



Potomac River Cruise May 27 – June 7, 2009

This cruise turned out to be a motoring effort with an occasional opportunity to put a sail up - some made a rare attempt to use two sails and one, briefly, tried a spinnaker. Not only were the winds generally light, but usually on the bow despite the weatherman's predictions which were consistently wrong. There were some positive factors. The tidal current was, for the most part, favorable; and the nights cooled off nicely for sleeping. Also, aside from Friday, June 5, rain occurred in the late afternoon or night.

Four boats, AVATAR, FISCAL STRAY, KARAYA, and REJUVENATION stayed the course and DAY ONE missed the last night. SECOND LOVE missed the first (concerned about the weather) the fourth (because of battery problems) and the last two nights (using good judgment to wait out the rainy Friday and they'd planned to leave a day early to head South). MAKANI joined us for the first three days and VOYAGER, coming from the South, was with us on the first night in Old House Cove at Solomons. They also joined us in Alexandria for the Captain's party and group dinner, without a boat. We surmised that Stephanie was anxious to explore new shopping grounds.

In Old House Cove, we had drinks on AVATAR; and the second night, all but DAY ONE went to The Torpedo restaurant in Cartagena Creek which surprised us by providing a bill of fare for a hamburger type "joint" as opposed to the excellent menu and food that we had had last year and was still advertised on their web site.

Friday we went to Canoe Neck Creek where SECOND LOVE welcomed all aboard briefly before a storm forced everyone back to their own boats. We made it just in time. Sadly, REJUVENATION claimed to have anchored in sea weed, dragged, and had to motor through the fleet for the storm's duration.

We then went to Port Tobacco River while SECOND LOVE went on to Piscataway Creek for battery replacement and a fun dinner with old friends who helped get their problem resolved. We all got together on DAY ONE for drinks. DAY ONE dragged anchor here. This anchorage was very exposed to the South, but the winds were from the Northwest.

Our next stop was Mattawoman Creek. It was Sunday and you would have thought you were on the South River on a weekend. This was a relatively tight, but protected, anchorage, with lots of seaweed again. AVATAR had head problems (clogged with seaweed) which Ted Clark took the lead in repairing. Monday morning we headed to our destination in Alexandria. Enroute, AVATAR had to replace the impeller, with lots of expert advice offered over the VHF. We elected to skip Mount Vernon with its charge of \$2 a foot just to tie up, even for dinks, plus an entry fee, and we were also reluctant to anchor in the Potomac. Most stopped at National Harbor for pump out and fuel and a spectacular view of the new bridge.



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SECOND LOVE arrived at the marina first to help as others arrived; but the staff at the marina was very helpful and the wind light so "tie up" went well. Only DAY ONE was put in a tight spot. Because we arrived early, all but KARAYA decided to have dinner at Geranio (Italian) where a number of things weren't as promised; but they acted without reckoning, with Joan's tenacity. While the waiter was surly until the time for tips, the food was very good. The group, individually and collectively, explored Alexandria the next day where we found Denny and Stephanie shopping.

The one problem was that the docks weren't really gated, so both KARAYA and DAY ONE found people on their boats, without permission, using the boats as props for photo ops. DAY ONE cleared the deck quickly when Joe demanded a dollar per person to have their pictures taken. The group did receive a nice compliment when the staff told the dock master that they were used to power boats, but the sail boaters were very nice people.

We also found from the dockmaster, a fun restaurant, "Jack's Place" for breakfast. It was similar to "Chick and Ruth's" in Annapolis, but much smaller, and no pledge or national anthem.

The marina didn't permit drinks on the dock, so with the number of people included, the Captain was very grateful when KARAYA volunteered to hold the Captain's party aboard - the Captain provided ice, cups, etc. It was there that we celebrated two anniversaries, the Tanczos'; 33rd (June 3) and the Hetherington's 44th (June 5). Drinks were followed by the group dinner at the Warehouse Bar and Grill, where everything was as promised and the dinner was excellent.

On June 3rd, everyone went their own way again, with the celebrants going French that evening at The Refuge and the Days enjoying a late anniversary dinner At Eve's. Both were reported as very good.

I do need to note that FISCAL STRAY had been having windless problems that necessitated hand over hand anchor retrieval. Her captain was able to effect repairs with KARAYA's captain's supervision. On completion, Tod negligently popped an essential part overboard while testing. Fortunately, he was able to acquire a replacement at West Marine for the missing piece.

It rained that Wednesday evening, night, and part of the next morning. In addition, on the 4th as we were preparing to depart, an unpredicted, fairly stout wind, came from the East - the least desirable direction for exiting the marina. Everyone was there at 0630 to help extricate DAY ONE from their challenging spot. Then all remaining captains moved on to REJUVENATION, KARAYA, AVATAR, and FISCAL STRAY, losing a captain dockhand as each boat departed. Everyone made it out successfully. As AVATAR was leaving with the wind driving the bow West, and the boat unresponsive in reverse, because of the full keel, the Captain was complaining that he needed a bow thruster. The



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first mate said we could get it. The Captain had been lobbying for one for several years. However, after our successful exit, the first mate said the Captain had done a great job; and with the crisis over and on mature consideration, she questioned how often a bow thruster would be used and how much it would cost.

We had decided to skip Mattawoman on the return and go directly to the Port Tobacco River and then to Smith Creek to accommodate the desires of several boats. At the Port Tobacco River, the wind was again favorable for anchoring and we enjoyed drinks aboard REJUVENATION.

Then it started to rain and it rained all night and the next day. Everyone that was exposed to the elements was soaked. DAY ONE had a bilge pump problem. When the bilge outlet was under water, water was flowing into the bilge. As the wind and seas subsided, the problem stopped but the Days decided to follow up on it at Zahniser's. There was a brief respite from the rain Friday night when anchoring and FISCAL STRAY asked everyone for drinks and quesadillas. Then the rain started again and while all were disappointed, we were still drying everything out and thought it best to "regret" this invitation. Both Dick and myself had Henri Lloyd foul weather gear which proved to be totally inadequate. DAY ONE was running out of underwear so they decided to skip Mill Creek and go to Zahniser's to prepare for the Gates' Patuxent River cruise. Even with a lovely home and beautiful boat, the general feeling was that a relatively inexpensive expenditure for additional underwear would be appropriate.

The last night in Mill Creek off the Patuxent found everyone aboard AVATAR for drinks. Sunday had a slower start with REJUVENATION headed for the Gates' cruise too and everyone else headed home. Again, the winds generally weren't great for sailing. A real plus for KARAYA was that Baxter and Maggie proved to be seaworthy. We hope everyone had as much fun as we did.

Boat	Days
AVATAR	11
DAY ONE	10
FISCAL STRAY	11
KARAYA	11
MAKANI	3
REJUVENATION	11
VOYAGER	1

Respectfully submitted,

Alex and Joan Collins, Cruise Captains



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