



The Potter Yachter

Newsletter of the Northern California West Wight Potter Club

June 2003

High Altitude Sailing at Eagle Lake June 28th and 29th



Eagle Lake, . 14 miles from Susanville California is the sailing destination for the Potter Yachters this June 28th and 29th. Launching will be at the Eagle Lake Marina on the south end of the lake, and camping will be in the Aspen Campground adjacent to the Marina and to Gallatin beach. Tent camping spaces are first come, first served, and require short walks in from the parking lot. This sail is one of the editor's favorites. (cont..Page 4)

Sail Calendar

June 7 and 8: Richmond overnight with a day sail to Angel Island.

June 28 and 29: Eagle Lake (make it a long weekend.)

July 3 through 7: Delta anchor out and fireworks cruise. Extension up to 7 days.

July 18-20: SCA Cruiser Challenge, Monterey Bay

August 10 Redwood City Day Sail

August 23 and 24 , Richmond to Loch Lomond with overnight at Richmond Harbor

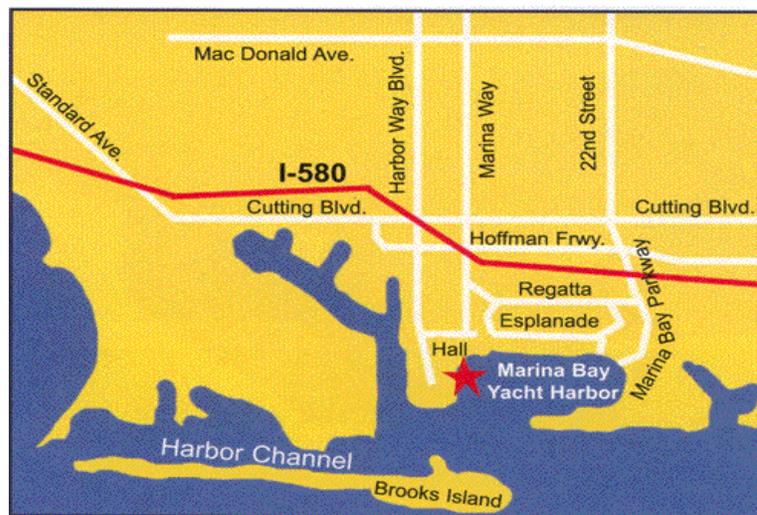
Sept 6: Oakland Estuary Day Sail

September 20-21: Enchanted weekend at Tomales Bay

October 5: Daysail at Richmond

October 18-19: Monterey Harbor

Richmond Sail Scheduled June 7th and 8th



The Potter Yachters will be gathering for an overnighter at Marina Bay in Richmond on Saturday June 7th and Sunday June 8th, with a possible day sail up raccoon strait to Angel Island then back to Marina Bay, if conditions are good. Launch time will be 10:00am. Directions to Richmond's Marina.

Take 580 to the "Harbor Way" exit. Go south on Harbor Way to "Hall." Take a left on Hall, go two blocks, and you will be in the ramp's parking lot. Sign in for slips is at the Harbor-masters office. Beginning sailors can stay within Marina Bay in high winds.

Potter Events Featured at Sail Expo in Oakland



International Marine's Dave Dressler (at L.) hosted a reception at Sail Expo in honor of Bill Teplow (R.). Bill who recently sailed his Potter 19 "Chubby" to Hawaii from S.F., gave a lecture at Expo.

There was a good turnout of Potter Sailors at Sail Expo in Oakland, CA, including Potter Bay Area skippers- Jerry Barrilleaux, Harry Gordon, Greg Yu, Pat Brennan, David Lawson and many others from the Northern California Potter Club. Bill Teplow's lecture about his P-19 Sail to Hawaii proved fascinating, and afterward it was possible to walk out on the Promenade and see "Chubby," Bill's

Potter 19 on display. (pictured below) At 5:30 Beer and Pretzels in abundance were wheeled into the International Marine Booth beside the shiny new P-15 and P-19 on display, by a smiling Dave Dressler and Fleet Captain Jerry Barrilleaux. In no time the keg was tapped and thirty or more Bay area Potter sailors celebrated Bill's achievement, and ended a great day at Sail Expo together.



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Chasing West Wight Potter History... Or How a Little Boat Goes a Long Way!

According to an old Potter brochure, "In 1949, Stanley T. Smith, with his brother Colin, built a small sailboat in the basement of a chapel in Halifax, Nova Scotia and shortly thereafter sailed for England, arriving after 44 days, one of the smallest ships ever to cross the Atlantic at that time. Then in 1951 Stanley completed the more perilous East to West crossing, and beset by the usual head winds, arrived in New York City after almost 18 weeks at sea."

"Nova Espero" was the name of that boat, and she was a yawl-rigged 16 footer with an inverted dinghy for coachroof and cabin top. She had a stub keel with a 600lb iron ballast shoe, according to the description of the boat printed in the book "The Wind Calls The Tune" which detailed "Espero's" voyages. In fact, Nova Espero's hull form, with a full length stub keel, looked quite a bit like a present day Montgomery 17, so it wasn't quite a P-14/15 that made those Atlantic crossings... But wait...the little Potter was to make her own reputation based on a really rough crossing of the North Atlantic from the Isle of Wight to Sweden!

Soon after Nova Espero's Atlantic crossings, Stanley decided to build an entirely different tiny sloop for himself, and some have speculated he was contemplating doing a single-handed Atlantic crossing when he designed the boat which is the ancestor of the fiberglass West Wight Potter 15's which we sail today.

With the considerable experience from his historic blue-water voyages, Stanley returned to the Isle of Wight, where his father and grandfather had been shipbuilders. Here he designed and built the stout "dinghy with a cabin" he needed, for single-handed

sailing in the sometimes rough waters of the Solent channel between the Isle of Wight and England's South East coast, and for overnight stays in the rivers, creeks, and harbors. A British Yachting magazine test of the boat commented on how amazingly well the little sloop went to windward, and how stiff she was in adverse conditions. Stanley dubbed the boat the West Wight Potter, and she was made of readily available and comparatively easy to work Plywood. He sailed the tiny Gunter rigged Potter up and down the South East coast, which with its tidal flats and river estuaries was a great cruising ground for the little centerboarder. His modest boatyard, West Wight Plycraft Ltd. began to sell plywood sisters of the first West Wight Potter, and eventually sold a plywood Potter to a visiting American, Herb Stewart.

Herb was an expert in Fiberglas construction of props for movies. When Herb took the plywood Potter home to Southern California the tough little boat began to stimulate a lot of curiosity. After dozens of inquiries about "where could I get a boat like that?" Herb negotiated a license from Stanley Smith to use the plywood boat for a mold, and began to make West Wight Potters of fiberglas for sale in the United States.

The reputation for rugged seaworthiness of the tiny little sloop became firmly established, both by Stanley's Smith's reputation as a blue water sailor from his Atlantic Crossings, and most indelibly, by an October crossing he made of the North Sea, being caught out in his Plywood West Wight Potter in a Force 9 gale... and living to tell the tale about it!

Stanley's incredible voyage in the 14 ft West Wight Potter stretched some

780 miles from England across the turbulent North Sea and the snowy Baltic to Sweden, a major feat in such a small boat, which almost was ended when he was blown ashore through the surf at Hvide Sande. He survived that beaching, and proceeded on up the Kattegatt, with ice coating the cabin top, and delivered the rugged little Potter to her new owner!

In the years following Stanley Smith's ocean crossing Potter adventures, several other 14 ft Potter skippers began to prove you could make it a long way in the little sloop, including David Diefenderfer, an explorer, who spotted from an airplane, a lost Aztec city in Mexico. Launching his West Wight Potter at the end of an ox cart path near Tuxpan, Diefenderfer penetrated the maze of waterways, eventually finding Mexicalitan, an ancient Aztec stronghold. Until his death at 80, Diefenderfer's passion was exploring remote waterways of North and Central America, often using his West Wight Potter.

Then John Van Ruth of Tucson, Arizona set a memorable first when he sailed his little Potter, Freya, single-handed, from California to Mexico and then on to Hilo, Hawaii.

One of the longest Potter voyages was by David Omick, a young sailor just 21 years old, who sailed his 15 ft. Potter from Seattle to Ketchikan, Alaska. It took 90 days to work his way up the coast while exploring hundreds of scenic inlets along the way. Recently Small Craft Advisory magazine located David, and then published a fascinating two part article about David's Alaskan voyage in his P-15.

Ultimately, Herb Stewart used the lessons learned from the design characteristics of the P-15. which he had rec-

Potter History... cont'd

ognized years before. Herb scaled up, designed and developed the larger Potter Nineteen, and today, the P-19 has its own reputation as a small, yet roomy, and sea-worthy boat. capable of accommodating a couple or a small family in greater comfort than the P-15.

Proof that Herb got it right, with his design of the 19 now seems to be clear. In August, 2002 Bill Teplow in his P-19, Chubby, completed a solo 24 day voyage from San Francisco to Hilo, Hawaii. Members old and new of the Northern California Potter Club met Bill at a reception held in his honor by Dave Dressler, owner of International Marine, during Sail Expo in Oakland last month.

Meanwhile, quite a number of P-15 sailors continue to do long beach-to-cove coastal explorations. One of the latest Potter Skipper's exploits of this sort, was 61 year old retired teacher Ann Westlund's 26 day summer voyage among the North Channel Islands of Lake Huron, Ontario. Ann has written a fascinating account of her voyage, which appears in the May/June 2003 edition of "Small Craft Advisory" magazine. In the same edition is a great story of Bill Teplow's inter-island sailing in Hawaii with his P-19, after arriving there from San Francisco.

Like most other Potter sailors Kathryn and I are content to enjoy "Eilidh" our P-15 West Wight Potter on a daysail or an overnight weekend excursion... but in our dreams we are right there with our more adventurous Potter brethren... The Potter fraternity of owners has, and continues to display, remarkable spirit in its pursuit of sailing in our sturdy little boats.

Story by Bruce Hood, P-15 "Eilidh"

Salt and Pepper Sail NOT Rained Out!

Bay Area P-19 Fleet Captain Jerry Barrileaux reported that in spite of the threat of heavy rain, 5 boats showed up for the annual "Salt and Pepper" Sail. Jerry and Dave Norris the P-19 sailors in the "old salts" category, took Jim Fouche, the only "Pepper", for a sail, and a great time was had by all in spite of lowering clouds and occasional showers. The purpose of the "Salt and Pepper" sail is to let new or some thinking of becoming new Potter sailors, have a look at the P-15 and P-19's presently being sailed by the "Old Salts" and even get in some tiller time between the new and old sailors, make some friends and quiz the more experienced skippers about good techniques, accessories, etc.

Do you have a story
or Photo that
should be shared
with your fellow Pot-
ter Sailors? Don't let
the legacy of these
special things go
un-published!

E-mail them to:

Isawren2@sbcglobal.net

Or regular mail : to 13 Pebble-
wood Pines, Chico, CA 95926

Eagle Lake Sail, cont'd

The campsites are sheltered in a grove of huge Ponderosa Pines, and some of the sites are right at the water's edge. Eagle is the second largest natural lake in California, and has an abundance of wildlife, with Ospreys, Pelicans, and gulls to be seen on the water. The lake's shallows are very gradual, with a sandy grassy bottom in many places, so that many of the Potter sailors may choose to beach their boats. If you don't like beaching your boat, Slips can be rented in the Marina which is only a couple of hundred yards from the nearly hidden campsites under the trees. The winds tend to be light in the morning and build in the afternoon so it is not uncommon to enjoy some mellow sailing early in the day with higher wind for excitement in the afternoon. It is possible for the wind to come up hard for a day or two, and on those days beginning sailors would not be comfortable. It is possible to anchor out if that is desired. The altitude is 5100 feet, so temperatures in the 80's can drop to the 60's at night, even when the temperatures in the Sacramento Valley are climbing over 100. The Aspen Grove campsites have fire rings, tables, and water hydrants nearby. Also nearby are flush toilets and sinks. The Eagle Lake Marina Store has ice, food supplies, and other items on sale to replenish or make up for anything you forget and left behind at home. Our family has been making the trek to Eagle for a great 4 or 5 days of camping and sailing for a great many years.. Contact me if you have any questions.. Bruce Hood, ed.



Turtled! A Cautionary Tale

My boat has a bright yellow hull. She was ordered that way so she would be easy to find if upside down. Planning pays. A friend and I had been sailing several hours, pottering around the Oakland Estuary. The last hour and a half he had been handling the tiller. In retrospect whenever there was a gust I assisted him and helped him head up a little. We were about 75 yards from the dock and had just tacked because there was a boat ahead of us. As we came through the tack several things happened. He was at the tiller and now on the lee side. I was on the windward side but leaning toward the mast reaching to uncleat the jib halyard prior to sailing to the dock. The gust heeled the boat and he froze on the tiller which increased the heel. This thru him over onto the lee rail. I fell forward and leaned on the boom and over she went. I did not have the hatch door on so lots of water rapidly flowed into the cabin. Earlier in the day a bottle top had jammed the centerboard in its trunk so it was down only a third of the way and not tied

down. Now we were both in the water, which fortunately was relatively warm, and we were both wearing PFD's. The boat was upside down. There was air trapped in the cabin and the hull bottom was well out of the water. The centerboard was out about six inches but when I grabbed it it fell back into the trunk. We tried holding the gunwale and leaning back but she wouldn't budge. Dave Lawson was Pottering near us so we tied on a bridal but his 2 horsepower Honda couldn't right her either. After twenty minutes or so a small Coast Guard boat followed by a large Oakland fireboat arrived. Our capsize had been reported. They said finding the bright boat was easy. After the C.G. made sure we were O.K. they left. The fireboat crew, including a diver, put some more lines on her and very carefully pulled her up. She just floated with her gunwales at water level and was very unstable. The top foot of the mast was covered with mud. The mast was not bent. The fireboat gently moved her to a nearby dock. They

rigged their pump and quickly sucked her dry enough to tow to the launch ramp. Winching her onto my tilt trailer she was still very heavy so we unscrewed the bilge plug and water poured out for several minutes. The rest of the derigging went well. After getting her home it took about four hours to empty the boat and get every thing washed off with fresh water. The only things I know were lost were my gas can and a set of screwdrivers. Lessons: 1. Do not let a new sailer control the boat unless you are ready to assist instantly. 2. Do not get careless just because you are near the dock. 3. Remember if your centerboard is not fully down you are losing a lot of stability. 4. There is a good reason for securing the centerboard down. If it is sticking out of the hull it is a good handhold. It also provides good leverage when trying to right the boat. 5. If the hatch door had been in place and water kept out of the cabin we might have recovered. Finally three cheers for the Oakland fireboat crew. *Don Person*



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Inside the Potter Yachter

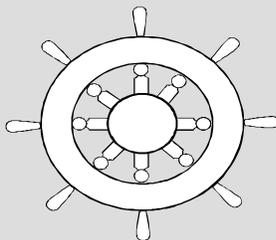
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With a Grain of Salt

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*

