

## Waiting for Weather in South Florida

We stayed on a mooring in Ft. Lauderdale for a week. It was nice hanging out on the beach, and seeing the sights along Las Olas boulevard. We were hoping to get a weather window to cross to the Bahamas “soon” but the weather didn’t seem to be cooperating. As day after day passed with forecasts for north winds and 5 to 8 foot waves in the gulf stream, we had to reset our expectations. We might be waiting for a while.

The Ft. Lauderdale moorings at \$30 a day are a bit pricey. Hmmm... if we have to wait, why not wait someplace cheaper? We talked it over and decided to migrate north to Stuart, where the moorings are only \$10 a day or \$240 a month. If we have to wait for a month, we’d save \$660. Cruisers are migratory and we love a bargain! On February 3<sup>rd</sup> we got underway again.

This section of the ICW is great for seeing the lifestyles of the rich. Mile after mile there are new sights that cause your jaw to drop in amazement. The waterway is lined with millionaire mansions and their yachts.



You also see failed condo developments. At night, there have no lights on. In the daylight, there are the “For Sale” signs and you see they have no window treatments.

Florida has more condo’s for sale than any other state. Prices are low, and there are real bargains. Miami papers are touting that European investors are buying.



And the contrasts! Here's a trailer park (old Florida) in front of an empty condo complex (new Florida).

If you look closely, you'll see the trailers have a better view of the water!



To the north of Ft. Lauderdale the ICW proceeds through "the canyon", with development on both sides and a series of drawbridges.

Some of the bridges are utilitarian, while others show some imagination. Here's one with turrets like a medieval castle!

We continued motoring north past Jupiter, through Hobe Sound, and then into Lake Worth. Ah, memories. It was here, right in front of the Jupiter light, that I ran hard aground on our way north two years ago.



I still remember the tourists on the lighthouse walkway pointing down at the funny sailboat that was stuck. I'm doubly careful now!



After anchoring overnight in south Lake Worth we continued the next day to St. Lucie inlet, and eight miles up the river to the Sunset Bay anchorage.

Arriving in Stuart is like putting on an old comfortable pair of blue jeans. We've stayed here before and we love it.

The new marina has value priced moorings, shopping is close by, and you have the natural beauty of the surroundings.

Part of the attraction of Stuart is that it's only a ten minute walk from the marina along the "Riverwalk" to the downtown shops and restaurants.

Who knows what you might see on the way; perhaps a heron having lunch! Mary took this photo from the sidewalk, about 8 feet away.



Stuart has the typical Florida sprawl along the highways. But, they've done a great job in preserving the beauty of the downtown historic district. It's a beautiful area to stroll around.

Here I am by the Sailfish Fountain in downtown Stuart. The jumping sailfish is the city's symbol.

Resting up in Stuart seemed like a good time to handle some logistics. One was buying a new (used) car. Here's Mary with her new set of wheels. And, what's the first thing you do with a new car? ROAD TRIP ! Time to visit the kids in Atlanta !



It's more than just a casual trip. We still have a kid in college, so Mary and I will cruise six months and work six months so we can balance the budget. We'll need a car in Port Royal where we'll be working in the summer; it needs to be Florida registered, so we're buying it here, driving north, and we'll park it at the marina in South Carolina. It'll be waiting for us when we arrive in May.

Some cruisers "move cars" every season. Normally we don't; it's too much hassle. Mary and I accept that part of cruising is to hoof it or use public transportation. That's what we did in Miami and Ft. Lauderdale.



In this case, we get to visit the kids in Atlanta, deliver the car to South Carolina, and we have tickets on Amtrak back to Florida.

Amtrak? Yes! It's only \$65 for a one way ticket from South Carolina to West Palm Beach. Riding the train is another adventure! We had a lovely 11 hour ride, with lunch in the dining car. No airport hassles! It's an elegant, relaxed way to travel.

We had a great visit with family in Atlanta. Here's Mary with her mom Anne, daughter Theresa, son John, and John's girl friend Laura.



Yes, that's John in the background. Why is it that grown children revert to kiddies again when their parents are around? ( Smile! )



Here's another family pic; the full crew. Matt, Theresa, Roy, Mary, Laura, and John.

Luke, we love you and hope to see you soon, son !

Now we're back in Stuart, car-less once again. Mary took her two wheel cart and walked a mile to Publix for her shopping trip today. Hoofing it is good exercise; Dr. Oz says so!

Meanwhile we wait out the cold fronts as they come through. Further north the same front would be a line of thunderstorms, or sleet or snow. At Florida sub-tropical latitudes, you have high winds, a sharp drop in temperature, and the wind clocks around to the south as the front approaches, and then clocks to the north afterwards.

The wind is clocking rather than backing because in Florida the low pressure center is almost always passing to the north. Altogether it's a 360 degree wind shift as the cold front comes through.

What happens to boats on a mooring? It twists up your mooring line! Here's our mooring after several cold fronts. The main mooring line goes over the bow spirit, and I have a second safety line to a cleat. They've been twisted together through three 360 degree turns from the cold fronts. Ha!



COASTAL WATERS FROM JUPITER INLET TO DEERFIELD BEACH, FL OUT 20 NM- WATERS FROM JUPITER INLET TO DEERFIELD BEACH, FL EXTENDING FROM 20 NM TO 60 NM- **SMALL CRAFT SHOULD EXERCISE CAUTION**  
**FRIDAY NIGHT** NORTH WINDS 12 TO 17 KNOTS. SEAS 5 TO 7 FEET.  
**GULF STREAM HAZARDS**...SEAS OF AROUND 7 FEET THROUGH SATURDAY...EXCEPT POSSIBLY 8 FEET FRIDAY NIGHT INTO SATURDAY PALM BEACH WATERS.

It's March. We'd like to cross to the Bahamas, but we're waiting for weather.

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