

## **“Roam” Takes Rich and Cheryll Odendahl for a 560-mile Alligator Hunt from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina to Sanford, Florida November, 2011**

The day after Rich's traditional Halloween “Inquisition of the Trick-or-Treaters”, we loaded “Roam” onto her trailer and drove the 860 miles to Myrtle Beach. Along the way we stopped to visit our friends Larry and Diane Dickinson and take a quick spin around Lake Norman near Charlotte, North Carolina. After arriving in Myrtle Beach, we launched the boat and tied up at the Osprey Marina. For the next five days we provisioned for our upcoming cruise, played golf, and hosted our brother-in-law Allan's parents; Richard and Reba Cornfoot. Rich's brother David happened to be in Charleston on business and stopped by for a Sunday cruise. He still seems conflicted by the whole tugboat thing that he has labeled a cult, but he seemed to enjoy himself. The truck and trailer were stored in a yard at the marina.



Rich and Larry Dickinson warming up the engine at Lake Norman



Rich's brother David came for a visit, but is not sure how he feels about driving a Tug

We first cruised 375 miles on a section of the Atlantic Intra-Coastal Waterway. The ICW winds its way from Norfolk, VA to Miami for a total of 1200 miles. We may do other sections on future trips. The ICW winds up and down creeks, both with and against the current and under the influence of tides up to nine feet. The traffic is light, and we suspect that its maintenance is yet another pork-barrel project.



Starting Out along the Waccamaw River near Myrtle Beach, South Carolina



Although we could fit under most bridges, this swing bridge had to open for us

One thing that we don't see in Michigan is large numbers of basically abandoned boats. Later on, we made the acquaintance of Shelly and Harley who were making the pretense of fixing up a dilapidated houseboat that was covered with dead insects and mold. Our conversation was cut short when Harley announced that they had to leave to "git us some vittles."

Radio conversations with the bridge operators also required a new set of language skills. One request to open a bridge was responded with a friendly; "C-mon up and I'll gitcha a openen."



Peaceful Sunrise at Minim Creek



Coiling the Anchor Trip Line

Cheryll lamented that our nearly new anchor lines were getting muddy; and wet, too.



The first of many derelict boats



Charleston, SC Maritime Center

The weather was excellent, with lots of sun and daily highs usually in the seventies. About once each week a cold front would slide through and the winds would shift to the northwest and strengthen for a couple of days. There was a tornado warning when we were in Savannah, so we doubled the dock lines, took down the canvas and deflated the dinghy. We were tied up near the Mirabella V. At 247 feet, it's the world's largest single-masted sailboat. We may have been secure, but if the Mirabella V broke loose, we were in trouble. The storm missed us, but caused a lot of damage elsewhere.



Taking "Pirattitude" to a new level; our neighbors built a parrot cage on their stern and filled it with squawking birds.



Sunset anchored in the South Carolina Low Country

When the wind wasn't too strong, we enjoyed the nights we anchored out rather than stay in marinas. Rich got little sleep when it was windy; getting up several times at night to check if either of the anchors had dragged. The traditional sunset snack at anchor was Jiffy-Pop and beer. Evenings were spent reading books and watching DVD's on the laptop. Sunrises were often accompanied by the smell of coffee perking on the stove and cinnamon rolls baking in a ceramic dish on the propane grill.



Sunrise over Wimbee Creek

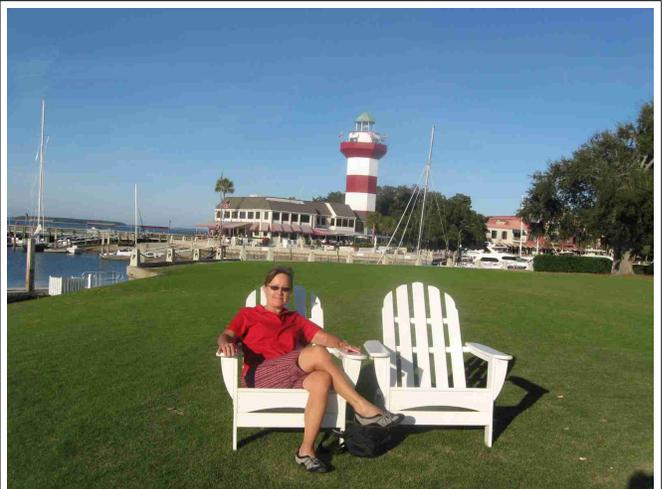


Antebellum Home in Beaufort, SC

We stopped in Beaufort, South Carolina and then cruised past the Marine Corp Training Center at Parris Island. We were definitely having more fun than the recruits who were likely doing push-ups or crawling through the nearby swamps and marshes.



"Roam" looks very comfortable in the 5-star marina at Sea Pines Resort



Relaxing by the 18<sup>th</sup> green at Harbour Town Golf Links

Rich wanted to stop at Harbor Town on Hilton Head Island where the Heritage golf tournament is held each spring. He's watched it on TV many times with envy as he's waited for the Michigan April weather to break, but nothing could compare to relaxing at ocean side and watching the day's groups finish their rounds. Well.... actually playing the course would have been better. But we left our clubs in Myrtle Beach. Maybe next time.



Visiting the city squares in the Savannah Historic District



The ICW is open to the Atlantic Ocean in a few short sections. Here it's getting a little rough on a breezy day on St. Andrew Sound.

The service was great at most of the marinas. There is a lot of competition with the current state of the economy, and many were trying very hard to stand out. Dock hands rushed to help us tie in and get settled. Some had cars or bicycles that we could borrow. Others had workout rooms, pools, jacuzzis and marble-lined showers. At daybreak in Thunderbolt, GA, the marina manager delivered a six-pack of fresh Krispy Kreme doughnuts and the morning paper directly to our cockpit.

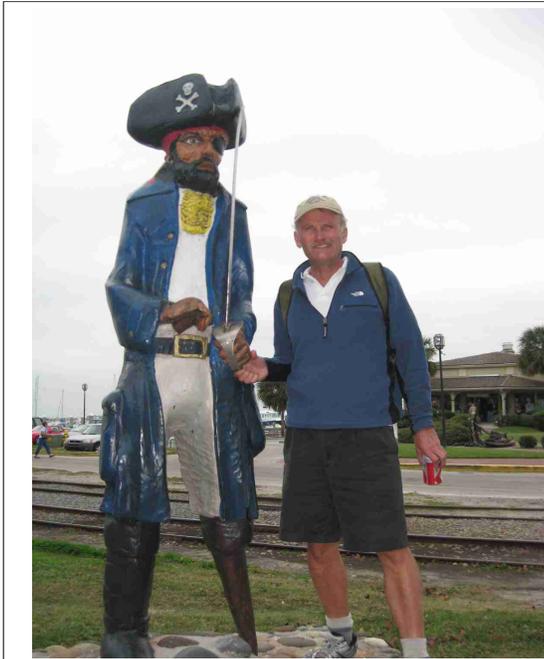


Shrimp Boat



Hotel on Jekyll Island, Georgia

Jekyll Island was our favorite stop. We enjoyed the blend of the historical district, the beaches and excellent golf courses. The local dish of Brunswick Stew was excellent at the marina restaurant. Jekyll Island deserves another visit.



**Left:** Fernandina Beach, Florida, where every day is “Talk Like a Pirate Day.”

**Above:** One of these sailboats ran aground following us in a place where the ICW channel has silted in. “Roam’s” 26-inch draft had no problem.



Passed by “Roam’s” bigger brother

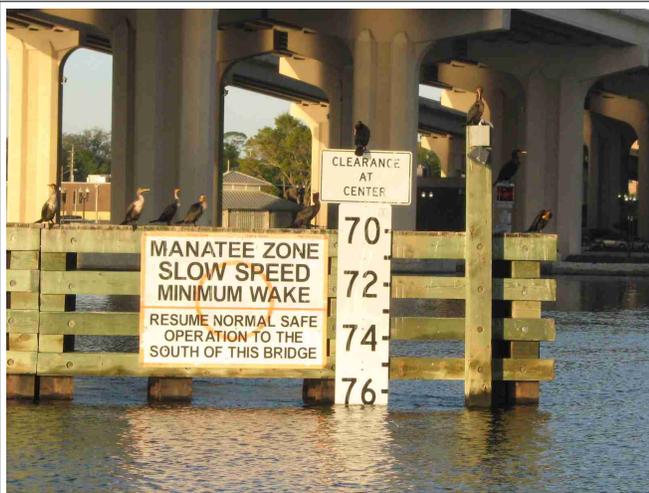


Tied up in front of Hooters at The Landings in downtown Jacksonville, FL; wings – yum!

When the ICW crosses the St. Johns River in northern Florida, we could have continued 400 more miles to Miami. Instead, we turned inland along the river to explore its 160 navigable miles. We took a five-day break in Jacksonville to visit Rich's sister Tanya, brother-in-law Allan and nephew Alex for Thanksgiving.

Rich also needed to retrieve the truck and trailer from the marina in Myrtle Beach. It appeared that it would be easiest to take the Greyhound bus from Jacksonville to Myrtle Beach with connections in Savannah and Charleston. The only bus each day left at 2:30 AM and took ten hours en-route. The downtown Savannah bus station is likely interesting enough in daylight, but in the wee hours, it is a rich, cultural experience. Upon arrival in Savannah at 4:45 AM most of the passengers went in search of cheap cigarettes and potato chip breakfasts. Six men came in wearing identical outfits; khaki pants, brand-new tennis shoes,

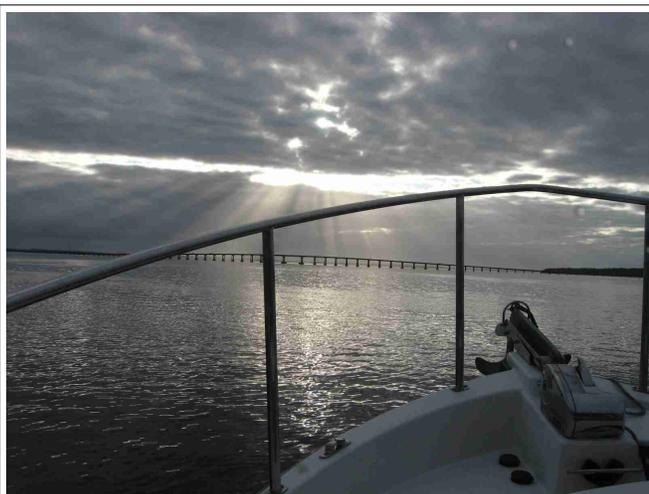
white shirts and blue jackets. They each carried a thick manila envelope. Rich figured that they were missionaries and the envelopes contained bibles. Nope. A woman wearing a Georgia Department of Corrections uniform checked them in for their buses. The envelopes probably contained instructions for contacting their Parole Officers. Shortly thereafter, six more teenagers showed up in quasi-military uniforms after being released from their juvenile offender boot camp. The convicts quickly outnumbered the other passengers. Fortunately, none boarded the bus to Charleston. Once on the bus, it was quite comfortable and Rich was able to snooze before driving the trailer back down to Florida. Rich was ready for early bed after the 10-hour bus trip and 400-mile drive. Cheryll looked much less haggard having spent the day doing laundry and hanging out by the jacuzzi at the splendid Ortega Landing Marina.



Yet another Manatee Speed Zone; we later saw a few of the big, ugly, stupid creatures



Flag whipping in the wind while anchored off Green Cove Springs, FL



Miracle on the northern section of the St. Johns River



Crab Pots everywhere; including the navigation channel



The "Old Florida" that we never knew existed



Water that looks like root beer

Many of the towns along the St. Johns River have free public docks. Some of the towns are doing well, but many have been hit hard by the economic downturn. All of them were clean, and we felt very safe walking the streets at night.



Vines make trees look like animals



Stopped by the Sheriff in a case of mistaken identity

Near Hontoon Landing State Park, we were stopped by a local sheriff who zoomed up from behind and cut across our bow. Cheryll's heart jumped, afraid that we had accidentally been speeding in a manatee zone. It turned out that the sheriff was friends with Frank and Cathy Forest who own an identical Ranger Tug named "Ainokea" and keep it nearby. We had a good laugh and enjoyed meeting Frank and Cathy for dinner that evening.



Cheryll enjoying  
"Jungle Richie's Safari Cruise"



Bald Eagle

There were lots of birds that we are incapable of identifying. There were dolphins swimming around the boat at a couple of anchorages. Or were they porpoises? Even after reading an article on the subject, we still can't tell the difference. We also saw a few alligators lazing next to the river. The final 50 miles of the river is very remote, and we felt far from home.



Sorry, but your guess is as good as ours as to  
the species of this bird



Rich and his Dad both agree;  
Retirement is the Best!

The end of the line was Sanford, Florida. We met Rich's Dad and Stepmother and friends Ken and Mary Ann Long for day cruises and then put Roam back on her trailer. Roam has earned an alligator refrigerator magnet to go with her Route 66 magnet and the stuffed beaver from Beaver Island. She performed fabulously for this trip. We used 102 gallons of diesel for about 560 statute miles of cruising and 80 engine hours. More importantly, after living together 24/7 for five weeks in confined quarters, we are still talking. Rich's Dad is caring for Roam at his house. We're planning an even more lengthy cruise later this winter. Stay tuned!

Our "Roam" trip reports are at; <http://www.odendahls.com/roam>

Our trip reports for the rest of the world can be found at; <http://www.odendahls.com/>