

## FORT to PORT - Fort Pierce to Port Royal

Back in the USA for April Fools Day. It was a 20 hour sail from Great Sail Cay in the Abacos to Ft. Pierce overnight on March 29 – 30<sup>th</sup>. We left at 4:00 pm and were anchor down at noon the next day. The plan was to sleep in, and get a late start up the ICW headed to Vero Beach. Vero has lots of attractions for cruisers, so it will be our U.S. provisioning stop.

Sunrise over Hutchinson Island at Ft. Pierce, from the Causeway anchorage. We're too excited; forget about sleeping late; it's time to get underway!



Why is this woman happy? It's 7:40 a.m. and we're going NORTH. She's happy to be back in the U.S.A.!

Funny... I don't have any photos of our stop in Vero Beach. This is now our fifth time through this part of the ICW. It's fun, but it isn't "new" any more. It's sort of like taking a drive on a favorite stretch of Interstate Highway.

After Vero is Melbourne, and Titusville. We're hoofing right along, short legs, with one night stops. The short legs make it more enjoyable as a trip and reduce the fatigue of being underway for long hours. We do 40 to 45 miles a day, and make a stop usually by 4:00 p.m. That makes for a laid-back, easy going trip.

On previous trips we would stop for several days at interesting places along the way; but for this trip we're looking forward to getting "home" so we're only making one night stops.

Here's a challenge: Name-That-Bar.  
It's "Squid Lips" in Melbourne. We're  
having a safe-arrival Blue Moon.  
Happy Mary!



There's a public dinghy dock nearby, on  
the north side of Eau Gallie Causeway.  
We anchor most nights to save on marina  
fees, so we've become experts at knowing  
where the public docks are!

Mary's standing on the Melbourne public dock, with "Gideon" visible over her shoulder.  
It's anchored a mile away outside of a charted cable area. Yes, we have a go-fast dinghy.  
(Smile!). Anchorage is pretty much anywhere on the Indian River. If it's breezy, just  
watch the depths and snug to the windward  
shoreline.

Next stop is Titusville. There's access at  
their marina on the north side, and a public  
dock ( but with NO LADDER ) on the south  
side of the causeway.

Hmmm... the south side is closer to the  
grocery stores and shopping areas. We tie  
the dinghy to the outside of the dock, and  
climb up on the struts and hike ourselves  
over the railing. Watch out for the barnacles!  
Hey, we're CRUISERS!



The dock is at Titusville's Space View Park, with monuments to the U.S. Space Program.  
Cape Canaveral is nearby, and Titusville was home to many of the engineers and  
scientists for NASA. Here's a monument to John F. Kennedy's challenge to place a man  
on the moon, "and return him safely to earth".



We continue north, through Mosquito Lagoon, pass Ponce inlet, and to our next anchorage by the Seabreeze bridge in Daytona.

No shore visit this time; but we each have ways to pass the time. “Skipper” enjoys bird watching... (Smile!).



Further north, on the way to St. Augustine. Occasionally we pass a local anchorage area where people moor boats to avoid the cost of a monthly slip rental. It's not always wise.

Here's a boat that was left “anchored out” and had problems. Saving money? Ha! Too smart by half!



Safe on a mooring ball at St. Augustine, we go ashore for a safe-arrival-beer.

We're at O.C. White's, across the street from the St. Augustine Municipal Marina.



St. Augustine is a special place. It's a beautiful city with a lot to see. We always find something new.

We take an extra day and spend it walking around the city and enjoying the sights.

We walk west on King Street. I visit Sailors Exchange, the marine salvage and consignment store.

And Mary finds...

**A QUILT STORE!**

OK. I'll just sit here on the curb and wait... patiently...

Of course, Mary waited while I spent time in Sailors Exchange. Fair's fair, as they say!



The next day, we get an early start.

The Bridge of Lions is restricted, so we get underway at morning twilight, in time for the 7:00 a.m. opening.



PLUS... the early start helps us play the tides. It will be a rising tide through mid-day, which will take us through the tide-dividing point on the Tolomoto River. Then, the falling tide will carry us to the St. John's river. WHEE!! A favorable tidal current all the way! It's rare to get this double-dip benefit!



We pass the St. Johns river by mid-day. If the tide had been against us it would be near evening and we would have anchored by Blount Island. But it's early, and we agree to keep going.

As we pass the St. Johns docks there's a Navy destroyer in dry dock! Not too close; the security patrol boat is watching us.

With the favorable tide, we make it ALL THE WAY TO FERNANDINA ! Fernandina has a mooring field, but, it's infamous for banging mooring balls. There's a strong tidal current and when wind and tide are opposed, the mooring ball bangs against your hull! It takes the paint off the boot stripe of the boat, and sometimes makes it impossible to sleep. We just had our boot stripe repainted, and don't want to risk it! We bypass the moorings and anchor out.

There are several boats that anchor close in, squeezing in alongside the mooring field. Ha! I don't like crowding; plus, with a go-fast dinghy, we don't have to! We head up Bells River and find a nice spacious area to anchor for the night.

Fernandina is a lovely city; in the past we've loved walking around the city and shopping. But... this trip... we're in a hurry. After an overnight stop, we continue north into Georgia. It's beautiful country, with the salt water marshes and the wild life.

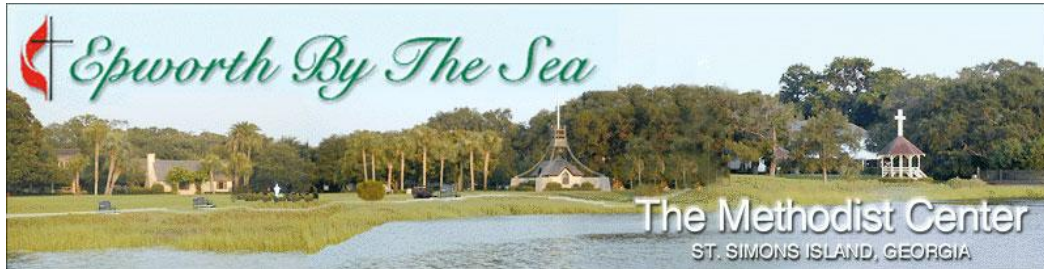


Including BIRDS! "Skipper" wants to get a better look.

The boom is too high off the deck for her to jump to; how did she get up there?

She jumps and then claws her way up the bundles of lines by the winches on the port side of the mast.

We pass Cumberland Island and raise the sails as we cross St. Andrews sound. We squeeze through the shallow ICW stretch by Jekyll Island, and anchor for the night in the Frederica River. It's by Epworth by the Sea Methodist retreat center. The sound of the Carillon carries over the water.



The next day we continue through Georgia, enjoying the beauty of nature in the Georgia marsh lands.



Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the  
terminal sea?  
Somehow my soul seems suddenly free  
From the weighing of fate and the sad  
discussion of sin,  
By the length and the breadth and the  
sweep of the marshes of Glynn.

--- Sydney Lanier



April 7<sup>th</sup> we anchor in the Frederica River.

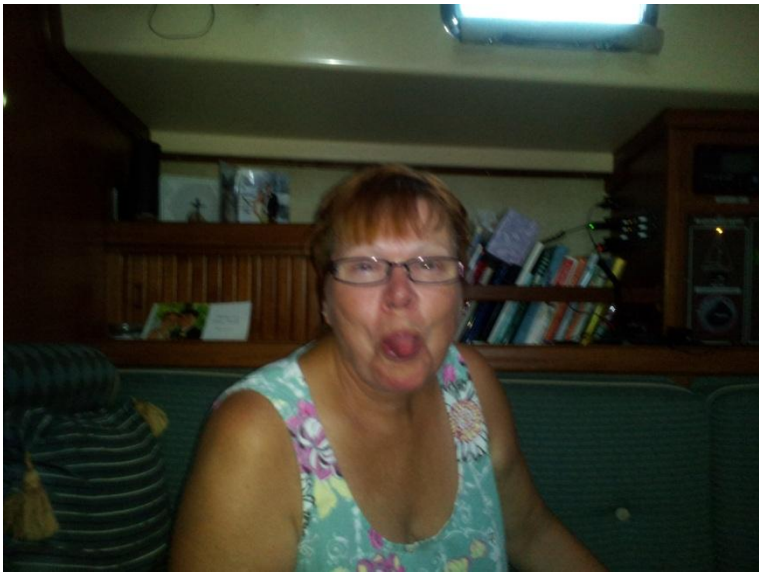
April 8<sup>th</sup> we anchor in Walburg Creek.

April 9<sup>th</sup> we reach Thunderbolt.

We go “outside” from Walburg to Thunderbolt. Leaving out St. Catherine’s Sound, and re-entering at Wassaw Sound into the Wilmington River. It’s a pleasant day sail, and allows us to bypass the bridge construction at the Skidaway Narrows drawbridge.



The entrance into Wassaw is skinny. Our draft is 5 feet, and it’s charted as 7 feet in some places at low tide, and as luck would have it, we arrive right at low tide! HA! The buoys here are moved frequently by the Coast Guard due to the shifting sand bars. I don’t trust the charts or the chart plotter. Idle down, go slow, and watch the depth sounder every 10 seconds, and watch the markers. We sneak our way in.



On past trips we’ve anchored for the night near Thunderbolt in the Herb River.

Hey Mary, do you want to anchor out again? OK, I guess that’s a “NO!”

We’ve been on the water for several days; we’re ahead of schedule; we’re nearly there, and we’re RETIRED and ON VACATION. It’s time to kick back.

We dock at Thunderbolt Marina for the night.

Yes, they still bring you Krispy Kreme donuts in the morning!.





Just a few blocks away is a local favorite sea food restaurant. "Tubby's".

A safe-arrival beer, and dinner out!

Hey... I'm getting choked up... we'll make Port Royal tomorrow. This is our LAST NIGHT OUT for our five month cruise!



We're eager to get back. We leave the dock at first light. Here's sunrise over Whitemarsh Island.



We motor across the Savannah River and past Daufuskie and Calibogue Sound and Hilton Head. Finally... back at our spot at Port Royal Landing marina on April 10<sup>th</sup>. HOME!

Two weeks from Fort Pierce to Port Royal, on the ICW.



Coming north, we sort of hustled along. It wasn't a "stop and smell the roses" trip; we had a destination in mind. Places to go, and PEOPLE TO SEE.



We wanted to get back so we could visit and see FAMILY.

Our daughter Theresa Beazley, and six month old baby Elijah.

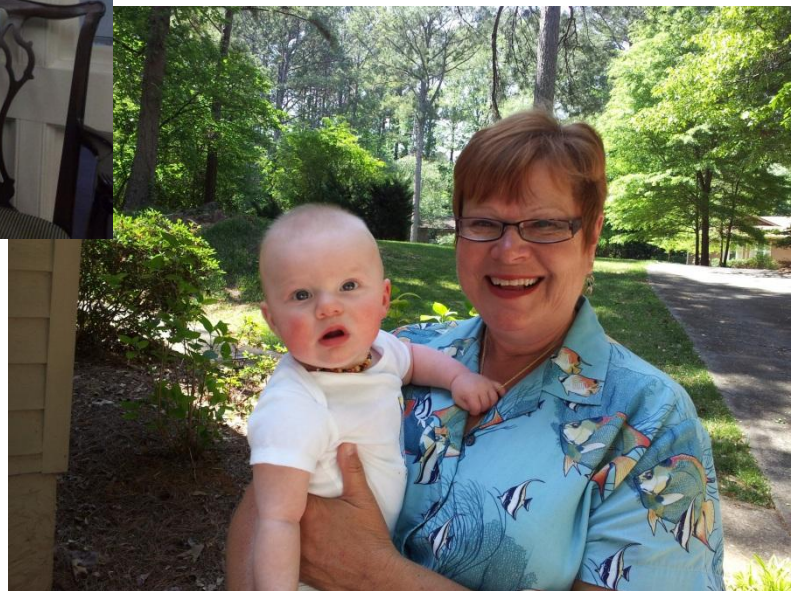
Our son John Stegall, being a good Uncle with baby Elijah.



Mary with her Mom, Anne Davis;

And finally... Mary with Elijah, enjoying being a Grandmother.

"Gram" and "Eli".



There's an important thought about cruising here on the last page. Gone for five months? Six months? Are you going to miss seeing family during that time?

It's one of the sacrifices we make to enjoy the cruising life style. Cruising brings new vistas and the excitement of exotic places, but it's at a cost. We loved sailing the Bahamas... and now we love being back!

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