

BAHAMIAN MOOR ANCHORING - A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

APRIL IN NORTH CAROLINA

We left Brunswick on the foggy morning of March 31st. Hmm... let's see if the radar works. It does! I see purple spots before my eyes! The boat came equipped with radar, but I'd never had reason to use it before. With the radar overlaying the chart plotter, it's pretty intuitive. The blips where the buoys are (nearly) match the buoys on the chart plotter. The radar outline of the shoreline (nearly) matches the outline on the GPS. It's a nice reminder that GPS is "nearly" right, not exactly!



A tall ship was leaving the Brunswick municipal docks at the same time, and I fell in behind her, and followed a half mile back.

Where had she come from?
And where was she bound?
No clue. The ship had only stopped at Brunswick overnight.

The first night out was a familiar anchorage, on the Duplin river, behind Sapelo Island. I've been here before. A nice, quiet spot after the fishermen go home; except for the occasional alligator.

Sometimes you see a log going across the current, instead of with it, and you look closer. Aha! There's the profile of the eyes and the backbone.



The next day we continued up the ICW through Georgia. We had a few knots of wind, and while crossing one of the sounds we unrolled the genoa so we could motor sail. At least we're doing a little sailing!

We don't go any faster, since the boat motors at nearly it's hull speed. But, we make the same speed with a lower throttle setting. And... hey... sails are pretty! Here's my first-rate first-mate after rigging the sail.



Next stop: Cane Patch Creek. This is an absolutely fabulous wilderness anchorage. Highly recommended. But, have your screens up... it's buggy in warm weather!



ANCHORING ACT ONE:

Coastal Georgia has those nasty 8 foot tides. It means you'll always have a reversing current. My habit is to use two anchors, one upstream and one downstream. Here's a photo: the primary anchor is on a chain rode, with a snubber.

The secondary anchor is on a combination chain and line rode, so what you see is the nylon rode, stretched back along the side of the hull. Right now the primary is the “working” anchor. See the ripples of the current in the water around the chain?

Six hours later, the boat will swing in place, and the chain will be slack, and the nylon line will be stretched ahead holding the boat. I’ve found blue bottom paint on the nylon line sometimes after the boat pivots, and I worried about the chain scraping the hull. But, somehow, it doesn’t seem to happen. There’s enough slack between the two lines after the anchors work a bit that the chain sags and clears the forefoot of the keel.

How do you deploy two anchors like this? I’m in 9’ of water with another 5’ to the bow, a total of 14’. I let out 125’ of chain, secure it, and back down to set the primary anchor. I then let out more chain and let the boat drift down-current. When I have a total of 250’ out, I stop and drop the secondary anchor. Then I use the windlass to pull back in a 125’ of chain. It’s slow, pulling in a few feet at a time as the chain sags, so I don’t burn out the windlass. The end result is I have the primary anchor ahead of me on 125’ of chain, and the secondary anchor behind me, on 125’ of nylon line and chain. Both are secured at the bow. **A Bahamian moor!**

The crew has a question: Is it 5 o’clock yet? YES ! Secure all lines, check the boat over carefully, have the spotlight and flashlights handy, light the anchor light, and we ready for the daily grog distribution!

But wait... where’s the captain? He’s down below, tightening the v-belt on the engine. The little Yanmar diesel has a 100 amp Balmar alternator running on a single v-belt. It’s a heavy load for one belt. I have to check it daily, and tighten the belt if it’s loose. It needs this every few days. If I forget, then it reminds me by burning up the belt! It makes a mess in the engine compartment with black dust everywhere. Worse, it could happen at a really bad time, like in a narrow channel facing tugboat traffic! So, I do this and my other maintenance chores each evening. It’s another reason to plan short legs each day and anchor early.



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Think about it... it’s not all seeing the sights, watching sunsets, and enjoying new kinds of rum drinks. Maintenance chores are a part of cruising. (Smile!). Afterwards, the grog tastes even better. There’s a quiet satisfaction in working with your hands on something, and knowing you’ve done it “right”.

You never know who you'll meet on the ICW. Here's some old friends from Marietta, Kerry and Sherryl Myrick. They're moving their boat from Hilton Head to Jacksonville. Hi !



We cruise on past Thunderbolt and Savannah without stopping. Been there, done that, several times on my Bayliner. The next anchorage is the upper end of the Cooper river, west of Daufuskie Island. It's spacious and deep, but has little wind protection. I set my usual two anchors out.

ANCHORING ACT TWO: The next morning.... Aaaarrrrggh! The anchor lines are twisted! The boat had clocked 360 degrees during the night with the reversing current. I can't retrieve the chain with the windlass with the nylon line wrapped around it, and I can't haul in the nylon rode of the second anchor with it twisted around the chain. What to do?

Aha. Marlinspike seamanship. I used a dock line to tie a tautline hitch on the nylon rode of the second anchor. Then, I transferred the strain onto this new line. With the strain relieved I could untangle the nylon rode from around the chain. It's time consuming, but it worked.

After passing Hilton Head and Port Royal sound, we stop for a few days in Port Royal. The marina is nice, and they have a courtesy car. Mary used it to make a shopping run to the grocery store. Here's the difference between live-aboards and dirt dwellers; we get excited when there's a courtesy car... Oh boy! We can go to Wal-Mart !



After another night anchored out in Toogoodoo creek, we steam past Charleston and on to the sea-ward anchorage of Dewees creek. Mary made a new friend. We were visited by a five foot alligator, who swam just past the boat and under our bows as he crossed the creek.

Next stop was Georgetown, where we anchored in the harbor. It was crowded, so again I used two anchors. The chain for the primary anchor, a 50 lb Bruce, goes to starboard; the nylon rode for the secondary, a 45 lb CQR is to port.

ANCHORING ACT THREE:

The next morning.... Aaaarrrrgh! The anchor lines are twisted! The boat had again clocked 360 degrees during the night. Last time I undid the mess with a tautline hitch. Gee, that was time consuming. Maybe there's a better way? If the lines are twisted because the boat turned 360 degrees clockwise, then (theoretically) I can undo it if I maneuver the boat 360 degrees counterclockwise.

The British have a wonderful saying; "too smart by half". The U.S. counterpart is Hey, it seemed like a good idea at the time. While I was trying to maneuver the boat around widdershins, the engine ***SUDDENLY*** stopped. Yep. I wrapped the anchor line around the prop!

I had to don my wet suit and dive to remove the line. Too smart by half !

Here's Rapid Roy suited up to go into the water.

Why is this man smiling ???

I untangled the anchor line from the propeller, and I had a spare 300' anchor line that I used to replace the damaged rode. Time to resume our travels.



From Georgetown, we had a delightful cruise up the Waccamaw river to Myrtle Beach, with an overnight stop at Barefoot Landing. Cruisers often stop here, since there's no place to anchor in the ditch.

We got an early start the next morning. It was foggy, but other boats were leaving, and I figured hey, I'll just follow them! It worked, and we got through the bridges as a group.

Finally, we continued on from Myrtle Beach to Southport, and then to Wilmington



Here's Gideon just passing the Cape Fear drawbridge. It's 65' clearance means they didn't have to raise it for us.

And, here's the retired battleship North Carolina, docked as a museum at Wilmington.



We signed up for a month's stay at the Cape Fear marina, which is just north of downtown. It was a nice stop over, and a chance to catch up on work projects.

Here's Mary applying blue tape. We spent a week in April putting two more coats of Cetol on the wood. It has to be done every 9 months.

Welcome to cruising.... (Smile!).



We have family in North Carolina. Our daughter Theresa and her husband Matt drove down for a visit.



Roy with Matt and Theresa in the battleship engine room.

Mary's brother Art Davis lives in Wilmington. Here's Art with his son Eric, Eric's wife Emily, and the newest little Davis, baby Chloe.



Finally... guess what? We ran into some old friends! We moved the boat down to the Wilmington City Docks, and were happy to be there for the Atlanta Power Squadron visit. Hey, I know you guys!

We took a ton of photos, far too many to include here. I'm putting in just one as a placeholder for all of the people we love and were so happy to see again.



Here's our track:

March 2nd – March 30th at Brunswick Landing Marina, Brunswick

March 31th - Duplin River, by Sapelo Island, anchored out.

April 1st - Cane Patch Creek, anchored out. A beautiful spot !

April 2nd - Cooper River, by Daufuskie Island, anchored out.

April 3rd - 5th - Port Royal Marina

April 6th - Toogoodoo Creek anchored out

April 7th - Dewees Creek - east side of ICW, toward the ocean;

anchored out on a spur of the creek on the west side of Dewees Island

Oh No! The ferry came by and gave us a wake twice every hour until 10 p.m.

This anchorage is definitely NOT recommended! (West side should be OK).

April 8th - Georgetown SC – anchored out in the harbor

April 9th - Barefoot Landing Myrtle Beach

April 10th - Southport Marina

April 11th - May 18th - Cape Fear Marina Wilmington NC

405 miles from Brunswick to Wilmington

1,101 miles under the keel to date.