



# Bay Currents

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## TSUNAMI RANGERS' 19TH ANNUAL SEA GYPSY RACE – RESULTS AND TALL TALES

*By Laura Nixon*

*Photos by Laura Nixon and Frank O'Reilly*

It was a cold, foggy day on the San Mateo coast — *oops*, that was another year. For the Sea Gypsy Race on May 2nd it was damn near *HOT* at Michael Powers' magical place on the beach at Miramar:



The seas that day made for an extremely exciting race. The buoys reported 8–11 foot swells and it was closing out for a solid mile around and south of Mavericks. You could see the masses of white water from a mile or two away on shore.

The conditions were such that for the first time in 19 years, the race course was shortened so that racers did not go around or cut through Pillar Point and get smushed into the rocks. The slot through the inside was literally impassable.

What? No opportunity for watching real carnage? Boooring! Well, it turned out that just doing the launches and landings was excitement enough for most of the spectators and racers.

As usual this race had just one class—anything and everything, singles, doubles, and all types of boats, from long skinny surf skis to short tubby plastic boats.

As high noon approached, Tsunami Commander Eric Soares gave his on-the-beach talk to the racers, outlining the course and the rules (such as they are):



Marta Talavera did a blessing of the kayakers and their journeys using rattle, song and sage smoke. She lived on Michael Power's property in the late '80s. Susan Whelan took over as the time-keeper this year, usually performed by her husband Dave, who was out of town.

The starting gun was a big ass firecracker attached to the business end of an arrow. Michael Powers intended to light the stick of dyno-mite, shoot the arrow and have it explode in the air... well, the timing was a little off and the thing exploded on the bow with a **big BANG** that deafened the racers, who were all stunned and temporarily paralyzed from the shock. However, they soon came to their senses and were off running or shimmying their boats into the water. The start of the race was exciting as you can see for the 15 boats and 17 paddlers:



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# BASK VOLUNTEERS FOR HABITAT RESTORATION

By Leslie Goss

It was a beautiful spring day when a work party of BASK, Bay Access, and Save the Bay volunteers launched from Loch Lomond Harbor for a paddle to the Marin Islands to assist with the habitat restoration project being undertaken by the Department of Fish & Wildlife.



The Marin Islands and surrounding tidelands cover 310 acres one mile east of San Rafael. The islands are a national wildlife refuge off limits to the public and the largest federally protected heron and egret rookery in the Bay Area. Our destination was the larger eastern island.

When we arrived we met up with a group of BASKers who had camped overnight at Kayak Camp on Angel Island. Our first order of business was to have lunch while Jessica Parsons of Save the Bay told us about the history of the island and the restoration project underway. Before getting down to our task of eradicating non-native vegetation, we were given a tour of the island including the main house and the guest house that leave traces of the lifestyle once lived there. These islands were once the private refuge of the Crowley Maritime dynasty.



After receiving instruction on which plants to eradicate we went to work pulling up fennel and other non-natives, being mindful to let the small seedlings of buckeye and oak alone. A tool called a weed jack was assembled and within minutes the French Broom, which grows rampant on the island, was being eradicated by its roots.



Everyone worked hard and enjoyed the opportunity to be on the islands. Save the Bay is hoping to partner with BASK again on this and other restoration projects being undertaken around the San Francisco Bay.

## NEWS BRIEFS

Kate McClain has sold Blue Waters to John and Pamalah Granatir, owners of Tamal Saka. Blue Waters will be the name of the combined company and its location will be in Marshall at the old location of Tamal Saka.

All the best to Kate, who has long been a valued member of the kayak community, steward of Tomales Bay, and excellent liaison between the people of west Marin and kayakers on Tomales Bay.

And best of luck to John and Pamalah!

There was a great, in-depth article in the *Marin Independent Journal* on March 21st about Marc Daniels, a Baidarka builder who has recently started offering build-your-own-boat classes in a workshop/boathouse in Inverness (up in Pt. Reyes).

Marc has been a boat builder since he was a kid and a kayak builder for 20 years. He studied with George Dyson in Washington state.

For \$1,480 you can take a flexibly scheduled 6-day class and go home with your own custom-built boat. He also sells finished boats for around \$2,800. For info call (415) 868-1488 or check out <http://www.truenorthboats.com>.