



# The Potter Yachter

Newsletter of the Northern California West Wight Potter Club

May 2002

## Sailing Calendar

**May 25-26:**  
Richmond Marina to Loch Lomond

**June 1-2:**  
Delta Cruise

**June 29-30:**  
Eagle Lake

**July 20-21:**  
Oakland Estuary to South Beach Marina, SF

**August 2-4:**  
Annual Lake Tahoe trip

**August 24-25:**  
SCA Cruiser Challenge IV, Monterey Bay

**September 14-15:**  
Tomales Bay

**September 28:**  
Richmond Marina to Angel Is.

**October 5-6:**  
Monterey Bay

**November:**  
To Be Decided

## Richmond to Loch Lomond May 25-26

Launch at Richmond Marina at 9 am. Experienced skippers can sail approx 6 nautical miles to Loch Lomond Marina in San Rafael on San Pablo Bay, exploring the town at lunch time, dine at the Fo'c'sle Restaurant.

Timing the tides is essential, or else you'll be running aground as you head into Loch Lomond. Navigational care is required to stay in the channel too. We'll be beating home against the wind but with the current.

New skippers can stay inside Richmond Harbor, a great place to prac-

tice sailing skills.

There will be a skippers meeting at 9:30 AM at which Judy will discuss navigation tips for the trip. These will include how to use the currents, taking back bearings, and navigating under bridges.

The other day, we'll daysail to Angel Island for lunch in Ayala Cove. Enjoy hiking or tours on the State Park on the island.

This is a great trip, so if you can't make it for the whole weekend, make it a daysail.

## The Case of the Mysterious Self-retracting Centerboard

About 2 years after we purchased our P-15, Kathryn and I, and our kids Brent and Leah, (who were 7 and 9 back then,) eagerly loaded all our things into the boat, and into "Silverbird", our little Toyota Van, and headed for Alameda to participate in our second-ever Potter Regatta.

Arriving at Encinal Yacht Club, the parking lot already had a dozen or more p-15 trailers lined up, and several of the club's more experienced sailors were greeting the new arrivals, and ferrying the later arrivals several blocks to the foot of Grand Ave.

We got the boat rigged and sailed "Aillte" back up to the Encinal Dock, proudly joining the raft up of twenty P-15's aligned three deep along the

jetty. The other family members stepped off and joined the skippers, other Potter families, and friends gathered on the lawn to socialize, and enjoy the barbecue lunch.

I was still in the cockpit, nervously  
*(Continued on page 3)*



## Delta Cruise

### June 1-2

We will be launching at Brennan Island at 9 AM and sailing over to Lundborg Landing on Bethel Island for an overnigher. The landing has a nice guest dock, (FREE, if you eat there!) A nice Bar, and really good food. They even serve breakfast.

The entrance to Franks Tract is only a quarter mile from the landing. Close by are the Sugar Barge and the Rusty Porthole, both very nice places. Lundborg Landing also has a campground and launching ramp (P.15's only).

This should be as much fun as Windmill Cove, except much cheaper!

To get to Brannon Island, take HWY 4 and cross over the Antioch

Bridge. Keep going and just after you cross the next bridge, the park entrance will be on your right. Tell the ranger you are just going to launch and park your car overnight. It should only cost \$4.00 for the weekend. (FREE launch). You can check out Lundborg Landing on the web at [lundborglanding.com](http://lundborglanding.com). Carol and I are cutting our vacation short to make this sail, lets have a good turnout!

Jerry Barrilleaux  
P19 Fleet Captain

## A Heck of a Way to End a Great Weekend - Bruno's Island April 6-7

I was a very happy camper when I headed back to B&W Marina Sunday afternoon after The Bruno's Island/Delta Ditch Race. The weekend had provided just the right mix of fun, companionship, sailing, and good weather. Eight boats had shown up, with Jim and Tina Ferguson coming all the way from Vancouver, Washington. Commodore Judy and David Blumhorst were there, minus Redwing, but more than willing to help Herman and Danny Wood with the P19 they're restoring.

Mike Westfield was there with the only captive Potter crabclaw in existence.

Jerry and Carol Barrilleaux launched Sunshine, Don Person had Sarah Ann rigged with the new lapper jib that proved awesome going to windward, Pat Brennan and Rich McDev-

vitt were there with their P15s. And best of all, Don Person had his own mothership, a houseboat packed with family for support. They generously offered brownies in the evening and coffee in the morning. Thank you, thank you.

I also discovered that the Potters' idea of a race is when we all head the same way the same day, and everyone likes evening barbeques and big breakfasts at Korth's Pirates Lair Marina.

Needless to say, I was a very contented sailor when I pulled out of the water at B&W Sunday afternoon. It would have been the perfect weekend if it hadn't been for a go-faster boat that smashed into one of pilings of the Mokulumne

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## The Case of the Mysterious Self-retracting Centerboard(cont'd)

*(Continued from page 1)*

arranging docklines, fenders, and other gear while looking at the boats of the more experienced sailors to make sure I did everything in a seaman like manner, and to observe if there were any rafting up “rules” I needed to learn.

Last of all, I debated... should I raise the centerboard, or should I leave it down? As I sat there you could hear the boards make their typical “clunk-clunk, clunk-clunk” on the centerboard trunk, every time a passing boat in the estuary would send some small waves into the dock. I watched the result, and it seemed that with the board down the boats tended not to drift against one another so much, and that all the other sailors had left their centerboards down, so I concluded that was the proper way to leave the boat, in spite of the rather consistent amount of noise it made.

I went on ashore and we all had a wonderful lunch and with many of the other Potter skippers, including many who would become good friends and teachers over the next dozen years: Jerry Barrileaux, Harry Gordon, Terry Gotcher, Gwen and Mahendra Singh, Don Bergst, and many others.

It was also a great day for a then-new sailor and Potter skipper like me, as I was picking up useful information about how to sail and rig my boat better with every conversation. One of the nicest, and most pleasant aspects of being in the Potter “club” has always been the way Potter skippers are so open-handed about sharing their experience.

We returned bright and early the next day, all of us tremendously excited at the prospect of “racing”. The year before, we had competed and come in dead last in a fleet of 27 boats. The

four of us were sailing “Aillte” in that very first race, and I remember sailing downwind watching the rest of the fleet gradually fade from view. Don Bergst, who helped organize the race, sailed over to us and said “Would you like to borrow my jib pole...?”

To which we responded, Sure.....What’s a jib pole?”.

This second race and second year we intended to do better!

We gathered for the Skipper’s meeting, then next thing we knew it was time to sail out to the line. We got the sails up, and someone gave us a friendly push off the dock. Just then the sails caught a sudden healthy puff and we began to beam reach toward the line.

The boat seemed to be heeling more than usual. Another good puff came along and lifted Brent’s new Potter Yachter Cap, which he had just gotten, and was very proud of, and blew it over the rail into the water. The little boy leapt after it, and I lunged after him and caught the waistband of his shorts. But in following him to the low side I also was putting my two hundred pounds there, and in another instant, Aillte quickly popped over onto her Port side.

Astonished, all I could think was “didn’t I leave the centerboard down last night?”

I pulled Brent back into the cockpit, and rolled myself into the water to unload the boat and hope she would come back up... which she promptly did.

But now, I was hanging outside the boat, clinging to the cockpit rail, and “Aillte” began to happily beam reach out to the line, as Kathryn had wisely grabbed the tiller and remained on

the windward side. Afraid an attempt to climb back in would tip the boat again, and being dragged slowly along while clinging to the cockpit railing, I called out to Kathryn, “Hon.. the centerboard must be up... get the centerboard lanyard and let the board down...”.

“Fine”, she said. “Where IS the centerboard lanyard?”

I quickly explained where it was and what to do, and in her great way of becoming even calmer when emergencies crop up, she quickly let the board down, the boat stabilized, and I got myself back into the cockpit. Brent’s hat had either floated between me and the boat when I went in the drink or our young sailor had grabbed it, so even that was rescued, and we sailed to the starting line... and got through the race.

I think we finished about third from dead last, this second time, managing to finish ahead of two other Potter skippers who I guess were even newer at the game than we were. So all in all we felt triumphant in overcoming adversity, and had a wonderful weekend!

Over the next several weeks though, I kept puzzling to myself, “didn’t I decide to leave that centerboard down?” So I bought a length of bright red yacht braid, and two small double blocks, and improved the lifting lanyard’s mechanical workings. And ever after that, I think I have been a little paranoid, and double check whether the centerboard and rudder blades are down several times a day! A lot of red lanyard in the cockpit means be careful!

There is a postscript to this story.

Almost ten years later, some Potter

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## A Heck of a Way to End a Good Weekend (cont'd)

Bridge. I suspect the usual culprits, booze and excessive speed, were responsible. Then the usual cast assembled to save the miscreants and traffic on the bridge ground to a halt. Once it started to move, there was a three-car pileup of rubber-neckers and more police.

All this highlighted the conversation Commodore Judy and I had about safety on Saturday. I am of the opinion that the four essential safety items for small sailboats are, in order: 1) a brain, 2) a PFD always worn, 3) a radio, preferably submersible, and, 4) a motor. Anyway, I'll gladly discuss it with anyone who wants to rant, rave, or talk. My E-mail is [dickherman@attbi.com](mailto:dickherman@attbi.com).

For some reason, the older I get, the more my brain runs on autopilot. I need a way to jumpstart it, and, re-

luctant to use jumper cables connecting a twelve-volt battery to my ears, I have found checklists are a pretty good substitute.

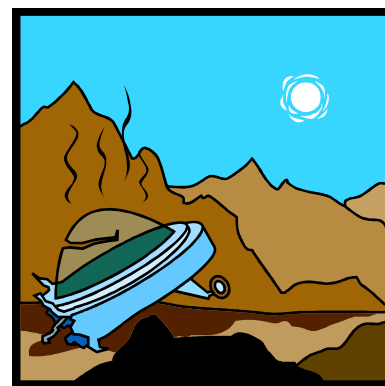
My personal checklist has six sections: Loading the car, Pre departure, Towing, Launch, At the dock, and Recovery. But I don't use it the way you would think. I reread it the night before I go sailing or when I'm eating breakfast. Then whenever I am at one of the stages, I try to remember what I had read earlier.

Now this is the important part. If I get a nagging feeling that I've overlooked something – I have! Time for the brain to kick in. I usually start by asking a very simple question. "What am I trying to do?" Most of the time, that solves the problem and I give myself a quick mental kick wondering how I

could have been so dumb.

I don't like to see people get hurt, and that go-faster idiot ruined a perfect weekend. Wherever he might be, I hope he now knows that the laws of physics haven't changed, and alcohol and boating don't really mix. Please see safety item number one.

Dick Herman



## Centerboard (cont'd)

(Continued from page 3)

Yachters met for a couple of days sailing from Rick's landing on Tomales Bay. We had a great morning of sailing, and were enjoying lunch and sharing Potter stories while sitting on a deadfall log on the rocky beach.

A passing breeze ruffled the water, and a number of choppy little waves rocked the row of P-15's. "Clunk-clunk, Clunk-clunk" went the centerboard on one, then another of the boats.

Cy Zoerner spoke up: "You know, that is such an annoying sound. A couple of years ago at Encinal Yacht club, I was sleeping on my boat at

the dock, and everyone of those damned P-15's was going "clunk-clunk, clunk-clunk". So I got up in the middle of the night, and I raised up every one of those damned boards on those boats, and they still went clunk-clunk - but it was a lot better".

I am sure Cy wondered why I laughed so hard, but I didn't have the heart to spoil it by telling him our part of the narrative.

Bruce Hood  
Vice-Commodore

## Kame Richards Lecture April 28

After Saturday's howling gale, Sunday at Richmond started sunny, cool and just breezy. Kame Richards, owner of Pineapple Sails in Oakland, lectured to sixteen Potter sailors about sail trim and boat tuning. He is a great speaker, able to make the most arcane sailing subjects clear and interesting.

Kame lectured on adjusting the draft in the sails using the boom vang, outhaul, halyards, etc., although the effect of each change is not always obvious. Kame demonstrated how tightening a P15 vang can bend the mast 2" forward, which can significantly reduce the draft in the main.

One adjustment most Potter owners

(Continued on page 5)



## Windy Salt and Pepper Sail - April 27

Thought you all might like to know the "numbers" describing what kind of conditions you were sailing in on Saturday, April 27. As many of you already know, "Small Craft Advisory" starts at about 15 knots -- and we were sailing in much more wind than that on Saturday!!!

Most of us sailed from about 10:30 or 11 am to about 1 or so, when we all decided it was MUCH too cold to continue sailing and we all magically convened at the same exact time for a hot lunch at Armini's sandwich shop.

From about 11 to 1, the winds averaged 18-20 mph (add 3-5 miles an hour to the sensor reading for the SW wind), with gusts averaging about 25 (actually closer to 28-30) mph, and as high as 28 mph (actually over 30, when you add the sensor location discrepancy). There were white caps everywhere, and lots of chop, even inside the Potrero Reach breakwater.

It was a perfect day for showing how well these tough little boats can handle rough conditions, in the hands of

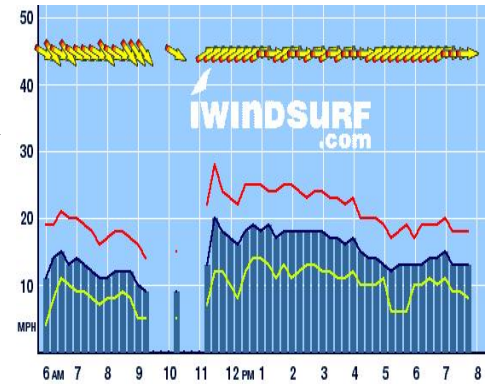
a skilled skipper. All the experienced Old Salts (skippers) put reefs in the mainsail and flew small jibs right from the start, and treated their "Peppers" to really exciting -- but safe! -- sails (as well as the occasional spray from the chop and wind while beating upwind!)

Below is a graph of the winds recorded at Point Isabel, right next to the spot where we were sailing. The sensor is at the local sewage treatment plant, and tends to read about 3-5 mph lower than the wind actually is on the water when the wind is blowing from the SW.

Thanks to everyone who attended and made this such a fun day!

Fair winds,

Judy Blumhorst  
Commodore



## Kame Lecture (cont'd)

*(Continued from page 4)*

do not change is the mast shrouds. Kame talked about how to tune the mast for better sailing. To check if the mast is perpendicular to the boat relative to starboard and port, use one of the halyards to measure the distance from the pulley on the mast to the shroud attachment. The distances should be the same. You can adjust the shrouds to make them the same.

The mast can also be set to be perpendicular to the waterline or raked slightly backwards. Raking backwards increases weather helm and increases pointing ability.

Shrouds have to be tight enough to hold the mast in place in high winds, but not over-tensioned, causing the boat to "banana".

Judy suggested that a correctly tightened shroud can be pulled 2" sidewise with two fingers. The rule of thumb for P15's, according to Jerry and Dave, is that a gentle pull on the forestay should leave it 1 1/2" from the fastening point on the bow.

David Meredith  
Education Captain



Photo by Kathleen Newell aboard Don Person's P15, Sarah Anne



# The Potter Yachter

MAY 2002

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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*