

THE TELLTALE

Catalina 34 Fleet One - San Francisco Bay

PETALUMA

Ernest Tuttle - *Paladin* #379

My wife, Linda, and I took our C34 to Petaluma for the first time on July 2, 2007. We are members of the Oakland Yacht Club and went on a club cruise.

Since I had never been to Petaluma by boat, I spoke with several people about the trip. Their advice was as follows:

a) Do not cross the bar in the San Pablo Bay to the Petaluma River at dead low tide with a sailboat.

b) Stay in the middle of the channel in San Pablo Bay. To be sure that you're in the middle of the channel, watch the channel markers both in front and behind you as you proceed up the channel.

c) Once you're in the river, stay in the middle of the river. I was told there's plenty of water in the middle of the river.

d) Do not attempt to go into Port Sonoma with a sailboat. This sailor advised that he got stuck in the channel at approximately 2 hours before high tide.

Our depth sounder was not working and, as we were coming alone to Petaluma, I decided to cross San Pablo Bay and the bar as close to high tide as I could. This worked well for us and we did not have any issue with depth on the way to Petaluma. The channel is clearly marked until you reach the river and, once you're in the river, it is self-explanatory.

There is one area of shoals in the river. This area is just above Cloudy Bend and is clearly marked with red buoys. The City of Petaluma publishes charts, instructions, and compass bearings for the approach from the bay to Petaluma. They will mail or fax you a boat package upon your request. They suggest that you call them before a group trip and they will help coordinate the visit. Their # is 1 877-273-8258.

The river is interesting. There are some nice homes and a few old marinas. We passed numerous small runabout boats and two tugs pushing barges.

Since we crossed San Pablo Bay and the river mouth at high tide, this meant that the current was against us most of the way up the river. The wind was against us also. From the mouth of the river to Petaluma is 12 miles. It took us

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News in Brief:

Paladin goes to Petaluma

Fata Morgana goes to Catalina Island

Insufficient Moorings at Angel Island caused the 2007 Rendezvous to be cancelled

Seven boats enjoyed the Richmond Yacht Club cruise-in

Casino wins fourth race in the Inter Club Series

Crew's Nest wins fifth race in the Inter Club Series

San Francisco Cup set for Septemeber 22/23 at South Beach Yacht Club

ROUND TRIP TO THE CATALINA RENDEZVOUS AT CATALINA ISLAND

A 750 Mile Shakedown Cruise

Paul Goss - Fata Morgana # 1772

On the morning of July 8th at 0200 hours, Fata Morgana our 2007 C34 #1772 left her slip at Marina Village in Alameda with three on board. We were on our way to the 25th annual Catalina rendezvous as part of a flotilla lead by Roger and Diana Frizzelle of Farallon Yachts. Their intent was to encourage and support Catalina owners in making an extended off shore passage in company with other boats. We set the engine throttle to 2500 RPMs and began the round trip to Two Harbors on Catalina Island.

We had made careful preparations for the trip. One member of the flotilla had provided us with a set of waypoints carefully numbered to facilitate communication of our locations amongst the flotilla. I had entered these into the RayTech software program on the boat's laptop computer and transferred them to the Navionics chip using the multi-reader. I also entered these waypoints into my trusty Garmin 48 handheld GPS as a backup. For additional backup Fata Morgana carries both the Northern and Southern California Chart packs.

Since the trip was going to be a "one shot" offshore passage we had taken on 69 gallons of fuel. We carried a full tank plus eight jerry cans in the port cockpit locker and one in the anchor locker. We also carried a home made fuel siphon built from an outboard motor fuel line. By cutting both end fittings off, we were left with a five foot rubber hose with a one way siphon bulb in the middle. This allowed us to set a jerry can in the port stern rail seat, insert one end of the hose in the jerry can, insert the other in the fuel port, pump the bulb a few times, then wait ten minutes for the fuel to be safely and cleanly transferred.

We also carried an inflatable dinghy completely inflated and secured upside down on the foredeck. Inside the cabin we had fitted a lee cloth to the port side settee and carried a second lee cloth that could be rigged on the starboard settee if necessary.

The first hitch in the plan showed itself as we passed under the Golden Gate Bridge at 0400 hours. There was a light wind out of the South and maybe two foot seas, not good sailing conditions, but fine motoring weather. Little did we know that the flotilla was meeting at Marina Village at 0400 hours not at the GGB, as we had believed. Repeated attempts to raise our missing companions on VHF failed. I had made the trip down the coast two years ago without any buddy boat and I had two experienced boaters for crew. So we set out alone.

On the evening of July 9th at 1830 hours, Fata Morgana was off Point Conception when we finally made radio contact with the rest of the fleet. We were stunned to learn that we were actually about twenty miles ahead of the fleet! We had covered 246 miles in about forty hours making just over 6 knots at 2500 RPMs and had consumed 39 gallons of fuel.

While preparing for the trip I had several concerns about consumption rates on Fata Morgana. My primary concern was fuel consumption. We had planned for the possibility that we might have to motor all the way to Catalina. By this point it looked likely that would be the case, but now we felt confident that the 30 gallons of fuel remaining would get us the remaining 130 miles with a half tank to spare. My second concern was battery capacity, but since we had motored the entire distance there had been no need to worry. We just ran the refrigeration, lights, radar, chart plotter, and autopilot as we wanted. My other worry was about propane usage until I read Don Casey's estimate of propane usage of one pound per person per day for cooking three meals a day. Our limited cooking kept us out of danger of running out of gas.

How did our array of high-tech electronics perform? First, the depth sounder gave us perhaps the biggest scare of the trip. About 0200 hours on July 10th we approached the Santa Cruz Channel between Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands. The chartplotter showed us as being in very deep water, but the depth sounder read 16 feet! This was very unnerving given that it was pitch dark and there are no navigation aids in the Santa Cruz Channel. It seems that rather than giving an obvious error message when it is in water too deep for it to sound it continues to show the last good sounding. Maybe it was a whale, but whatever it was, the reading did not square with our other inputs. We did not rest easy until we got into depths of less than 200 feet and the sounder once again agreed with our other inputs

Second, let me say that my old boat had an autopilot, but not one that would track to a waypoint. The Raymarine autopilot steered us on legs approaching 50 miles long with a cross track error you could measure in yards. However, we were constantly puzzled by the 20+ degree difference between the heading of the boat and our course over ground. We just attributed it to set and drift and didn't worry as long we got where we wanted to go. As we traversed Santa Cruz Channel we tracked our progress on two other handheld GPS units and the ship's system was always right on target.

Third, we had later confirmation that our radar reflector made us a good target. This was especially gratifying since we had seen four masts from our fleet on the horizon over our stern with no radar blips showing. We felt a little like we were being pursued and our early warning system had failed us. It was not our radar's fault. Fiberglass sailboats are notoriously bad radar targets. I have heard many opinions about radar reflectors, but the difference between Fata Morgana's visibility and that of her companions convinced me that they are cheap insurance.

The theme at the rendezvous was getting ready to go cruising. For me, the most valuable talk was given by the Selden spars US rep Scott Alexander. I had some question about the installation of the boom vang on Fata Morgana. It seemed that I could not get the boom down enough before the vang dead headed. Scott offered to come out to anyone's boat in the harbor for a free consultation. We found two issues. First, our mast was inverted. That meant that the top section of the mast was bent forward rather than having the usual pre-bend aft. We straightened the mast by loosening the after lower shrouds and tightening the forward lowers. We tried to tighten the back stays also, but we could not budge the turnbuckles and left that for a later day back at home. Second, he observed that the tang attaching the bottom end of the vang to the boom was bent. This was probably due to someone's trying to get the boom down enough to tighten the leach of the mainsail. This would not have been an issue if the outer attachment point of the boom vang were to be moved back a few inches. This was also left for attention back at home.

On July 16th at 1600 hours, Fata Morgana left Ventura with four aboard for the trip back to Alameda. Having faced noserlies (winds from the South) all the way down to Catalina we now had the prospects of facing stronger noserlies (this time winds from the North) all the way back to Alameda. Although the trip up is statistically more difficult than the trip down, I was reassured by having on board one sailing buddy who has done this trip over twenty times and two others who have each done this trip multiple times. This did make for a different trip.

The person with the most experience had brought along his own set of charts and a notebook of way points he has used successfully over the years. We had decided that we would not retrace the downward trip when we had stayed about twelve to fifteen miles offshore. We would stay about three miles offshore and follow a set of waypoints that were to be decision points where we would decide if we needed to go into port for fuel or to wait out bad weather. These points were just before we reached Point Conception, Port San Luis, Morro Bay, and Monterey.

Since the other two crew members each sported his own handheld GPS, we proceeded to enter these points in three places. The ship's chart plotter did not agree with the other two GPS units! This was disconcerting to say the least. For a while it looked like we might have four navigators with the captain being the least experienced and the ship's navigation system under suspicion. With some testing we found that even though the Raymarine chart plotter said it was showing magnetic bearings it was in fact showing true bearings. I found that it was set to find the magnetic variation automatically, but showed the variation to be 0. I changed the method to manual and the variation to be 14 degrees and viola! all GPS units agreed! This explained the puzzling discrepancies between the plotter's heading and course over ground. My more experienced friends had pushed me to validate and correct my primary navigation unit.

On July 17th at 0200, hours Fata Morgana rounded Point Conception in the face of 32 knots true (37 knots apparent) head winds and four to six foot seas. In those conditions our speed dropped to below five knots at our now standard 2500 RPMs. Even my most experienced crew member remarked on how little the boat pounded in these conditions. The autopilot performed perfectly keeping our cross track error in the hundredths of a mile range. We only had two failures. Most seriously, the vent stack for the propane cabin heater allowed water to enter soaking the foot of the port settee. It has no provision for inserting a solid plug in green water conditions. In addition there was a small leak around the backer plate for the deck-mounted turning block for the mainsheet. Other than that the boat motored on without complaint.

As we motored up the coast we were still entering the latitude and longitude of the tried and true waypoints from my friend's notebook. I did notice that after the autopilot had faithfully guided us to the exact point we had given it the trust in the system had grown. I knew we had turned some corner when I had set the next waypoint just by putting the cursor on the chart and hitting the "go to cursor" button. My crew asked me a couple of questions about the distance off shore I had set the point and expressed satisfaction with my choice. They observed that they could see that the way we are going to navigate in the future has changed. Mind you, they have seen navigation go from celestial navigation, to radio direction finders, to Loran, to GPS, and now to chartplotters.

An old sailing buddy of mine back in Maine always told me that a well planned and executed passage left no stories to tell. On July 18th at 1800 hours, Fata Morgana returned to her slip in Alameda after motoring over 750 miles with no more serious incident than a soggy bunk. My thanks to my crews and to Fata Morgana for an uneventful trip.

three hours under power. All in all, it took us about eight hours to get to Petaluma from South Beach. To give us maximum advantage with the depth, we left South Beach at approximately 11 a.m. and arrived at approximately 7 p.m. Unfortunately, the bridge tender had left for the day. There is a small bridge that must open across downtown Petaluma or you cannot get a sailboat into the turning basin. By 7 p.m., the bridge tender was nowhere to be found. We called his cell phone and office and the police.

At this point, my spouse was not entirely pleased. But things were about to improve. Since we could not get into the downtown turning basin, we decided to put in at the Petaluma Marina. This marina is located just outside of town on the San Francisco Bay side of the bridge. It is a wonderful modern marina. It has a Sheraton Hotel onsite, with a nice restaurant and bar. (They make excellent Bombay sapphire martinis.) There is a nice coffee shop onsite and there is a 7-11 across the street.

The harbormaster's office was closed when we arrived, but we put in at the pump out dock and looked around. Shortly I met Leevon who was doing maintenance on a boat. Leevon is a Cajun through and through. He lives on his Columbia 36 at the marina and does maintenance work for a number of boats. Leevon was an absolute delight. He found us a berth, sprayed bird poop off the dock, helped us dock, gave us a key, and then started talking. He was not only very helpful, but very friendly and entertaining. We heard stories of his lost loves, business adventures, fun times, sailing adventures, and his single-handed trip to Mexico due to a failed relationship. We discussed sailing in and out of Petaluma from San Francisco. He reaffirmed the advice I had been given previously and reminded me about the shoals in the river. He had been delayed on a passage when he cut the corner. He assured me that normally you could sail out of Petaluma, but that you could not sail all the way to Petaluma. He gave me his theories on how to time the tides and current just right to have the current work in both directions with the wind. However, when it was time to leave on day three, he pointed out the obvious that the wind was coming from the wrong direction and that we would, in fact, have to motor the entire way down the river.

On day two, we took a taxi to downtown Petaluma. We could have walked. It is a mile or so. We met our friends

on their boats and spent the afternoon walking around Petaluma. We had a great lunch in an Italian deli. The yacht club opened the bar for us. We enjoyed their hospitality and then had an excellent dinner at a restaurant across the turning basin from where Oakland Yacht Club boats were docked. After dinner, a couple from Oakland Yacht Club that had driven to the club cruise out and were staying at the Sheraton drove us back to our boat.

While docking in the turning basin in downtown Petaluma you're required to dock stern to. Many places along the dock do not have power. Petaluma Yacht Club is right at the turning basin. I would suggest that they be contacted prior to taking a cruise to Petaluma so that they could open the clubhouse and facilities, if the trip was scheduled on a day other than when they would normally be at the club. The yacht club's all volunteers and they were very friendly to us.

On July 4th, we followed a Hunter 34 down the river. They had a depth sounder. We left with the falling tide and with the thought that we could cross the bar with at least one hour of rising tide over the low spots before we reached the river mouth. We had no problems getting out, but the Hunter 34 got a little off center in the river and did bump the bottom right before the tide started rising. We stayed in the center of the river and had no problems at all. It was fun to be in the river and to see the tide start to rise just before we exited the river.

We had no problems crossing San Pablo Bay. The bay was quite calm, but we did motor into the wind all the way to the San Rafael Bridge. Once past the bridge, we tried to sail in light winds. However, soon we were back to motor sailing. The winds were mild to nonexistent all the way to Point Blunt on Angel Island. At that point, as we came around the corner, we absolutely got hammered with the wind and chop. We had a very wild ride across the slot. It was as windy as I've seen on the bay in a number of years.

In conclusion, we enjoyed our trip to Petaluma and return. We would be happy to return. It is a long way up and back on a sailboat. On the other hand, we consumed about 8 gallons of diesel fuel. My friends in their big powerboats spent several hundred dollars on fuel for their trip.

Richmond Yacht Club Cruise-in:

On the second weekend of July, 14 members and friends enjoyed a warm and sunny weekend at Richmond Yacht Club - Stu and Cory (*Aguavite*), Bruce and Gary (*BruGar*), Lance and Mary Louise (*Magic*), Dave and Edie (*Wind Dragon*), Rick and Susan (*Painkiller*), Juan and Eva (*Ciaco*), and Ray and Patti (*Crew's Nest*).

We were warmly welcomed to the RYC by Juan, Eva and the RYC welcoming committee (a great idea). After helping us tie up and get settled, they invited us to join them on the deck of the Club. The views across the Bay to the City were spectacular and we all spent and relaxing afternoon getting better acquainted,

“Happy Hour” was followed by a BBQ (in doors at RYC). It was fun to watch the various BBQers in action and give helpful advice - often not appreciated. Some very specials salads (made by the RYC chief), the warmth and hospitality of the RYC members, and “out of this world” desserts made this a memorable dinner. The dinner ended with a selection of “out of this world” deserts and coffee.

On Sunday morning, we checked out *Ciaco* and were impressed by the work Juan is doing in preparation for his and Eva’s trip to Mexico – solar panels, radar, power and battery management systems, and a bimini

hoping to make *Ciaco* safer and more comfortable for he and Eva. For her part, Eva recently acquired a Ham Radio Operator License - well done!.

On Sunday morning, Eva drove a few of the ladies to Old Port Richmond and a walking tour of the town very interesting, Thank you Eva

After breakfast and coffee, a very enjoyable weekend came to an end and people headed for their home ports.

We thank **Juan** and **Eva** and the **RYC** for their hard work in organizing this very successful weekend in the sunshine.

2007 Rendezvous

As we all know, the moorings at Angel Island were “upgraded” earlier in 2007. After the work was completed and the initial problems solved, the powers that be placed a limit on the number of boats that could be attached to each mooring - a total of 4 boats. This limitation makes it impossible to moor the 100 boats that usually attended the Rendezvous. Because an alternate site could not be found in time, the Rendezvous has been cancelled for 2007



Aquavite, Wind Dragon, Crew's Nest and Painkiller at the RYC Guest dock



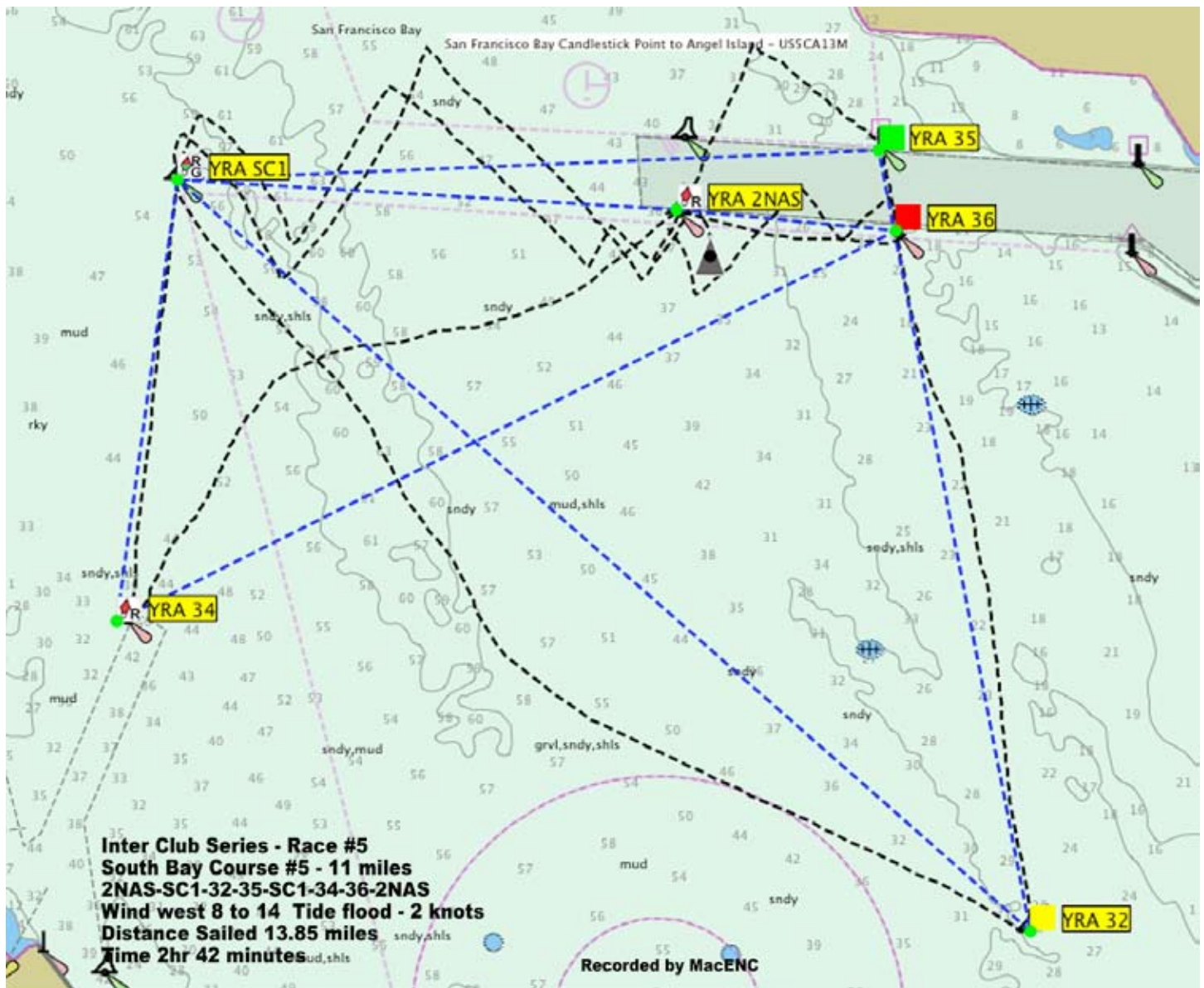
Fleet 1 share appetizers and drinks with the RYC Welcoming Committee on the RYC deck

Inter Club series Standing after 5 Races with one throw-out

			1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
383	David Sanner	Queimada	1	3	1	2	2		6
1383	Ray Irvine	Crew's Nest	3	1	4	3	1		8
214	Bill Eddy	Casino	5	2	3	1	3		9
8	Chris Owen	Mottley	2	8	2	5	5		14
1561	Lee Perry	Obsession	9	4	7	4	4		19
108	Larry Baskin	Sea Spirit	4	5	5	7	6		20
796	Kurt Magdanz	Amandla	6	9	6	6	7		25
1772	Paul Goss	Fata Morgana	7	6	9	8	9		30
1259	Lynn Guerra	Rollover	9	9	9	10	10		37

For the Technical Inclined:

The following chart is the track (black dashes) taken by Crew's Nest during Race #5 of the Inter Club Series. The course rhumb line is the blue dots.



Fleet 1 Racing

Inter Club Race #4

The fourth race of the series took the boats back to the South Bay. Eight of the nine boats made the starting line in wind from the South South West to 20 knots. Wind from this direction converts South Bay courses into mostly reaching courses leaving few opportunities to pass and gain distance. The Race Committee signaled course #6.

The start was peaceful - everyone started on starboard and *Obsession* led the fleet across the line. The fleet worked their way to the first mark. *Crew's Nest*, *Queimada* and *Obsession* were the first three around the mark.

The big decision on the second leg was what to do about a large ship anchored on the rhumb line to the mark - windward or leeward side? Everyone except *Mottley* chose the windward side. *Mottley's* decision paid off and she rounded the second mark in first place followed by *Crew's Nest* and *Casino*. Having brilliantly gained the lead, *Mottley* became confused over the course number and headed off towards the wrong mark. This allowed *Crew's Nest* to regain the lead and *Casino* to reduce their distance from *Mottley*.

The order at the third mark was *Crew's Nest* followed by *Mottley*, *Casino*, *Obsession*, and *Queimada*. By the fourth mark *Queimada* had passed *Obsession* and was now in fourth place on the water. The order around mark #4 was *Crew's Nest*, *Mottley*, *Casino*, *Queimada* and *Obsession*.

On the reach to the fifth mark, *Casino* passed *Mottley* to make the order at that mark - *Crew's Nest*, *Casino*, *Mottley*, *Queimada* and *Obsession*. *Mottley* gave the mark (a large post in the ground) a wide berth so as not to repeat their screw-up in Race #2.

The order remained unchanged during the short windward leg to the finishing line. After the corrections were applied, the finishing order was - *Casino* followed by *Queimada*, *Crew's Nest*, *Obsession*, and *Mottley*.

We congratulate *Casino* on their win and *Obsession* on their very strong fourth place – 10 seconds behind

Crew's Nest and 10 seconds ahead of *Mottley* – well done!

Inter Club Race #5

The fifth race of the series presented an extremely challenging set of conditions on course #5 in the South Bay. The winds were variable from 5 to 15 MPH, a flood tide from 1 to 3 knots, a large tanker anchored in the middle of leg #6, and a restricted start / finish line on two legs.

It was tough right from the gun. The unwary starboard tack starters had to struggle to make it across the line before being washed by the tide into the committee boat. Those who got the best start crossed the line as close as possible to the pin end, leaving those who arrived early to run down the line into to a poor position.

Everybody tacked on port. *Crew's Nest* was to windward of the fleet where the adverse tide was stronger but so was the wind for most of the leg. At the first mark, the order was *Crew's Nest* followed by *Casino* and *Queimada*.

The second leg was no less challenging, Avoiding an anchored ship, resisting being pushed into the South Bay, finding and staying in the wind on the right side of the course kept crews busy. Everyone managed to work this out sooner or later as they made their way to the second mark. *Crew's Nest* rounded first followed by *Queimada* and *Casino*.

The third leg was a simple reach until about 200 yards from the mark where it turned into a close haul to the mark – those who had sailed high of the lay line had the advantage as they could foot off to the mark. The order remained unchanged at the third mark.

On the fourth leg, the idea was to play the strong wind against the tide and hope for the best speed towards the mark being careful not to stumble across the start / finish line and be DNF'ed. The order was again unchanged. With *Casino* and *Queimada* continuing to have a great struggle.

The fifth leg started out as a simple reach to the mark

Racing from page 7

(YRA #34) but about 75 yards from the mark the wind headed and went very light. Boats had to harden up and hope like hell to make the mark. *Casino* and *Queimada* continued their battle for second place.

After rounding the mark, we were confronted with light winds, a strong current, a large tanker, and having to avoid the start / finish line. Everyone choose to slowly work their way against the current and pass on the windward side of the tanker –Tankers are big when you get up close! Next the choice was whether to pass the pin end of the line or the committee boat end of the line. As it turned out, the pin end was the smarter choice. By the sixth mark, *Queimada* had extended her lead over *Casino*.

When they crossed the finish line, the order was *Crew's Nest*, followed by *Queimada* and *Casino*. The order remained the same after the correction were applied.

We thank **SBYC** for providing the Race Committee for this race.



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2007 Rendezvous Angel Island
Cancelled until 2008

Race Schedule

Inter Club Series

September, 8 - South Bay

San Francisco Cup - SBYC

September 22 and 23, 2007

Midwinter - GGYC

November 3 - City Front

December 1 - City Front

90107

**San Francisco Cup
at
South Beach Yacht Club
Registration Closes
September 7, 2007
Contact Chris Owen
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Fleet 1 website

<http://www.c34.org/fleet1/index.htm>

Fleet 1 Photos

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/c34fleet1/>

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