



POCOMOKE/JAMES CRUISE REPORT 2009
AUGUST 1-16, 2009
PAM & MIKE EPPRECHT

SUMMARY: The cruise was planned by Stan and Mary Hutchison, but on advice of his Doc, they had to cancel at the last minute. The planning was excellent and our thanks to Stan and Mary. The cruise lasted 15 nights and explored the lower Eastern Shore of Maryland and Upper Eastern Shore of Virginia along with the James River. There were several stops in Solomons and the Northern Neck of Virginia. Total distance traveled was 417 NM. The weather was warm, as expected for August, with a light breeze. As is the custom on the Bay, when traveling South, we had winds from the South. On our return trip North, we had winds from the North. Four boats participated in the cruise, three of which had AC and they were very happy.

July 31, 2009 Friday: This was the intended start date but the winds were from the south initially forecast to be in the 10-15 KT range but later the forecast was increased to 20 KT with gusts to 35. Early morning calls with Gypsea confirmed a go then a later call with Salt Shaker caused a rethinking of the plan and we delayed a day. Difficulty in reaching Gypsea due to a faulty VHF and poor coverage for their ATT cell phones, resulted in them slogging their way to Solomons from Grace Creek. Much thanks to Les Anstey, Judy Weckel, Dick Tanczos and "Escape" for their efforts to try to reach Gypsea. They ended up in Spring Cove Marina for the night.

August 1, 2009 Saturday Home Port to Mill Creek Solomons 35 NM: The winds had moderated and Eagle and Salt Shaker made the passage to Mill Creek in Solomons, with much less effort than the day before. A Captain's Party was held on Eagle at 1700 with crew of Koel arriving by dinghy. Rene and Gresh Sackett, friends of the Epprecht's from Hong Kong, live around the corner on Leason Cove, which is not suitable for anchoring.

August 2, 2009 Sunday Mill Creek Solomons to Crisfield 42 NM: Since it was a long trip, everyone got underway early. We had our South winds but we did get in some sailing. The wind and the seas built to 15 to 20 with 3-5 ft waves. This was not a pleasant ride but we did make it. Salt Shaker reported their chart plotter was on the OOC list so Eagle helped guide them in. All were very happy to be in Crisfield. Salt Shaker took a slip at Somers Cove Marina while Eagle and Gypsea anchored off the Coast Guard Station. All attended dinner at the Watermen's Inn. Suzy "Separate Checks" was our waitress and was a hoot. She named us couples 1, 2 and 3 with couple number 3 being "Cloudy". Dinner was excellent. At the point where the Commodore



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was going to induct Gypsea into CSSM in a very formal manner with all sorts of photographs and speeches for having qualified that night, it was reported that a tornado touched down about 5 miles away and that heavy rain was coming. After an abbreviated ceremony which consisted of handing over the pennant and a welcome shake, we were off to the dinghy. We made it back to the anchored boats before the heavy rain arrived. Welcome to Jim and Pamela McCloud to CSSM.

August 3, 2009 Monday Crisfield to Pocomoke City 30 NM: Morning started with the help of Reveille at the Coast Guard Station over the PA system at 0630. Then at 0700 the multiple checks of horns, whistles, bells etc on each and every boat in their flotilla. Due to a recently lowered overhead Power line (57 feet) and charted 2.5 depths in Broad Creek (later confirmed by Gypsea), Eagle and Salt Shaker remained in Crisfield.

Our newest CSSMer carried out the mission to Pocomoke City in their 20 inch draft vessel. They reported a beautiful ride up the river and a nice stay with free dockage at the town waterfront. They were met for dinner by the Montague's and Tanczos (their sponsor) to celebrate their qualification. Eagle and Salt Shaker opted for the greasier of the two greasy spoons in town for breakfast at Gordon's. It was noted that the locals were not eating, merely drinking coffee. The ordering process was a bit strange but the meal was good and the sausage was excellent. At Noon Salt Shaker and Eagle purchased tickets and boarded the Stephan Thomas for a day trip to Tangier Island. We were advised by 2 independent sources working for the ferry company that there were no drinks or food available on the Ferry, which seemed strange, but we planned accordingly. Upon boarding, we found a full service soft drink and snack bar. We arrived Tangier at 1315 and explored the town by golf cart then on foot. Had ice cream at Spanky's with Spanky serving it him self. On our way back we passed the post office and 30 golf carts waiting for the mail. Not much to do on Tangier Island. The Commodorable found a restaurant that served soft shell crab bites which were excellent and well worth the exorbitant price. The two captains found the local hardware store which more closely resembled a West Marine than a hardware store. Return trip was uneventful except that we were the envy of the other passengers since we were the only ones who had provisioned for the trip. The beer was really good. Salt Shaker came aboard Eagle for drinks and dinner during which the GenSet stopped working-Not Good.



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August 4, 2009 Tuesday Crisfield/Pocomoke/Reidville to Onancock 26 NM: Another Revielle thanks to USCG. Salt Shaker left the cruise departing for the other Mill Creek off the Pax River at 0800. Gypsea departed Pocomoke for it's trip to Onancock. Voyager with Chuck Ellis as crew departed Reidville for Onancock and Eagle left Crisfield for Onancock. Gypsea arrived first and took a slip at the Onancock Wharf Marina. Eagle anchored and Voyager reported in with engine overheating problems. They anchored about halfway up the channel and began working on the engine. Ending up replacing the SW pump impeller but not recovering the missing blade (this is only the first chapter of this story). Gypsea joined Eagle for cocktails since Eagle had a bit of air. Eagle had dinner at Bizzoto's and it was excellent. Gypsea was being joined by Pamela's sister and husband the next day so they planned on eating out that night.

August 5, 2009 Wednesday Onancock Lay Day: Voyager got underway and anchored near Eagle reporting engine working fine. Gypsea was joined by family and all explored the lovely town of Onancock. Gypsea had lunch at the General Store while Eagle and Voyager had lunch at the Irish Pub. Voyager came aboard Eagle for cocktails while Gypsea tried out Bizzoto's. It must be reported that Chuck brought a large selection of fresh items directly from "Chuck's Garden" which he went on and on about how hard he works to grow these delicious items. Eagle made arrangements to have the generator repaired and used Deep Creek Marine which Gypsea had used the day before. It was amazingly a \$20 capacitor and Jerry Ormsby did an excellent job. It was a bit scary when he pulled up in a Jag. Captain Mike immediately verified the rates. Turns out Jerry has a foreign car repair business. GenSet fixed.

August 6, 2009 Thursday Onancock to Deltaville 31 NM. Gypsea bid farewell to the cruise and was first to get underway. Voyager and Eagle followed out the 5 mile creek. Eagle noticed that Voyager and the t/t Voyager were no longer connected and so informed Voyager. The fourth time was a charm during the recovery process. We were headed for Jackson Creek, Southern Branch for the night, but Voyager had another overheating problem entering Jackson Creek and made way to the dock at Deltaville Marina which is where Denny purchased Voyager. After the engine cooled, they found the missing blade and attributed the overheating to the obstruction with the blade. To be continued. Voyager came aboard Eagle for drinks and dinner.



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August 7, 2009 Friday Deltaville to East River, Mobjack Bay 29 NM: The next morning we decided on a late departure to let Voyager get parts and work on the engine. At 1100 they declared her seaworthy and we got underway enroute to Mobjack Bay East River. Eagle was first out and soon heard that Voyager was again overheating. It was agreed that they would go back to the dock and fix the engine and catch up with Eagle if possible, if not we would rendezvous at Hampton Flats, which is what happened. The final fix was the replacement of the thermostat, which after a couple of sea trials, convinced the crew that it was in fact the culprit. Eagle had a peaceful night on the broad expanse of the East River. Quite a way off the Bay.

August 8, 2009 Saturday Deltaville/East River to Hampton Flats 41/29 NM: We found good wind from the SW and Voyager had a great sail all the way to Thimble Shoals Light where they finally put on the engine (which worked). We both sighted dolphins during our sails. Eagle did a motor sail out of Mobjack Bay and we both anchored in Mill Creek between the Hampton Roads Tunnel and Ft Monroe. It was a lumpy night with South winds pushing waves right under the bridge.

August 9, 2009 Sunday Hampton Flats to Kingsmill Marina 29 NM: We were constrained by a 60 clearance at the James River Bridge. We made our reservation for an 1000 opening and proceeded against a strong SW wind. Arriving a bit early, the bridge tender opened for us and we proceeded up the river in grand fashion enjoying the 1 KT + current pushing us along. Voyager did a good deal of sailing. We passed the "Reserve Fleet" across from Ft Eustis which consists of 30 or so transport vessels maintained by the Maritime Administration in case we need them in time of National Emergency. We arrived Kingsmill Marina at 1430 and easily took our slips. This was the start of a three day 100 degree period, so it was fortunate that we were on shore power. This was a crew change for Voyager with Jim Norton and his son Niles joining Voyager. They arrived late afternoon and Chuck drove their car back to Easton arriving late at night. Kingsmill is a wonderful complex so we explored and selected Regatta Restaurant for dinner. There was no sign of difficult economic times at Kingsmill. Excellent dinner. Niles did some further exploration at the Marina Bar where there was live music.



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August 10, 2009 Monday Kingsmill Marina to Deep Creek 17 NM: We had a forecast of the hottest day of the year so we decided to remain at the marina with AC running and enjoy the pool. Eagle got underway at noon, picked up fuel and Voyager followed soon after also getting fuel. We had the current against us going back down the river and arrived at Deep Creek at 1540. Cocktails were hosted aboard Voyager and we all spent a pleasant night.

August 11, 2009 Tuesday Deep Creek to Smithfield Station Marina 11NM: The trick to getting into Smithfield is timing your passage over Bob Shoal (3 ft on the chart). We made plans for a noon passage over the shoal which was 2hr 35 min before high tide. We made it through with Voyager indicating he successfully tested his depth sounder at one point. We arrived at Smithfield Station to an easy docking situation and lots of help. Cannot say enough good things about this Marina. Great restaurant for lunch. Complimentary Breakfast and a business center to catch up on Emails. Eagle walked into town while Voyager decide on pool time during the early afternoon and put off exploring until just before dinner which was at Smithfield Inn and was excellent.

August 12, 2009 Wednesday Smithfield Station Marina to Hampton Flats 18 NM. We started the day with a great complimentary breakfast and then did some more exploring of the town and lovely old homes. Smithfield is making a great effort to attract tourism. We had Bob Shoal and the James River Bridge to contend with and both were negotiated successfully. The bridge opened early and held up traffic for about 25 minutes total. Hopefully none of the cars could read our boat names. We anchored in the same place as on the down Bay portion of the trip since the winds were forecast to be from the North. Shortly after anchoring, we saw some significantly black clouds and strong winds from the West. Eagle reset her anchor. It turns out that Norfolk had 5.25 inches of rain in about 2 hours, tunnels were flooded and closed. We probably had two inches, then it all passed and we had a peaceful night.

August 13, 2009 Thursday Hampton Flats to Fishing Bay Deltaville 40 NM. We got underway early with Voyager first out due to the long trip. Again we were fortunate to see dophins just north of Thimble Shoals Light. Voyager sailed for a while and Eagle motor sailed until the wind died. We anchored in Fishing Bay and watched the junior



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sailors of Fishing Bay YC complete their races. NOAA predicted, and we actually had, North winds and a peaceful night.

August 14, 2009 Friday Deltaville to Reidville 33 NM: Originally we planned to go back to Onancock since we had a weather contingency day available and the return crew on Voyager had not been there, so we got underway. About an hour out Eagle reported it's engine temp going up slightly so it was decided that Eagle would go back to Deltaville and fix the problem and Voyager would proceed to Reidville. Eagle would catch up if the repair was quick or join Voyager the next day. It turned out to be seaweed in the intake strainer and Eagle reached Mill Creek off the Great Wicomico just at Happy Hour. Voyager chose to anchor in town to have dinner ashore. Peaceful night with cool temperatures.

August 15, 2009 Saturday Reidville to Mill Creek Solomons 44 NM: Initially we had good winds. Voyager had their sails up before they passed the sea buoy. Wind was out of the NE so we hoped to sail which we did for a while until it dropped. We anchored in Mill Creek and Voyager invited Eagle over for drinks but the enticement of Eagle's already running AC quickly changed the plans. The night cooled and it was peaceful sleeping.

August 16, 2009 Sunday Mill Creek Solomons to Home Port 35 NM: Both boats were underway early again trying to sail but the wind remained out of the NE and calmed. It was a beautiful day and we all arrived home safely.

CRUISE NIGHTS

EAGLE – 15

VOYAGER – 12

GYPSEA – 5

SALT SHAKER - 3