

"Bull Session"

News and Comments for the El Toro Class

July 2009 #298

www.eltoroyra.org

Lake Merritt July 5 (this Sunday) Oakland

Mayor's Cup Independence Day Regatta

I will be there

Registration at 9:30 to Skippers meeting 10:30 - 3 races on the "puddle-of-punishment"

The topic of conversation this Sunday should be: 1) the Lake Tahoe Nationals this year, 2) Where we will be sailing the nationals next year, 3) Date of the Moss Landing Regatta, 4) the resort we will be going to for Clear Lake 2010.

Clear Lake Report

by Dave Vickland

2009 El Toro Regional Championship, Clearlake, CA, June 15-17

This year's El Toro Regional Championship regatta was held at what used to be known as the resort town of Clearlake Highlands, starting in the early 1950's, this was the center of activity for SF Bay's Small Boat Racing Association's first summer regatta, a day after most public schools close for the summer, Father's Day Weekend, the beginning of summer fun for many SBRA families and sailing clubs... oh, back in the day, back to 1960, perhaps... kids and Moms spent Friday afternoon loading El Toros on top of Lido 14's and Snipes, maybe another El Toro on the roof of the station wagon, and a weekend's worth of gear and food, and waited for Dad to get home from work. There were Zephyrs, and 110's, Finns, Stars, Mercurys, Blue Jays, Coast 13's, Satellites, Super Satellites, Melodies, OK Dinghies, and a few new hot-rod 5-0-5's. Everybody was going to Clearlake!

Hurry Dad! School's out and we wanna get there! We wanna swim in the lake! We wanna sail on the lake! Yes, Hurry Dad! Mom, call Dad and get him to leave work early, please, please!! We wanna get there before dark. To a twelve year-old, the coming weekend - Friday, Saturday, and Sunday - seemed like it would last nearly all summer. Sailing every day, miniature golf, bowling, and pinball in the evening, then maybe sneak a few kisses on the pier while the adults socialized somewhere else, barefoot short pants romance. Ah, summer in the 60's!

The Nash's were always there, sailing 110's OK Dinghies and El Toros. Vicki Koerper, that cute girl from Lake Merritt, was always there. The Paxton family was there with El Toros and an FJ, Art Lange was there sailing his Flying Dutchman, Pete Blasberg in his FJ, Paul Tara with his 5-0-5, and the Vickland clan with their El Toros and 5-0-5.

The "old-timers" returned to Clear Lake again this year, as in so many other mid-June weekends over the past fifteen years. The El Toro class now carries the tradition of the old 200 to 300-boat summer SBRA regatta at Clear Lake. Sixteen El Toro sailors, three father and son "teams", three gray-faces, two sets of dentures, four stents, thirteen bad knees, a few extra pounds, and three dogs. The sailing is still excellent - warm, moderate breezes, everybody's favorite wind shift, gusts, holes, and occasional motorboat chop.

Six sailors showed up early enough on Friday to sail in some informal “rabbit start” races in the late afternoon, the Toros’ traditional tuning session at Clear Lake. That windy fun got them one broken deck, two capsizes, and a split rudder. They hoped it would not be quite so windy on Saturday and Sunday, but it was a look back in time to see six 50 to 60 gray haired year-olds hiked-out upwind, toes in the straps, hands on mainsheet and tiller, looking like healthy young teenagers from a distance, steering around the building chop, crash-tacking, and giggling... yes, you would have heard the giggling and sense the childlike joy if you had been close enough to the boats.

Using Gordie “Arena” as committee boat, but without a permanent Race Committee, the Toro sailors drew lots, giving each of six different competitors RC duty for one race. For the race missed while serving as Race Committee, the sailor would be allowed to use the average score in his or her four best finishes. Vicki was the “her” in the fleet, that cute girl from Lake Merritt.

The overall results tell the story. Most sailors had at least one “bad” race, 10th or worse. All of top ten finishers either won a race or were at some point in position to win a race. Everybody got lucky at least once...maybe Vickland and Nash had the most good luck... But then, only one sailor won more than one race, John Pacholski, the eventual winner, even though his son, Mike, tacked on and covered him at some crucial moments, the family pair finishing 1st and 2nd in Race #3.

Race #1 was sailed in moderate shifty wind. Patrick Tara (one of the “kids”) got into the lead early in the race and was never really challenged by the three closest old-folks – Nash, Paxton, and Vickland – who, as is their way, covered each other closely throughout the race, making tactics easy for the leader.

Race #2, another moderate and shifty breeze was won by Fred Paxton hanging on against four or five vultures watching for his slightest mishap... he makes few of those, however.

Race #3, sailed in light and shifty wind was dominated by the Pacholski clan (1st and 2nd), followed by Art Lange, Paul Tara, and Gordie.

Race #4 was a one-tack, one-big-shift drifter that found Vickland and Shapiro in the right place at the right time, then a follow-the-leader-home affair.

Race #5 was a “two-tack” windward-leeward, leeward-windward, reachy, runny flip-a-coin, now-you-see-it now-you-don’t extended affair where it was sometimes better to be way behind the leader than to be in the lead. Gordie used-up his 'lucky chip' in this race, but he protected his leading position well through the second half of the race, vultures and wannabe’s all around him everywhere plotting and scheming to steal his glory.

Race #6 was a marathon. Gordie was the RC in this last race; and he moved the starting line and marks a couple of times and then gave the sailors a six or seven-leg (most sailors lost count) short legs windward-leeward affair. First place was well contested by about seven boats, but John P. (many El Toro sailors cannot pronounce his name) stayed near the lead throughout, took the lead on the second to last leg, and held on to the finish... winning the regatta with that final first place finish.

The miniature golf course and bowling alley have been closed for over ten years; the only pinball machine left in town is at the Glow Worm Bar down by the police station; so, evening activity was reduced to taking an early supper out and returning home to rest and rehab knees and elbows.

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**Advanced Junior El Toro Clinic
(June 22-25, 2009)**

Who says you can't have a junior El Toro clinic at the Richmond Yacht Club in June? Not the ten enthusiastic RYC juniors and their two compatriots from the Santa Cruz Yacht Club junior program who participated. The clinic was the brain child of RYC junior instructors Tim Stapleton and Mark Halman. The instructors for the week were Buzz Blackett, Christina Nagatani, and David Liebenberg, with organizational work and lots of on-and off-the-water assistance provided by Mark Hallman. The themes of the clinic were heavy-air boat handling, sailing aggressively, and setting and working toward goals. The highlight of the week was the Wednesday morning introduction to match racing taught by Liz Baylis. Liz not only introduced the kids to the rigors and complexities of match racing, but got them working on match racing drills that dramatically improved their boat handling.

The juniors who participated in this year's clinic are Dylan Barry, Grace Anne Carrick, David Halman, Jesse Kittles, Sara Lake, Little Bear Lundergaard, Sam Normington, Dane Perrott, Liam Russell, and Haydon Stapleton from RYC, and Mackenzie Cook and Michael Pacholski from the SCYC junior program.

All of the instructors hope the clinic can become an annual event.

Buzz Blackett

14th - The Atlantic Coast Championship at the Cambridge Yacht Club.

The next regatta will be Atlantic Coast Championship as part of the Cambridge Yacht Club Annual Regatta. The Cambridge Yacht Club is in Cambridge, Maryland! Registration is 7:30 to 10am. It will be a one day regatta on Saturday for us. (Click here to go to Cambridge Yacht Club regatta information)

Lake Tahoe Yacht Club Race Week '09

August 3-4-5-6

A true Race Week on Lake Tahoe for class racing sailboats. There may be tourists but no to many power boats. Light to moderate winds and a great place for a family vacation. Hotels, cabins and camping facilities are available very close to the Tahoe Yacht Club on Lake Tahoe's North Shore, Tahoe City. To provide good racing with a separate starting line and finish line. We are hoping to have about 50 to 75 boats. There is an invasive species inspection required but there is no fee for non-motorized boat just a quick inspection. Sign up soon so we can find out how many to expect in each class.

Tahoe Yacht Club www.tahoeyc.com

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Please pass this info along to any possible participants, we hope to see you all at Lake Tahoe in August!

2009 Calendar

Lake Merritt July 5 Oakland

Fremont	July 26	Summer 789
Nationals	August 3--6	Lake Tahoe
Worlds	August 15-16	Pincrest
Fremont	August 23	Fall 123
Fremont	September 13	Fall 456
Fremont	September 27	Fall 789
Total-Dinghy	September 19-20	RYC
Moss Landing		
Stampede	October 4	RYC
Cork Screw	October 17	Redwood City
RYC Midwinter's	December 6	Richmond First of '09