshine and, with us another 10-15 boat lengths behind.

Alina rounded the mark, with Passing Wind about 45 seconds behind. Jerry Barrilleaux in Sunshine misjudged the rhumbline, and had to make two short tacks to round the mark, adding about 30 seconds onto his time. We were 30-45 seconds behind Sunshine around the upwind mark.

By about 1/2 way through the downwind leg, Don Rhodes appeared behind us in his Montgomery 17, Joy Jib. By the time we crossed the finish line, he'd caught up quite a lot and narrowed the space to about 8-10 boat lengths.

I'd guess that Alina crossed the finish line about 20 boat lengths ahead of Passing Wind (1-2 minutes), Sunshine crossed about 10 boat length later (30-45 secs later), and we crossed about 15 boat lengths later(45-60 secs later). Joy Jib was only about boat lengths (30-45 seconds) behind us at the finish. After a 1.5 hour race, the top 5 boats all finished within about 2-4 minutes of each other, I'd guess, but I wasn't timing it. I was sailing



# The Potter Yachter

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2002

Greg Yu  
33855 Juliet Circle  
Fremont, CA 94555

## Inside the Potter Yachter

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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 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*