

A newbie's perspective of SFBANTA Rio Vista Rendezvous



Having recently purchased a vintage (OK, let's call it what it is: "old") 32' Nordic Tug, Pam and I were a little apprehensive about "fitting in" at the Rio Vista Rendezvous. Though I have been following the goings on of SFBANTA via the web for the last couple of years, this would be our first time to participate at one of the organization's events. We had long looked forward to the 2008 Rendezvous.

Traveling to the event wasn't a problem; Rio Vista is Tugzilla's home port! Having originally planned to keep our tug in "his" (yes, it's a boy!) berth, our first site of the SFBANTA gathering was as we approached the guest dock on foot from the parking lot early Friday morning. Bacon in hand for the BBBB and proudly sporting our ID badges, Pam and I were immediately made to feel

welcome as Bud greeted us with a smile (maybe for the bacon?) and Scotty handed us a goody bag full of neat stuff! Then, once the others began to notice the newbies, the question "Where's Tugzilla?" seemed to resound along the dock.

As I mentioned before, I'd read up on the adventures of the SFBANTA members at the web site and, in a way, felt I already knew some of you through the stories; but, in fact I knew only one member: Bob Scura, salty keeper of the 32' tug "Norma Jean"! The modern day Jack London who was berthed in a slip next to my Dad's Willard Vega trawler in Rio Vista a few years back. I'd met Bob in passing and many an evening I would admire and covet the Norma Jean. "Some day," I thought "I'm gonna get me a Nordic Tug!" Fast forward about 5 years and here we were, face to face again with the legend Bob and with other "Tuggers". And where WAS Tugzilla, anyway?? Why, over in G shed. Well, not for long. "We'll move Hoot back a bit and slip you right in and tie you off of Snug Tug!" said Bob. Bob's, and everyone else's enthusiasm, was contagious so we soon brought Tugzilla (little tug with big attitude; hence the name) around to meet his extended family. First, though, we had to experience Bud's boiled breakfast in a bag. What a treat and the perfect beginning to our first rendezvous. This, we realized, was going to be great fun!

The breakfast was our first chance to sit and talk with many of the other SFBANTA members present and was also where I discovered that Bob Scura wasn't the only member I knew. Pam and I had actually met Linda Farris a couple years back at a Delta Marina event. It took us some extended thought and conversation over BBBB to figure that out; but, son of a gun if we didn't finally make the connection! Small world!



A bit later in the day, we eventually moved Tugzilla to the guest dock to join our new friends. The 100' cruise to the dock was uneventful with no dramatics. . . a VERY good thing! Having once gotten him secured to the dock with many a helpful hand (thanks, Carol, for showing Pam the properly flemish down a dock line, Tugzilla was given as warm a welcome as his owners had received. I don't believe I've ever met a friendlier group of folks than the SFBANTA members and moving to the dock brought the full force of the word "conviviality" home to me and Pam. Had we stayed tucked away in G berth, we would not have realized the fun and good conversation we'd have missed out on. Nor would we have learned about the effectiveness of dish soap on squeaky docks, the sock on the burgee trick, or that Wayne had such an affinity for soft, cushy, giant chairs; But, hey, who doesn't??!

It was all such a kick in the pants! We thoroughly enjoyed our first SFBANTA rendezvous and can't wait for the next! And not just because of the nifty Tug Tweaks trophy or the cool raffle prizes either. Wow!!! Definitely a stroke of beginner's luck! All that aside, it was you who made the experience for us. Thanks for making it a memory of a lifetime for us. It was so much darned fun that we're still grinning about it and telling stories to family, friends, neighbors, the vet., the mail person, strangers.

We truly appreciate how well organized the gathering was and the amazing wealth of knowledge present among the members and sponsors alike. Oh, not enough food, though. . . JUST KIDDING! There were massive amounts of food! You guys know how to throw a party.

In closing, I would heartily recommend to those who are only drifting the web seas and dreaming about a Nordic Tug: Remember, life is not a dress rehearsal - you've got one shot at it. Owning a Nordic Tug, even a "vintage" one, is a great way to enjoy some terrific experiences, meet the nicest people, and journey to new places.

For these SFBANTA newbies, the adventures are just beginning...

Vince and Pam Meyer
Tugzilla NT032-38