

### We've set a deadline

November. This is our fifth month living aboard. We've become well acclimatized to it; safe and secure here in the marina, very comfortable. Perhaps too comfortable?



Living at Burnt Store marina is almost like being in Disneyland, with all of the landscaping. It's beautiful. But, we bought the boat to go cruising, not to be a marina queen.

We've tried to get out day sailing "once a week"; that has gradually slipped to once or twice a month. There's always something to do on the boat. We're not bored, but time slips by. The marina is like a womb... warm and safe.



Here's "Pops", Mary's dad Dick Davis, joining us for a day cruise. Later the wind picked up to over 20 knts. The boat was playfully romping along at 7 knots boat speed, with all three sails set. FUN ! Island Packets are stiff and love a fresh breeze.



We're not alone in being "stuck" in the marina. Of the 5 live-aboard boats on our dock, there are a variety of stories. One boat has not moved from the dock in three years. Another has made two sailing trips in the past two years, for a couple of weeks each time. And, there's a crotchety old bachelor who has been out day sailing twice in five months. There is almost a magnetic attraction to stay in the marina, for those who can afford it. Stay home. Stay safe. Stay comfortable. It's too much trouble to go out.



Here are photos of our fellow live-aboard boats. Two never leave; one is provisioning for the Caribbean, and one goes gunkholing locally.

The gear on deck is NOT a good indicator. The boat with the fuel cans is one that never leaves!





The big news this month is a happy reunion with our friends the Taylors. David and Susan are completing their ASA Bareboat certification through Windsong Sailing Academy with a charter trip here in Charlotte Harbor. We first met on a similar trip almost a year ago. Hey! Great to see you guys again !!!



Who's that in the dinghy? Why isn't it moving? I'll never tell.... (Smile!).

Captain C.J. from Windsong with his happy students.







Nature is all around us. Even in the marina. Do you hear snorting outside? Maybe the manatees are visiting.

I can't believe they come into the dirty water in the marina, but they do. These photos were taken from the cockpit of our boat at the dock.



We've made lots of new friends, and we've enjoyed the camaraderie with other couples here in the marina. There's a whole new social scene among the live-aboards. You instantly have rapport with your common live style choice.

December will be our final month in port for a while as we provision the boat and say goodbye to family over Christmas. Our family will join us on the boat, and we've rented a small condo for a few days. They're all curious about what we're doing! The kids and grandparents will visit, see the boat, and we'll go sailing and anchor out for at least one night. After Christmas we'll send our vehicle back to Atlanta for storage, and we'll be without a car. We'll set sail "cruising" within a day or so afterwards; December 28<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>.



Did I mention being without a car? That's the only part left that bothers me. It's proof again that this is like a second childhood. We're now regressing to before-having-wheels. Aaaarrgh! NO WHEELS!!! Our plan is to test Enterprise Rent-A-Car's motto "We'll pick you up" when we need to go somewhere by land.



The boat is in great shape. Mary and I have refinished the brightwork. I've replaced all of the bad hoses and other items flagged in the survey. We've bought additional safety equipment for off-shore sailing; jacklines, tethers, and harnesses.



It's time to leave the nest. We've set a deadline for ourselves of the end of December. We'll cut the dock lines and go! South along Florida's west coast, then the Keys, then north along the east coast in the spring.

**NEXT MONTH....**

**WE'RE OUTTA HERE !!!**

....Mary & Roy Stegall  
aboard S/V "Gideon"  
November 2007