

Cheryll and Rich Odendahl Roam around a “Half-Lap” of Florida November, 2012 through March 2013

Just before the onset of the freezing Michigan weather, we trailered our Ranger Tug “Roam” to Jacksonville Beach, Florida and moved aboard for a trip down the Intra-Coastal Waterway to Fort Lauderdale.



Sunset over the Dinghy Dock in Stuart



Manatee Begging for Fresh Water in Titusville

We stopped in many cities along the way, finding a unique personality in each. St. Augustine has its history. Palm Beach has its wealth. Most of the cities have gorgeous beaches. Based on the people we met at the stores and restaurants, the genius rocket scientists have left the Titusville/Cape Canaveral area. If only Newt Gingrich had been elected, they would have all surely returned to construct the space colony on Mars.



**After Rescue from Somali Pirates;
Maersk Alabama Lifeboat Donated to
Navy Seals Museum, Fort Pierce**



Rainbow over our Wake



Making Lunch along the Way



Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse

We moved every day or two to a new town or anchorage. Some areas of the ICW are quite secluded, others are lined with high-rise condos and marinas full of mega-yachts.

We spent eight days in Fort Lauderdale, waiting for a weather window to cross the treacherous Gulf Stream to the Bahamas. The forecasts were consistently for eight to twelve foot waves with winds out of the north. Each waiting day Rich went on beach patrol. He made careful observations, collected data and calculated the daily official TPM ratio. We enjoyed meeting some other tug-nutters at their downtown condo. Fort Lauderdale has a lot to offer, with a population much younger than the rest of the state. Cheryl found the Galleria Mall and did not get bored as we waited for the north winds to calm.



The ICW is Crowded on Weekends



Fort Lauderdale Thanksgiving Sunrise



Along the Okeechobee Waterway



**Unidentified Bird on the
Lake Okeechobee Shore**

We finally gave up on waiting for acceptable weather to cross to the Bahamas. We are reminded that you need not one weather window, but two; one to get there and one to return. Instead, Roam was pointed north to Stuart and then west, across the 150-mile Okeechobee Waterway to Fort Myers. One day we went for a dinghy ride along the Lake Okeechobee shore. Cheryl was having fun taking pictures of birds when an alligator leapt into the water from his hiding place just a few feet away. She was so startled that she almost fell out. He swam away hungry-looking.



Sanibel Island Beach



Reflecting upon Cayo Costa State Park



Rich's Heart is Racing



Palm Island Marina

After visiting several friends, we pulled Roam from the water and headed home for the holidays. We returned in late January, just in time for the 2nd Annual Southwest Florida Ranger Tug Rendezvous. Fifteen boats were there, and we enjoyed seeing old friends and making new ones. Rich got ideas for new equipment and boat modifications, and the ladies shared decorating ideas.



Ranger Tug Rendezvous



Low Swing Bridge had to Open for Us



Caladesi Island State Park



Shells on the Beach

After the Rendezvous, we cruised north to Tarpon Springs and visited friends in St. Petersburg. We caught lots of beads at the Dunedin Mardi Gras parade with Gary, Sylvia and Thistle Graham. In Tarpon Springs, Rich's brother David delivered our truck and trailer and helped with engine maintenance. After a visit with him and Rich's dad and wife Dee, we trailered to Everglades City for several days of cruising in the 10,000 Islands area.



Washing the Anchor after Spending the Night in the Bay at Rich's Grandparents' Former House Near Treasure Island



Cruising the Mangroves at John Pennekamp State Park; Key Largo



Molasses Reef, Key Largo



Orange-Finned Snorklefish Dives from the Swim Platform

We spent March in the Florida Keys. Most of it with our good friends at Harbour Cay Club in Marathon. Rich did boat maintenance and ran the seven-mile-bridge every other day. Cheryl explored the local shops and did much damage to her credit card. Friends Frank and Sandy Tenkel gave Roam shelter at their rented condo from a nasty cold front with winds over 35 mph. Jerry Richardson, Rich's retired friend from GM, helped us put Roam back on her trailer for the long, sad trip back to a cold Michigan Spring.



Blues Angels Perform at the Key West Air Show



Heading Home from the Marathon Yacht Club

Our world-wide trip reports are at:
<http://www.odendahls.com/>

The adventures of Roam can be found at:
<http://odendahls.com/roam/>