

Port Royal

We're planning a one year stop here. By chance, we fell into a nice spot at Port Royal. The people are friendly, the marina is family run, and they're attentive to their customers. The climate is mild, and there's a local live-aboard community, so we found we had instant friends.

What was to be a one night stop on our way south is now a one year layover!



There are two reasons for stopping; one is to work and raise money to replenish our cruising funds. My revised budget estimate is \$15,000 a year for boat maintenance and upgrades. And that's with doing the labor ourselves!

But, there's another reason we stopped; a need for some steady human contact. Full time cruising, anchoring out month after month, leaves a void. We'll enjoy our new friends here while we take a year off as live-aboards.



And... Hmm... Port Royal is half way between Raleigh and Atlanta, where we have family. We can visit the kids, and they can visit us. That's part of the "human contact" we were missing.

Here's Mary with son Luke, and our daughter Theresa and her husband Matt, whom we saw on a visit to Raleigh.

Luke has made his own "life style choice". He's a scuba instructor on Gizo, in the Solomon Islands. I'm glad he came home for a visit!

(Guess which one in the photo left civilization for the South Sea Islands. It isn't hard.)



Here's our son John and his girlfriend Laura, who came to Port Royal and stayed overnight on the boat.



Finding work wasn't difficult. Mary spoke with a friend who had moved here from Atlanta, and was hired the next day as a nurse at the local hospital, just 2 miles away.

When the local TowBoat Captain found I was a licensed Captain, I was drafted into the on-call rotation for the local TowBoat U.S. service. We were lucky that Mary and I easily found work. It's fate; we didn't choose Port Royal. Somehow, Port Royal chose us! All part of God's plan.

Driving the TowBoat has been exciting, and at times challenging. You get a chance to collect lots of good sea stories. (Smile!).





Here's a boat aground who called for assistance. Nope... I wasn't able to pull them off when I arrived. TOO LATE !

I successfully pulled them off seven hours later, as the tide returned and the boat was upright again.

NOTE: Many of the tows I've done had charges of over \$1,000. But, if the owner has Boat U.S. "unlimited" option, the charges go back to the national. There's no charge to the owner. I have that myself. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED !

In one sense, when we got to Port Royal we were ready to stop for a while. But then again... those beautiful sunsets keep calling us....

Gee, how soon can we drop the dock lines and get out of here? (Smile!)



And finally, here's the wonderful lady who's working night shift as a nurse to support me in my old age.

(Why is this woman smiling ???)

FUTURE CRUISER NOTES:

Some readers may wonder what cruisers do to earn some cash. Here's what we've heard from other cruisers. This isn't a made up "idea" list; these are jobs we've found other cruisers doing to raise money or extend their budgets.

- Nurse. There's a shortage everywhere. Hospitals, nursing homes, hospices.
- EMS tech. Same as nurses; there's a shortage of trained people, so it's easy to find work when you stop somewhere.
- Boat maintenance. A local live-aboard here charges \$50/hour to do you-name-it for other boat owners at the marina. Light engine work, electrical, equipment installation, general handyman, or cleaning and waxing the hull. I've seen the same thing in other marinas.
- West Marine. If you're going to work retail, at least it's in the marine industry, and you get deep discounts on stuff you buy for yourself. I've met four different cruisers who work part-time at West Marine, in four different cities.
- Diver. You can earn \$\$\$ doing hull cleanings. It's strenuous work, so you need to be in good shape. I'm a diver and I still hire it done. I wound up huffing-and-puffing when I tried to do it myself.
- Delivery Captain. I've heard of rates from \$150 to \$200 a day. Most are licensed Captains.
- TowBoat U.S. or SeaTow. You'll need to be a licensed captain with the towing endorsement. The rate here at Port Royal is \$45/hour for the captain. BUT... you only get paid when you're called out, so it isn't steady income. For me, it's totaled \$1,800 over three months.
- Tour Boat or Dive Boat Captain. With a Captain's license, you can usually find work in places like the Florida Keys, but it may not be steady.
- Artist. Pick up driftwood and make something out of it. Or jewelry. This idea is almost limitless. Just use your imagination.
- Canvas work. You'll need a heavy sewing machine, such as a Sailrite. There've been live-aboard seamstresses in three different marinas we stopped at.
- Cutting Hair. It's tricky to find a professional hair stylist when you're living on a boat. One cruiser set herself up as a hair stylist on her trawler for other cruisers in the area. This was in Boot Key harbor, Marathon.
- Internet Professor. Do you have an advanced degree? With a fast internet connection, you can work from anywhere.
- Marina dock hand. Low pay, but it gets you off the boat, and you may get free dockage as a benefit. I've heard several cruisers mention this deal.
- Marina office work. Dockmaster, bookkeeping, etc. in the office. This one is open to the ladies.
- Head boat deckhand. Head boats are daily fishing charters. The Captain usually has a mate or two aboard to help out.

I'm sure there are other creative ways for cruisers to make a buck; these the ones we've happened to run into during our time afloat.

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