

## **Petaluma River Sail**

Saturday, October 9, 2010

Mike Bolger, Force 5

Mike O'Toole, Sunfish

Mark Alarie, Spindrift 10

Penny Bolger, peddling kayak

Melinda, paddling kayak

Wallace Whiting, Vagabond 14 "Patricia Rose"

We left Petaluma Marina at 10:30 A.M. and short-tacked in a nice breeze the 1.2 nautical miles upstream to the "D" Street bascule bridge, arriving at 11:30 A.M., just on time for our scheduled bridge opening. The bridge tender wasn't responding on VHF, so we finally called the Petaluma Police by cell phone, who connected us to the bridge tender, who was in Sonoma and had not received any notice that he was supposed to be opening the bridge at all on Saturday! (Both Wallace Whiting and Mike Bolger had scheduled an opening at 11:30 and another at 1:30 with the City of Petaluma, and a subsequent call to them on Monday revealed that "this has never happened before and we hope that it doesn't dissuade you from coming back to Petaluma!") The bridge tender offered to come in 45 minutes or so to open the bridge, but we declined. The two kayaks offered to tow the four sailboats under the bridge if we lowered our masts, but the sailing skippers declined and instead tied up at the docks of the Friends of the Petaluma River, downstream of the bridge and in front of the River Heritage Center (a wooden structure with "Ghirardelli" painted on the side). We walked around the Turning Basin to have lunch at Flippers. While returning to our boats, we passed the 1891 80' scow schooner "Alma" and the "Grace Quan," a 43' replica of a turn-of-the-century shrimp fishing junk (both up from the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park) that were tied up in the turning basin, along with a reed canoe, two beautiful wooden rowboats, and two wooden boats under construction by traditional means. We were in the middle of the Petaluma River Heritage Day celebration.

At 1:30 P.M., we sailed downwind to the Petaluma Marina, where we said good-bye to Mike O'Toole and Melinda. The 4 remaining boats then continued on a broad reach to a run the 3.7 nautical miles to the Lakeville Marina at Papa's Taverna. We estimate that we may have experience Force 5 as we attempted to avoid the death roll, round-up, and accidental jibes. Mike Bolger towed Penny's kayak part of the way and still clocked north of 6.5 knots (while towing). It was an exciting sail! Some water was shipped, but nothing serious. While tied up at the Lakeville Marina docks, Mike's Force 5 still had enough windage (with the sail rolled up!) to roll over. At 3:30 P.M., we removed sails and Penny protected our boats as Patricia Whiting drove the other skippers to Petaluma Marina to retrieve trailers and get them to Lakeville for the haul out.

A great time was had by all.