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Notice of Event

2003 Fall Regatta and Swap Meet

Nov. 8 2003 - Nov. 11, 2003

Ivanpah Dry Lake, Primm, NV, USA

NOTICE CHANGE OF DATE from previous years. See NALSA website at www.nalsa.org for up to the minute details.

Pony Express Rides Again

By Bob Dill

Smith Creek is the scene of two great annual regattas, the Cow to Cow on Memorial Day weekend and the Pony Express on Labor day. I have wanted to attend one or the other for years but have been using my available dirt time for Iron Duck trials or the Americas Cup. This year my friend Steve Lande was interested in making a 'weekend' trip so it was now or never.

These events are special for several reasons. First of all, they are organized by Kent and Pat Hatch who have been putting on high quality sailing events in the catamaran and landsailing world for many years. The events are basically fun events with

some hard fought but not too serious racing. Then there is the location: Smith Creek is located about 25 miles east of the small former mining town of Austin, about 2-1/2 hours east of Reno. The setting is typical basin and range with mountain ranges on both sides of the lake. The area is remote with the nearest ranch about 10 miles away and Austin the nearest town. The playa itself is large (2 by 5 miles) with a large pricker island in the middle. The surface is both smooth and hard. This year the west end and the nearby Baby Smith playa were as smooth as a playa can get. Overall it is landsailing at its best.

Steve and I arrived in Reno on Thursday evening after being bumped in San Francisco by too many Burners (Burning Man Participants) trying to get on the same airplane (the 3 hour delay was converted into the ticket for the



(continued on pg. 6)

From the President

by Bob Dill

The NALSA Fall Regatta and Swap Meet is coming up in a few weeks. We will be sailing at Ivanpah Dry lake in Primm Nevada (at the CA-NV state line on I-15) on November 8 to 11 (as usual, you can come early and stay after if you would like to). We expect several Sirocco's to come out from the midwest and the usual group of western sailors. We moved the date from Thanksgiving to see if we would get more participation from sailors who traditionally have other commitments on Turkey day.

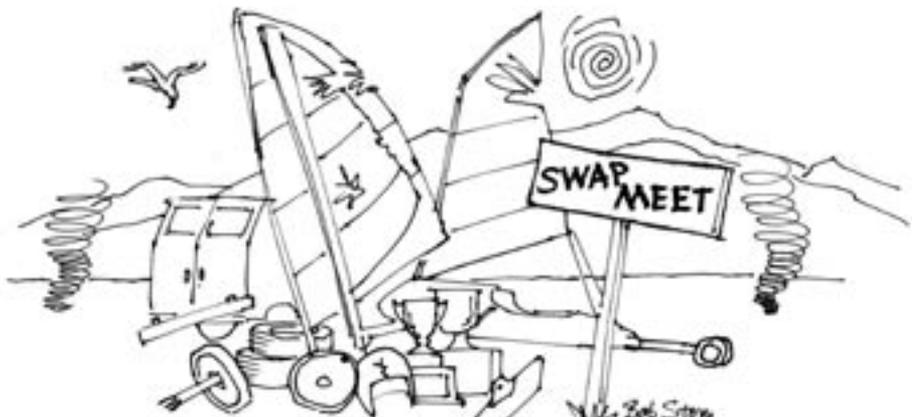
The swap meet will be freeform and is likely to take place on the first windless day of the event. If you have some old battens, a Manta wheel or an old yacht you aren't sailing any more, this may a good chance to find a new home for it and perhaps for you to find some new treasures.

As the event gets closer we will publish more details on the events page of the NALSA website at (www.NALSA.org)

The PACRIM Regatta is rotated around the Pacific Rim landsailing community on a 10-year basis.

It was last sailed in the US in 2000. This year it will be sailed in March in New Zealand on 90 Mile Beach on the north end of the North Island. The dates are March 13 to 20. There is a link to the New Zealand Standart website on the NALSA.org events page.

This is one of the best sand sailing venues in the world. The beach is relatively wide and the sand is amazingly hard (A fully loaded tour bus barely puts a dent in it). Above all it is LONG: about 60 miles long. There are lots of things to see and do in the area from tours of the northland to the Bay of Islands on the eastern side of that relatively narrow part of the country. They bay of islands was, in my dear wife's



pacrim:2004

90 MILE BEACH / NORTHLAND / NEW ZEALAND



SUNDAY MARCH 13 to SATURDAY MARCH 20 :: 2004

considered opinion, the place she most wants to return to on our next trip to the NZ.

The sailing will be spectacular. The New Zealand landsailors are always a great fun. They are expecting a good turnout from Europe. The number of sailors going from the US is likely to be small...we seem to take work too seriously (but who ever looks back on their life and feels bad about not spending more time at work). Of course, while you are there, there is all of New Zealand to explore. The 2004 Landsailing's America's Cup is planned for March 21-26. It will be sailed at the usual venue: Ivanpah Dry Lake. Details can be found on the events page of NALSA.org. If you are so inclined, it will be possible to attend both the PACRIM and the America's cup in their entirety as you can leave Auckland in the evening and be in LA the morning of same date.

Bob



Wally Hall's Ice Flyer

by Bob Dill

I took the opportunity to sail one of Wally's unique yachts at The Pony Express. I have known for years that the design allowed sailing in very heavy wind but this year I came to appreciate it's ability in light air. The use of the windsurfer rig does number of good things. The sail is sheeted to an excellent shape by the wishbone boom (and downhaul). The sheet has no effect on shape so it is good at all angles of attack. A center sheeted set up, as found on most conventional yachts, has a poor shape when it is sheeted out to get the yacht started. The perfect shape combined with large sail size allows Wally to start more easily than most yachts in light winds. He and his friends were often the last to be sailing in a dying wind. You can put up a sail size that is suitable for the wind, although Wally takes rather large sails out in very windy conditions.

The visibility with the front seating position could not be better. He had

a sheet pulling lever ("the death stick") mounted in his yacht. It worked very nicely but you want to make sure it is uncleated well before you have the urge to let out a little line! The high portion of weight on the front wheel makes it very unlikely that it will under steer. The over steer did not seem to be a problem but I did not really test the limits of the yacht. Wally routinely sails it at its capability, and he could sail through the prickier mounds a lot faster than I would ever attempt to in his yacht or any other. The fact that he does not sail into the mounds on a regular basis attests to the yacht's ability to go where it is pointed.

Wally has put years of thought and innovation into these yachts and, while they may not be the fastest on the racecourse, I think they may be the most versatile yachts on the playa. I am working on an iceboat that will borrow many features from Wally's creation. While Wally no longer sells yachts, he still sells some parts and has an extensive website with plenty of detail on making these yachts.



Playaology

Bob Dill

The term “Playa” is Spanish for “beach.” Playas are ephemeral lakes that have water on them from time to time but are generally are not water covered (hence the name “Dry Lake”). They come a variety of forms ranging from gooey mud flats to pricker covered hard pans to fabulous sailing venues like Ivanpah and Smith Creek. Most playas are not all that good for sailing; probably 20% are really good with another 20% being sailable if not great.

The floor of the lake is a build up of relatively deep-water sediments from lakes that existed here in the Pleistocene (the period of the ice ages dating back roughly 1,000,000 years). Most of these lakes dried up several thousand years ago when the climate warmed after the end of the last ice advance. At their peak, these lakes were much larger than the remaining playas. Terraces marking previous lakeshores and river deltas can be seen around some lakes, often several hundred feet higher than the playa itself.

These surfaces are the flattest dry land surfaces in the world. They typically have slopes of less than one foot per mile. At a smaller scale they can be very smooth with local relief being as low as 1/16 inch. Combined with their relatively high traction, this makes them excellent sailing surfaces. Their large-scale flatness comes from the fact that a shallow layer of water occasionally covers them. Wave action stirs up the shallowest areas most and allows transport of the sediments to slightly deeper, but less riled up areas. This slow process fills in old cracks, hoof prints, and tire ruts. It also keeps

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Northern Illinois Sirocco Club
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vegetation from making a foothold on the playa.

In the next few articles we will look at playa hydrology, surface composition and evolution.



(Pony Express cont. from pg. 1)

Reno we could see very large cumulus clouds over Fallon, about half way there. When we got to Fallon we realized they were really much further over east. We were treated to a proper lightening show on the drive to Austin where we arrived to light rain. Fortunately the main rainfall was in the next valley east of Smith Creek.

The next day we put together two brand new Manta Twins under the supervision of Manta Master Assembler, Larry Hatch. We only had half a dozen parts left over when we were done and the boats did not fall apart. We finished just in time for a light afternoon breeze (7-12 mph). We sailed until dusk all over the lake and in and around the pricker mounds that line the south and west shores.

Saturday quickly showed it was likely to be a light wind day. Steve and I went hiking in the Shoshone range east of the lake. Hiking here is very

pleasant. At 6000 feet the temperature is reasonable. With no tall vegetation, the views over the lake, nearby valleys and ranges are impressive. The cactus and other plants are not as interesting as in the Mohave but the geology is just as complex (I came back to the car with my bag limit of 'interesting rocks').

Back on the playa, the wind came in briefly at about 3 and then more steadily at 5. That evening we had the traditional Pot Luck Dinner. Larry and Anita cooked a turkey and everyone brought lots of wonderful offerings (Steve and I provided Austin's best corn chips and dip). After dinner, Marvin had his large telescope set up and gave tours of the night sky until late in the evening. The sky here, as you might imagine, is as good as it gets with the complete lack of stray light and the high elevation. Marvin was able to explore whole pieces of the sky that he can't see in Reno.

Sunday started out sunny and windless. We headed off on a jeep tour of an old gold mining camp south of the playa in the Shoshone range. The gold was associated with an unusual green gabbro (a dark granite-like rock). Not much gold was found although there was lots of equipment left behind from the effort. About the time we were cresting the 9,000-foot ridge above the mine, the wind was picking up and rain showers were visible off to the south. We got back to playa in the early afternoon as the real wind arrived.

We raced in winds from 15 to 30 mph with a fair amount of dust (typical of a rising wind) and occasional light rain showers. After two hours the wind gradually went away leaving several of us ghosting back into camp at the end of the last race. Mark Harris won the Manta Twin class with Larry in second and Marvin third. Chris Ubel took top honors in the Udder class in his Standart. Next year we will have a Hind Teat award for consistently poorest performance. This prize would have been mine this year....I clearly have got to spend less time gabbing, taking pictures and collecting rocks and more time learning the subtleties of sailing the boat around the course.

The rest of the afternoon there had

isolated showers around us making for wonderful cloudscapes and keeping us guessing about the need to abandon the playa. It showered several times over night although the playa was dry when we arrived Monday morning. Most people were either planning to wait out the last remaining showers or get off the playa early. What looked like the last shower of the day was getting organized up wind at about 9:00. Larry had about an hour's work to do to get packed up. It took the shower about 50 minutes to roll over us. He left in the height of the rain pulling his 7,000 lb trailer with his landyacht trailer behind that. It was about all his big pickup could do to haul everything across the softening playa but he made it with only a good coat of mud to show for it. Afterwards he concluded he would have been better off to wait for the shower to pass and the lake to absorb the water as he expected it to take longer to wash his vehicles that he would have had to wait. The Smith Creek Playa seems to be able to tolerate a lot more water than Ivanpah before it is too soft to drive on. It gets slippery but does is not as quick to roll up on the tires or turn into gumbo.

As expected, it was a great weekend and I highly recommend attending either of these events to all landsailors.





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