

2025 Pirate Cruise to Virginia Beach

5/23/25: Technically, the cruise hadn't begun yet. After a reasonably rainy several days, we "set sail". However, we weren't alone. Debris washed into the river by the rain was abundant. But reduced speed and a little luck allowed all eleven boats to arrive in Colonial Beach without incident.



The wind had been up for several days and was predicted to continue for most, if not all, of the next ten days. And a consistent 10 – 15 mph wind can make docking a challenge, especially for those whose slip also competes with the fast-moving current produced by the wind pushing water out Monroe Bay's narrow inlet.

The difference between warm and cool was largely dependent on clouds. More than one person commented that they spent much of the arrival day taking off or putting on more layers of clothing. It was a small price to pay to enjoy a spectacular day along the Potomac River.

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5/24/25: Another day much like the first, the gang broke up into smaller groups for walks or biking to town, tinkering with boats, plotting a course to the next destination and enjoying time outdoors away from normal daily pressures.



The group reassembled to pay tribute to a nice and most generous dinner of ribs, cheesy potatoes, garden salad and apple cobbler, all supplied by our hosts, Bill and Susan.



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5/25/25: Another day with a little less wind made this morning's potluck breakfast a great success.



Thankfully, Bill's boat holds a lot of people! Our destination: St. Clement Isle. I'm sure many have driven past the area for years never realizing the significance of what you were passing by.



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Knot Home has past this Island numerous times. The large cross and lighthouse, serve as unmistakable landmarks. We had no idea that Isle was part of Maryland's parklands.



The fact is, none aboard had ever visited the Island. So after cautiously approaching to test depths, the boat was secure, and the Island was ours. Well..., mostly.



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It turns out there is a water taxi that shuttles people from the shoreland to the Island. So, we weren't exactly alone.



The Island is immaculate and easy to walk, with freshly mown lawns and upscale outhouses.



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The history of the Island is well documented, so look it up if you're interested. But it was neat to see how the Island's history was intertwined with St. Mary's where many in the group visited during last year's cruise to Dennis Point.



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To my eyes, I think OYC is delivering some of the BEST cruises we've ever had!



Job well done! And many thanks to Bill and Susan for another great OYC cruise and to Edith our Commodore and the many members that make all this possible!



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5/26/25: For some members, continuing to the Chesapeake Bay was an early rise. Of those, most departed from Colonial Beach at 6:00a and arrived at the mouth of the Potomac at 8:00a where we were greeted by slack tide and a northerly wind of about 10 knots.

The first group arrived in Onancock at 11:00a and all were safely in their slips by 2:30p.



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With all boats secure, the sun made an appearance as welcome beers were handed out to all.



After a brief gathering on the dock to welcome the sun, the first order of business was a visit to the liar's bench. So how big was the fish?



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Mallards is a most excellent restaurant located next to the marina. Not only were we treated to good food, we enjoyed live music just outside, in celebration of Memorial Day. Karen Hart (she and Dave will join us later) raves about their crab stuffed avocado. We weren't disappointed. Don't pass it up if you have the chance!



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5/28/25 Walks into downtown Onancock were pleasant but short. It is a very nice and very small town. So, when members discovered there was a short ferry ride to Tangier Island at our marina, many opted to explore the Island.



Tangier's history is well-documented, so no need to repeat it here. However, if you've never been, it is a worthwhile trip. Suffice it to say that Tangier inhabitants pride themselves on being the "soft-shell crab capital of the world". As you pull in (or out) of Tangier, it is impossible to miss the free-standing crab shacks, sticking out of the water, some in ruin and others still in use.



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The Island is very easy to walk. There are very few cars and most get around on golf carts or scooters. If you've ever wanted to go back in time and imagine the life of a waterman, this is the place to do it!



5/28/25 Weather waits for no one. Originally, we were to depart for Cape Charles and indeed, one boat in our group got up early to do just that. However, the remaining lazy heads agreed to spend another night in Onancock, and go into Hampton a day early, thus removing Cape Charles from our cruise schedule.



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5/29/25 What a lovely day to be on the Bay! Off we go to the Docks at Downtown Hampton. Well, all except for SeeSea who opted for the quieter destination of Safe Harbor Blue Water, also in Hampton.



As far as I know, this is a first for OYC. The concrete floating docks, trash receptacles at every other boat and a location with easy walking to restaurants and museums, as well as home to one of the best dock masters (Allie) anywhere on the Bay. I think OYC made a favorable impression on her, so if you ever go, be sure to mention you are with OYC and I suspect you will enjoy a warm welcome!



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Since we were a day early everyone had time to walk around, familiarize themselves with the area and then meet up again for a group dinner.

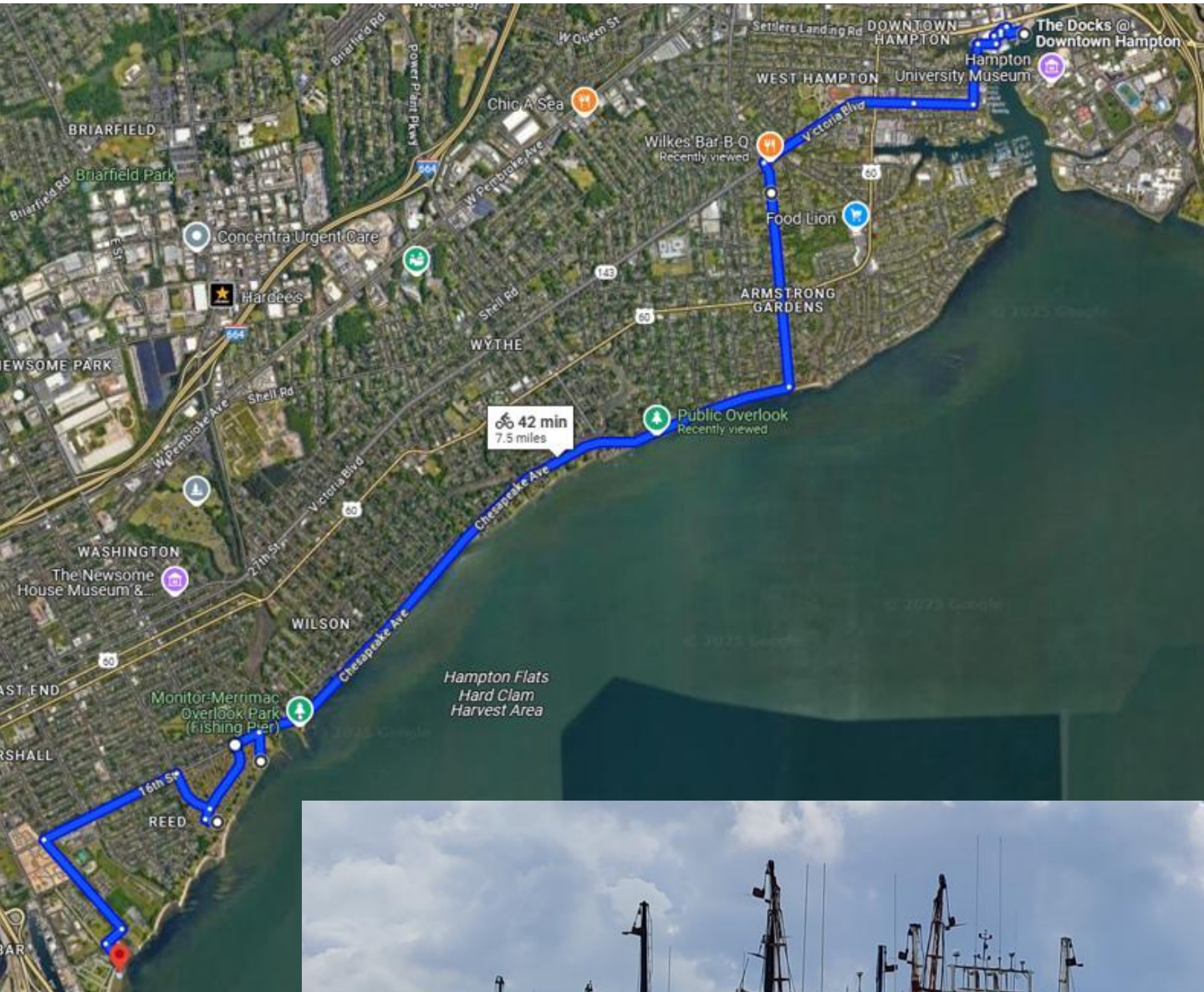


5/30/25 Of course, the primary timing for our visit to Hampton was to attend Hampton's Black Beard Pirate Festival. Today, the volunteers making up "Blackbeard's Crew of Hampton Virginia" set-up for the following day's festivities.



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Meanwhile some of us opted for a little exercise by bicycling to the Monitor Merrimac Overlook Park and continuing into Newport News.



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5/31/25 Blackbeard Pirate Festival! I've been to several pirate festivals including several visits to Rock Hall and we've enjoyed them all. But this is, hands-down, the best. Blackbeard's Crew does a great job keeping their costumes relevant to the period and many demonstrations allow you to imagine what the life of a pirate was like.



It isn't reasonable to include all the pictures in this journal. However, if you would like to see more, visit [OYC's website](#). Of course, many of us were not in period appropriate garb...



... and some of us had to pay the price (much to my wife's delight)!

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Now, perhaps some of us take this whole romantic view of pirating a little more seriously than others. But all came to enjoy the spirit (or perhaps several spirits).



And Carrusin's spirit ended up winning second place in the boat decorating contest!



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It's worth mentioning that Blackbeard met his demise in the waters near Hampton and enjoyed an after-life with his head on a pike at the mouth of the Hampton River. The battle was commemorated by narration and demonstration as the British war ship took command of Blackbeard's vessel and put him in chains.



This was a real treat for those of us with slips. We had front row seats on the bow of our boats!



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And just in case all of this wasn't enough fun, Hampton treated us to a spectacular fireworks display featuring a fire waterfall under the bridge!



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6/1/25 Departing Hampton, we set sail for Virginia Beach. In this area of the Bay, it is possible to see (but nearly impossible to photograph) dolphins and other wildlife all seeking shelter from the sea...



... and seemingly undaunted by the constant parade of military vessels navigating to and fro.



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As we motored past Fort Story and the Cape Henry lights, we're now on the Atlantic Ocean and enjoying more dolphin sightings...



On our way into Virginia Beach.



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We docked at the Rudee Inlet Station Marina...



... just in time for fresh tuna! The marina is a working dock with all manner of deep-sea fishing vessels. We were advised by our dock master (Baily) that OYC is the only yacht club he works with. Another stellar reputation earned by OYC!



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But make no mistake, this is a prime location, with the Rudee's Restaurant at the marina and just a few blocks from the beach and all it has to offer!



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Dan and Deb offered up a BBQ to help members recover from restaurant bills. Added to our group was Dave and Karen Hart and Heidi, a friend of Vicky and Bob and now, the rest of us too.



Bill and Kingsley of See Sea's crew treated everyone to a wonderful guitar session.



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And then there was more bicycling all the way from Rudee's, down the boardwalk, through the Cypress-filled waters of First Landing State Park...



... and out to the Bay, just west of Fort Story.



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6/4/25 After a few fun filled days at the beach, we regretfully parted ways with See Sea and headed for Urbanna.



Urbanna is another quiet little town, unless you are visiting during the Urbanna Oyster Festival (we were not)! Our destination was the Urbanna Boat Yard and Marina, fondly referred to as Urbby, by locals and situated just beyond the city dock. It is also the home port to OYC's own Bruno and Susan Millonig (Millie Gael) who unfortunately were unable to meet us until the very end of our visit.



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Things were winding down now towards the end of our cruise and Urbanna gave us a chance to walk, talk and dine.

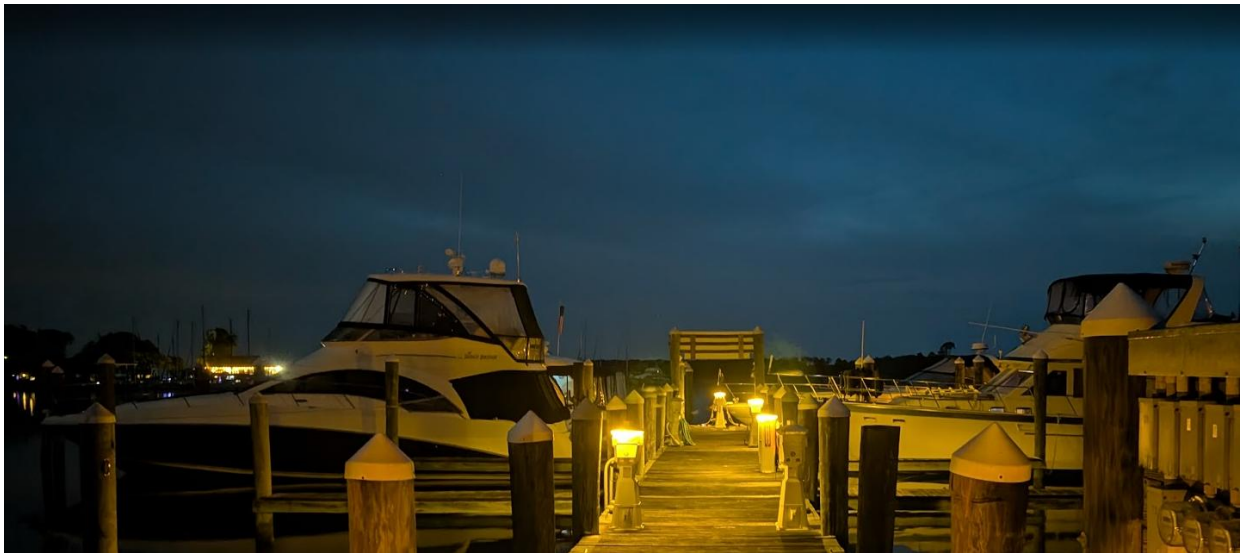


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We also made good use of the marina's well-appointed pavilion for a couple more potluck meals...



... and then it was on to our final destination: Corinthian Yacht Club. Well for most anyhow.



Dan & Deb had an opportunity to meet up with some former OYC members. However, Endeavor, Escapade and Gratitude spent the evening at the Corinthian Yacht Club's happy hour and Delores (CYC Commodore) honored OYC by taking them to Pier 450 for a delicious diner.

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So yes, it was a wonderful trip. But why this journal?

For many of us, there are only a limited number of opportunities to live life to the fullest. I hope this journal gives the members who participated in this cruise something to remember it by.

And for members that were unable to join us, I hope it sparks your imagination for future trips. Don't let these opportunities pass you by, if you can help it.



Please consider joining the OYC board and help us plan more adventures of a lifetime!

Best, Dan & Deb