



# wind & currents

Newsletter of the San Francisco Boardsailing Association

Fall 2002

## Time to Vote!

☉ *By Suzanne Suwanda*

San Francisco Boardsailing Association's efforts to promote and preserve windsurfing in the Bay Area are managed by a small group of volunteers, your board of directors. The board obtains and distributes important information to the membership concerning access and safety; lobbies government departments, officials and other associations concerning windsurfing interests; maintains relationships with other bay users and interest groups; and plans social events.

Board members are elected by the membership. The last newsletter invited new candidates to consider running for election; a slate of directors is presented on page 7 with space for write-in candidates. All current SFBA members are requested to mark and return their ballots by September 27, 2002.

Thank you for supporting your windsurfing association, and happy sailing! ☉

## ☉ SFBA Fall Party! ☉

Take off those booties and put on your dancing shoes! Come celebrate another great windsurfing season with fellow SFBA members and their guests on Saturday night, October 12, at the St. Francis Yacht Club in San Francisco. Race awards, live music and more — see the website ([www.sfba.org](http://www.sfba.org)) for time, cost and other details. Volunteers are needed; send an e-mail to [suwanda@earthlink.net](mailto:suwanda@earthlink.net). See you there!

## New Eastshore Park: Will There Be Access?

☉ *Peter Thorner*

The fight for a new East Bay access continues. Summer winds bring a river of wind that flows through the Golden Gate and passes over Albany on its way to the Delta. The Albany Bulb, formerly a dump/landfill, extends out from the surrounding shoreline into an area where the winds are usually stronger and steadier than the winds at Berkeley Marina and Point Isabel. It would be difficult to find a more appropriate place for a windsurfing launch.

Planners for the new Eastshore State Park have decided to allow a windsurfing access, but they are not allowing for any vehicular access on the existing road. A dozen windsurfers showed up to the August 15th planning meeting in Berkeley. They made it clear that a shoreline access that is located 1,000 feet or more from a road or parking is not access that can reasonably be used by windsurfers. State law makes recreational access to the Bay a priority. The park plan fails because it does not allow for real access for windsurfing which is one of the most popular forms of recreation on the Bay.

Recreational access can be excluded when it is not feasible or when there are significant ecological impacts. Neither of these arguments apply in this case. The road already exists and it is located away from ecologically sensitive areas. The exclusion of vehicles is a result of pressure from groups who believe that car use should be as limited as possible and that allowing cars will ruin a sense of "naturalness and isolation." They have decided that vehicles cannot be allowed on the Albany Bulb at all because of the aesthetic impact it will have in the very limited areas where the cars could be seen or heard.

*(continued on page 3)*

## Treasure Island Development

The plan to redevelop Treasure Island is moving forward. The potential developer, Treasure Island Community Development, has submitted a draft development plan to the Treasure Island Development Authority (TIDA). The draft plan is available online at: [www.ci.sf.ca.us/treasureisland/](http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/treasureisland/). The plan includes two boardsailing areas, as indicated in the picture below. The boardsailing areas would include parking and vehicular access. The plan submitted is a conceptual plan and the details, including the number of parking spaces and number and type of access ramps, will be refined during the planning process. Most of the rest of the north end of the island would be a wetlands area under the plan. If you want to participate in the planning process, keep an eye on the SFBA website ([www.sfba.org](http://www.sfba.org)) for meeting dates and informational updates.



### TI Information

Treasure Island, or TI as the regulars call it, is a great jumping off point for trips to Angel Island, Alcatraz and the Embarcadero. There are larger swells and stronger winds as you move closer to Angel Island. Because of the difficult launch and the strong currents, this site is best suited to advanced sailors. On a typical day, larger sailors will be riding a 5.0-meter sail. The currents here are weaker than they are at the Golden Gate, but there is no nearby shore to climb up onto if the current pulls you away from the island. Most sailors launch from the boat ramp area at the north to northeast corner of the island.

### TI Advice

Use a Larger Board. A slightly larger board here provides some insurance against a strong tide or dropping winds. Expect the wind to get fluky when the fog or low clouds move in.

Check the Tides. A good tide book will have a map showing when the flood currents are the strongest relative to the maximum flood at the Golden Gate. Make sure you are well powered on a flood and head upwind early so that you are ahead of the game if the wind drops.

Sail with a Buddy. Because there is less boat traffic close to Treasure Island, you can only safely expect help from another windsurfer if you run into trouble. Even when sailing with a

buddy, recognize that it is possible to become separated and that you should always be ready to go it alone. A radio and a strobe light are excellent investments when you sail the open Bay.

Watch for Traffic. There is less boat traffic here than near the Gate, but many of the boats and ships are large or fast and they may not be expecting to see you well offshore. The ferries connecting San Francisco to Larkspur and Vallejo move very quickly. If you are down in the water, they will have a hard time seeing you because of the large swells. The best bet is to stay well out of their way. If a friend is down in the ferry lane, you can help out by sailing around them to mark their location.

The launch at Treasure Island is rough compared to most sites. There are three launching techniques used at Treasure Island.

1. Walk down the boat ramp and then sail or swim to get out around the jetty to reach clean wind. The wind is very fluky at the ramp but usually gets better as you swim or drift out. Watch out for holes and gaps in the ramp that could injure your foot or ankle.

2. Climb down the rocks alongside the parking area and sail across to get past the jetty. This can work well if the wind is making it over the jetty. If the wind is too southerly, you may be swimming for the first 50 yards.

3. Walk to the west along the path that circles the island and launch off the rocks well upwind. This area has the toughest launches but may provide you with the extra upwind ground you will need if you are sailing on a flood tide. Only launch down these rocks if you are very comfortable with the conditions since it is easy to be injured or damage gear among the large and slippery boulders.

Coming In. Most people sail in just east of the jetty with as much speed as possible and swim the last leg if there isn't enough wind to sail. If the tide is flooding, there is often a counter current near the shore that will pull you back toward the boat ramp. If you are swimming, and you see a head pop up nearby, have no fear. There is one very curious harbor seal that frequents the area. 🦈



## Save The Bay Presents SFBA Prez Peter Thorner With 2002 PROTECT THE BAY Award

☉ Suzanne Suwanda



San Francisco Boardsailing Association President Peter Thorner was recently honored with Save The Bay's 2002 Protect The Bay Award. Here Peter addresses Save The Bay members at the 2002 annual membership picnic on June 8 at Oakland's Martin Luther King Shoreline Park.

From left to right: Thorner at podium, Harold Gilliam, David Lewis (Save The Bay executive director), and Sheilah Fish. (Gilliam and Fish each won awards as well: CELEBRATE THE BAY, and RESTORE THE BAY, respectively.) ☉

## New Eastshore Park: Will There Be Access?

*(continued from page 1)*

If the planners are allowed to exclude windsurfing access based on overstated aesthetic concerns, then there is nowhere that access will be safe in the future. The irony is that a windsurfing access would actually allow more people to experience the real naturalness and isolation that can be found on the bay.

While the planners have failed locally, there is still a chance to fix the plan. In the fall, the plan will be presented to the State Parks Commission. The Commissioners are more likely to understand that a State Park should be inclusive. A number of meetings will be held in the East Bay and the public will be invited to comment. Windsurfers should be there to ask for reasonable access for cars. Reasonable access will allow bay access for windsurfers and kayakers and will also allow those who are not locals to also enjoy our new state park. Please keep an eye out for information on our website ([sfba.org](http://sfba.org)) and plan to attend one of these meetings. ☉

## Kites and Boards...

One of SFBA's goals is to develop new safety tips that include kitesurfing information. This project is ongoing. For tips and information now, check out San Francisco Kitesurfing Association (SFKA) at [sfkitesurfing.com](http://sfkitesurfing.com). SFBA will continue to promote safety for all and to fight for access that will benefit both windsurfers and kitesurfers. ☉



## Portable Toilet at Larkspur

Once again SFBA has arranged a portable toilet near the Larkspur launch site on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard near Remillard Park in Marin County. The unit is handicapped-accessible (therefore large enough to permit changing clothes) and will be there through September. The SFBA Board coordinates with the Larkspur public works department to install the porta-potty on town property each year, providing a more ecological alternative to the surrounding wildlife refuge and blackberry bushes. Funds for the unit come from SFBA dues. for the unit come from SFBA dues. ☉

## Three Rules of Crissy Field

 *Rick Paillon*

The most visible windsurfing venue in the Bay Area is the area of San Francisco Bay within two miles or so of the Golden Gate Bridge. Typically the launch site for this area is Crissy Field, so windsurfers usually refer to the area as “Crissy,” no matter where they launch. There is something foreboding about sailing Crissy. Sail boaters have long acknowledged the area as challenging because of the shifting winds and currents. For windsurfers the big ships and the heavy boat traffic and the lack of visibility of a downed sailor add to the danger. You’ve seen them out there, impressing the commuters and tourists. Some of the spectators consider them daredevils, skipping over the waves among the ferries and fishing boats. You’re tempted to join them, but are you good enough? How good do you have to be?

I was wary of Crissy when I first began sailing about seven years ago. I had no desire to sail there. I was happy at my home site, which was five minutes from my house. But as I got better I began visiting other sites when the wind wasn’t blowing at home. I had chatted to several people who sailed Crissy. Just about everyone I talked to had some kind of a horror story about sailing there. Nevertheless, I was drawn to the area by a combination of curiosity and wind-jonesing brought on by a wind famine in the North Bay.

I have been sailing there for five years now and I still keep hearing interesting stories from Crissy sailors. I thought a column of these stories would make good reading for “Wind & Currents” readers. I encourage everyone who has a good tale to tell about sailing Crissy to submit them to me for publication at [rpaillon@cwnet.com](mailto:rpaillon@cwnet.com). We will edit the most interesting ones and publish them. If this is a success for Crissy, we may move on to other challenging sites such as Third Avenue, Tomales Bay, and Sherman Island. Your stories do not have to involve a disaster, just something of interest to other sailors.

To get things rolling here are a few of my own Crissy stories.

### The Rule of Ten

About five years ago I bought a used board from a guy in the Marina District whose name I have forgotten. He had not been sailing much longer than I had but his home site was Crissy. He was unsure of his own ability to judge the wind conditions so he used the rule of ten. He did not go out unless there were at least ten other windsurfers on the water. He stopped sailing when he couldn’t see at least ten other sailors.

### The First Rule of Crissy

Don’t sail on a flood. I have heard this from dozens of experienced Crissy sailors. This rule is broken all the time, but if you are a newcomer, you would be wise to follow it. The first concern that I had about sailing at Crissy was that the wind would shut off and I would be sucked out the Golden Gate on a ebb current. Although this is eminently possible, it is far more probable that the wind will just weaken. If this happens on a flooding current, you won’t have enough power to schlog upwind against the current. People have been known to come ashore as far east as Fisherman’s Wharf during a flood tide. You have far better control of the situation if the wind and tide are opposing one another instead of joining forces against you.

My first experience sailing Crissy was during a 4-knot ebb. I had followed the two rules above. I went out on 6.5-meter sail and a 103-liter board. Although at the time the web page was reading 20 mph for Crissy, the wind was rather light. After the second or so run, as I got near the shore, the wind wasn’t strong enough to even stand up on. I started swimming for shore with my board and rig in tow when I was about even with Anita Rock.

I caught a few gusts but mostly had to swim in. As I was swimming I noticed over a dozen people still sailing out in the center of the bay. I felt sorry for them. They would have an even longer swim than I was having. I was carried about a mile downstream towards the Gate and landed at the beach between the Coast Guard station and Fort Point after about 40 minutes in the water. I left my stuff on the beach, walked back and got my car. My worst fear about sailing Crissy had been realized and I had survived without losing any equipment. I knew I would sail there again.

As a postmortem, I found that I had been caught in a wind shadow that occurs regularly in that part of the bay. Had I the confidence or experience, I could have sailed back out, away from shore, down wind, and upstream to where the wind was blowing. I then could have sailed all the way in, east of Anita Rock. I didn’t see anyone else swim in after me. In fact, people were still going out as I drove away.


This brings us to the Immutable Rule of Crissy:  
You will pay dues. 🌀



Pro windsurfer Josh Stone with wife Amy and son Harley



Left to right: Doreen, Ken Hartz, Mr. & Mrs. Jonah Lepak, and Kids

 *George Hays*

On Saturday June 1st, Coyote Point Yacht Club played host to the super fine SFBA Windfest party. An unprecedented windsurf and kitesurf industry presence, coinciding with an excellent turnout from local sailors, made this party one to remember. If you ever wanted to meet some of the sport's big names, this was the place to be. The free dinner compliments of SFBA left everyone feeling pretty satisfied. Then it was time for the raffle. Josh Stone showed some skin and donated the shirt off his back to make sure the raffle went well. And went well it did: the total amount of wind gear and clothing raffled off boggled the mind. Then, with minds sufficiently boggled, Shark Sandwich proceeded to play a few sets of really good rock and roll. Whether your favorite tunes sound like Macy Gray, Blink 182, or Bob Marley, you were covered. The next time SFBA announces a party, here's a suggestion: GO! 🍷



Shark Sandwich Rocks! Left to right: Jeff Leeds, Terry Carleton, J.R. Johnston, Gary Zimmerman



The Third Avenue Gang



"ASD" The Millers — Leslie and John — with daughter Carson and friend Mona



## San Francisco Boardsailing Association Board of Directors Election

Paid (2002) members only. Please vote for up to 9 directors. Write-in candidates are welcome and should include the candidate's contact information. Please return your ballot to SFBA, 1592 Union Street, Box 301, San Francisco, CA 94123 by September 27, 2002.

**George Hays**

George has been working grassroots and cyberspace with the SFBA to protect windsurfing access in the Bay Area since 1993. Knowing that the battle is never over and that there is strength in numbers, George produces the SFBA eNewsletter to get the word out to the masses via email when action is needed. Regular job: Business Development for iWindsurf.com.

**Jim McGrath**

Jim has been windsurfing since 1979. He currently races, mostly out of Berkeley. For the past few years he has been helping other board members fight for windsurfing access at Crissy Field, Coyote Point, and in the East Shore. He works as Environmental Manager at the Port of Oakland, and has a masters in Coastal Engineering.

**David Nelson**

An Oakland resident, 1984-2001 windsurfer (wannabe looper, jumps, swells, waves); 2001-present kitesurfer (loops, easy). Responsible for SFBA membership database and annual billing; answers to membership@sfba.org. When not on the water, he is a computer programmer (<http://davidnelson.info>.)

**Rick Paillon**

A Greenbrae resident windsurfing for 7 years, his favorite sites are Tomales, Crissy, and Rod & Gun. Rick is a mechanical engineer by profession; he also enjoys music.

**Nancy Peck**

Resides in Novato and has been windsurfing for 10 years, mainly at Sherman Island. A UC Berkeley business school graduate, CPA and tax partner in a San Francisco CPA firm, she has previously served as SFBA treasurer.

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San Francisco Boardsailing Association  
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add postage, mail this page. 2. Include y  
2002 dues if y  
are not current. 3. Go shred!

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**Suzanne Suwanda**

SFBA secretary for 2 years, has been active in SFO and Coyote Point access efforts, produces SFBA newsletter and the occasional party; windsurfing since 1976. Off the water she's a real estate agent by day and a bluegrass musician by night.

**Peter Thorner**

President of SFBA for 2 seasons, has been active in efforts to stop SFO runways, opposing over-height-limit buildings at Coyote Point and lobbying for new and improved launches at Treasure Island and Albany. Serves as SFBA liaison with United States Coast Guard.

**Benita Zimmerman**

Benita Zimmerman has been windsurfing for over 10 years. She usually sails at Coyote or 3rd Avenue and especially loves it when it is ebbing and the swells are big out in the channel. In the winter you can find her skiing West Face, Headwall or Shoot 75 at Squaw Valley; she has been an avid skier for over 30 years. When there is no wind or snow, she is usually on the tennis courts at Foster City or rollerblading at Sawyer Camp Road in San Mateo. In between all her sports, she finds time to service her clients by finding them the best possible real estate loans on the market; she has been a successful mortgage broker on the Peninsula for over 16 years. She has served as a board member for SFBA now for the past year and a half.

**Richard Zimmerman**

A board member for two years, Richard has been windsurfing for ten years in the Bay Area. A retired professor, he is active in Bay Protection issues.

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Write-in Candidate

Contact Info

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Contact Info



Election Ballot Inside!



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