

Singlehanded Sailing Society

October 26, 2000



San Francisco Singlehanded Sailing Society
P.O. Box 1716
Mill Valley, CA 94942
www.sfbaysss.org

1999-2000 Officers

Commodore: Pat Broderick
Vice Commodore/Race Chair: Terry McKelvey
Treasurer: Bud Cohen
Membership Secretary: Bud Cohen
Newsletter Editor: Craig Haggart

Newsletter submissions are always welcome!
Please contact Craig by phone at 408-739-1904,
or by e-mail at haggart@slac.stanford.edu.

A BIG THANK YOU TO THE VALLEJO RACE COMMITTEE:

Hester Burn-Callander (driving Pelican for the start), Robert Dietrich, Lieschen Hartman, Jean Novotny, Synthia Petroka, Heli Roiha, Ray Wells, Don Blood, Pat Broderick, Lynn Williams, and Jillian Thompson. And not a single speeding ticket among the whole lot!

Commodore's Comments

By Pat Broderick

Well! The Vallejo Race was an exciting conclusion to a great racing season. The Race Committee hardly had time to pack up and get on down to the Richmond YC before **Salty Hotel** came tearing around the old Western Pacific ferry terminal on Sunday. The rest of the pack was not far behind.

It was so windy on the RYC race platform that we "reefed" the orange station flag by rolling it up on the staff and took down the blue shape because we were afraid they might "tack" us out into the channel.

The Vallejo Trophy meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 1, probably won't be that exciting, but it will be important. In addition to handing out the Vallejo trophies, the SSS membership will be selecting its leadership for the next two years. That's always an important decision for any volunteer organization, so be sure to come on over and vote.

Since this will be my final newsletter as Commodore, I want to thank you for the opportunity to hold that office. It's been an enjoyable two years. Terry, Bud, and Craig have been a wonderful slate of officers, making the organization run like a chronometer. Jean and Fred and all the other Race Committee volunteers provided superb races. Handing out trophies to a great bunch of racers after each race topped off my enjoyment. You should try it one day!

The SSS exists for short-handed racing. Sponsoring those races and encouraging short-handed sailing through TranPac Seminars and meeting presentations are its major purposes. And, all this is accomplished because SSS members continue to step forward when called upon or when they see the need. Thanks for helping.

Vallejo 1-2 Race Report

By Terry McKelvey

What a weekend! From the race deck it was awesome - from the water even more so! The wind was from the "wrong" direction all weekend, although I think the only time the fleet would have wanted it any different was when they were short-tacking up the river on Saturday. And there certainly was plenty of that wrong-way wind - enough to move the fleet along smartly on Saturday, and enough to turn Sunday into a screaming thrill ride.

Gary Helms took line and corrected honors on Saturday, putting plenty of distance between his new Corsair and the rest of the fleet. There were some closely fought tacking duels on the way to the finish, and some "time-outs" in the shallows near the river mouth.

Unfortunately, Saturday night did not give much rest to those who stayed in Vallejo - the wind howled in the rigging all night, and in the morning there was a whole flock of fenders that had worked loose from the fleet and fled to the southwest corner of the marina. By the start, the wind had clocked around well to the east and it was a wild reach down the river. Race committee barely had time to pack up, drive to Richmond, and unpack before **Salty Hotel** came screaming around the corner to the finish...followed quickly by everyone else. **Starbuck** corrected out first over **Salty** -- but just barely. (Both skippers later said they were amazed that the other one was putting up a chute, and claimed to have put theirs up only in self-defense!) Nearly the whole fleet finished the 17.5 mile course in 2 to 2-1/2 hours - I don't think any of us has seen that fast a trip back from Vallejo before.

There were also more adventures and mishaps on Sunday. Two Wyliecats broke their wishbones, and **Opus** crewmember Huw Roberts rescued skipper Jason Crowson, who went for a sudden swim in San Pablo bay (read about it in Jason's writeup). The story of the day seems to be that people got wet, got beat up, got worn out, broke stuff, saw bigger numbers than they'd ever seen on their instruments, got beat up some more, and still came out grinning like racing fools!

Starbuck, Opus are 2000 Season Champs

Greg Nelsen of **Starbuck** certainly showed how serious he was about holding onto the SSS perpetual trophy. He juggled Matson shipping schedules to get the boat back from the TransPac finish in Hawaii in time to compete in the Half Moon Bay race. Yes, he won both of those races...and racked up a pretty impressive record the rest of the season too. Congratulations to Greg on a second term as Singlehander of the Year!

Congratulations also to the Doublehanders of the year on **Opus**: Jason Crowson and Huw Roberts! They came out on top of a very close contest with Dave Rasmussen's Salty Hotel and last year's winner, Bill & Jane Charron's Borderline.

You'll find full race results on pages 4, 5, and 6 of this issue.

Vallejo Race Stories

First up: Rob Macfarlane on his Nelson/Marek 45 **Tiger Beetle**:

It was a killer ride both ways!

There we were on the high seas, wondering just how true the NWS forecast for unmanageable breeze would be. Setting up near the committee boat to start, I was horrified to see that Tony (on **Regardless**) had gone for the big genoa while I was flying a measly number three. Oops. But a clean start and a sail that points well got us going onto the course.

Luck was with **Beetle** as we sneaked around the Brothers to find strong reaching winds across San Pablo Bay - a fabulous ride across the bay, main and three and going fast in the right direction. Reverie was destroyed by a huge bomb of spray from behind, out of which leaped a trimaran at warp nine. Gary's boat hit the water and blasted through another wall of spray; such is multihull sailing, you travel in your own rain squall.

Beating up the river to the finish was fun despite the head wind and foul current and muddy shallows - I had the entire river to myself. Short tacking an IOR battlegon comes highly unrecommended, and along the way discovered new ways to foul the jib sheet and that stepping on the autopilot release lever will bend it.

In Vallejo, **Sceptre** pulled in next door and I found they were playing houseboat for Brad Van Liew and Bruce Schwab, who were racing in borrowed Wyliecat 30s. Bruce's boat sported the latest in hull lightening holes courtesy of a too-close Moore 24 at his start. By nightfall a bunch of us were ensconced in **Beetle's**

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cockpit under clear, warm skies telling stories and now I know more than I really wanted to about Gio's use of the head. One of Brad's Open 60 sponsors is a winery, and he kept returning from **Sceptre** with buckets of the stuff while Bruce banged through Fahey tunes on the guitar.

Sunday the wind really kicked in. With Sarita on board we were going lickety split for Richmond. The main looks huge plastered up against the rig, the boom hanging way out to leeward. When the wind hit 38 (true), Sarita decided it would be better if I were driving when everything came apart. We pushed hard, and the folks behind pushed harder still. Sarita (facing aft) : "Wow! A kite.. ouch!" Me: "Who? What? What's happening?" Sarita: "Shut up and drive. Wow! mastheads do NOT belong in the water..." We reefed at 45, the breeze topped 49, boat speed hovered around 10 knots as we surged through the chop.

A pair of maniacs in an Express 27 passed by under a big kite, with **Starbuck** in hot pursuit. Gregg is seriously deranged, but ULDBs look way cool when rolling wildly under spinnaker. By this point we were wondering how to jibe without ripping the gooseneck out of the mast. Fortunately, the wind eased off to 27 knots, which seemed oddly light and we dumped the reef and made the jibe with fingers and toes still intact.

The finish was big fun and Sarita got the gun. We also raised the bar for our top boat speed: it hit 13.4 during the Pacific Cup, but we recorded a whopping 16.8 in San Pablo Bay. We had an amazing weekend of sailing, and it was a super way to end the season.

- Rob

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Next up is Jeff Dunnavant:

The Vallejo 1/2 race for **True North** (C&C 37) was fairly uneventful compared to other boats, but it will be memorable none the less. I can say it was the weekend I burned a zillion calories grinding, reefing, unreefing, reefing, pulling in the furling jib, letting the furling jib out, more grinding, tacking, tacking, tacking. A message therapist could do quite well working the Vallejo docks.

Saturday's singlehanded leg was a blast, averaging 7-8 knots boat speed from The Brothers to the river entrance, except for the short tack to the finish line. Luckily I had plenty of markers showing the shallow areas -- other boats!

Sunday was the real adventure. Starting out reefed and ready for the blow, we struggled out the river. Not seeing any disasters occurring with the few boats ahead, out came the reefs. Kay Rudiger, my sailing partner, and I discussed what a pleasant sail this race was shaping up to be. But we soon took notice that the sails on **Tiger Beetle** were flogging far ahead. Hmmmm, maybe we should get a reef in the main while things are still manageable. No sooner had I finished reefing than Kay turns the boat hard to starboard. At first I thought we had just rounded up in a puff, since every boat near us was doing the same thing, but I was quickly informed of the 4ft depth indication. No way, we were just off the tanker dock! Lots of fish, maybe? Nonetheless, everyone ran towards the channel.

Moments later, the wind really hit. No turning back down wind now, we really were rounding up -- and up, and up. Wind indicated over 34kts apparent!. Wow, where did all these muddy swells come from too? Back to more reefing and grinding! Gee Kay, did you see that Wyle doing those 360s?, Hey, how about that spinnaker blowout on that Olson -- and something sure looks funny with the mast on that boat we just went by with their sails flogging on the deck. It was whip-out time! Could the weather forecaster really be right?. By the time we got back in control, Kay had blisters on her hand from steering, and I was exhausted. But the racing went on, back to 8-9 kts on the speedo and a great sail to the finish! Other than our very abused bodies and a broken sail slug, we fared very well.

Just think if it had been the usual windward sail...

- Jeff

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Now it's Jason Crowson's turn, from the Express 27 **Opus**:

What a weekend! I knew that it was going to be a fun, wild ride when I first got on the boat Sunday morning and looked at the Windex pointing straight down the Vallejo channel. I couldn't have imagined the course of events that were about to take place, but was certain it would be a memorable event.

We started in just the right position with only **Lone Wolf** to lead us out the channel. As we rounded the channel entrance markers and smiled at the sight of white caps in front of us, an instant round-up reminded us that we had made the wrong decision in putting up the full kite instead of the shy kite. "OK, we can take it down now," I think was the

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comment made by my sailing partner, Huw Roberts.

Back under white sails, I was trying to get into the groove of surfing the waves when some bone in my body decided to take up gymnastics at that very moment. So I performed a perfect back-flip right into San Pablo Bay. I'm sure it had nothing to do with the lifeline dragging in the water. Huw successfully turned the boat around, and insisted that I get back aboard and postpone my gymnastic dreams until after the race. Climbing back up on the boat, I was grateful that the Express had only 6 inches of freeboard because I now weighed at least 50 lbs. more with my foul weather gear full of water.

As I went down below to change into something dry, I kept getting thrown around. I looked up on deck and saw the infamous ear-to-ear "Express-surfing-grin" on Huw's face as he ordered me to get back on the rail. Still flustered from my earlier dousing, I climbed up on deck and joined in the fun!

We finally decided that we needed the chute up when we could not see any more white caps, and our fellow Express sailors were within our grasp. Up it went, and we continued surfing right past the rest of the fleet who had graciously waited for us to catch up.

Even though I was a little wet, it was a great day of sailing and I was very thankful that I had decided to wear my PFD in those conditions. I guess someone was looking out for me!

- Jason

From Race Committee: Congratulations to Huw Roberts for the beautifully executed rescue - a fine show of seamanship with results that we are very thankful for. Also a heartfelt thank you to GW Grigg and Jillian Thompson on *Velocious* (and to any other boats we didn't hear about!) for standing by until *Opus* was underway.

Last, but not least, we hear from Mark Halman:

This was my second adventure singlehanded the Hobie 33 *Lone Wolf*, so it was great to have just 15 knots of breeze from the north. Not much chance of having to do that spinnaker stuff by myself. Some boats chose to sail toward the Richmond breakwater at the start, which proved to be a faster route as the boats converged at the channel entrance. Another tack into the next bay and out again put me right under the bow of the first of the oil tankers. From then on, it was short tacking all the way to The Brothers. Two Wylie 30's gradually caught up to me, but somehow I stayed ahead.

I was able to separate from the Wylies after rounding Pt. San Pedro and setting a larger jib. Approaching the Vallejo Channel, I decided to change down to the #4 for the short tacking up the channel. During the tacks, I had the tiller pilot steer the boat through the turn, using the autotack function to allow me work the jib sheets. Once the other winch was loaded and ready for the next tack, I took over the steering again. My system worked well until the Vallejo Channel, where I became personally acquainted with the mud. On my third attempt at using the autotack feature, the boat started to tack too late--I was on the mud, and on a falling tide! After five minutes of lowering the jib, backing the main, and heeling the boat, I managed to turn toward deep water and get sailing again--just in time to stay in front of those Wylie 30's.

Sunday's race delivered some exciting moments with 25kn of NW wind. It was a scary fast trip. Most of the fleet headed straight for Pt. Pinol after leaving the comparative shelter of the Vallejo Channel. We elected to get south across the channel as fast as possible to minimize the adverse effect of the flood. The wind continued to build as we left the shelter of Mare Island, and we saw steady 28 knot winds and one gust of 35 knots. We saw a lot of boats to windward of us struggling with the gusts, with some boats taking down their headsails altogether.

About two miles from Pt. Pinol, we saw a boat to windward set their kite. I told my crew, Bob Fricke, "Crazy idiots, they will never carry it." A second look showed the kite full and pulling, and then I recognized the sail--it was the shy kite I had bought as the owner of *Salty Hotel*! Dave Rasmussen and his crew started to speed away, and by the time they got to Pt. San Pablo they must have been at least a mile ahead of us. As I came up on deck after repacking our smallest kite, Bob told me the boat had been up to 16 knots and averaged 14. *Salty Hotel* must have been screaming along. Prior to the race, Dave had been heard saying he was a little nervous about the race. He had good cause to be scared; for about 15 minutes he was the only one we could see with a kite up. As the wind dropped to below 25 knots, we hoisted and with the new ebb were soon at the finish line.

Thanks, Race Committee, for hosting another good adventure!!

Please remember to come to the SSS meeting this Wednesday, November 1st, 2000. Vallejo trophies will be handed out, and SSS officer elections will take place. Be there and participate! 7:30pm, at the Oakland Yacht Club in Alameda.

TENTATIVE SSS SCHEDULE FOR NEXT YEAR

Three-Bridge Fiasco: January 27, 2001

Farallones: April 14, 2001

Corinthian: June 16, 2001

Half Moon Bay: August, 11, 2001

LongPac: August 22-26, 2001

East Bay/Estuary: September 29, 2001

Vallejo 1-2: October 20-21, 2001

Membership packets for 2001 are expected to be mailed out in late November.

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