



MARINELAND TO FERNANDINO, FLORIDA

From the Logs of the Knotty Dog

MARINELAND

We had a nice stay at Marineland. We knew we'd be there a couple days due to weather so just decided to take advantage of the down time. Several other people had the same idea as the docks were full and everyone was hunkered down. Marineland has nice floating docks for transients and the staff is very welcoming. Besides offering discounted day passes to Marineland they also offer nature tours of the reserve across the channel including kayak tours and boat tours. I was lucky to get the last kayak tour before the storm front arrived forcing them to shut the tours down.

Marineland is worth seeing if only for the fact that it is the nation's first oceanarium. It opened in 1938 to much fanfare, and I think had an unexpected number of visitors, in the 20,000 plus range the very first day, which seems incredible on this little and at that time remote of land. It continued to operate on a small scale until 1998 and then was bought out and reorganized to what it is today. The old restaurant and hotel are no longer there but you can still see remnants of what it was like in it's hey day.

The marina staff though very friendly and helpful had no problem sending one boat away in the storm. We were a little surprised when an old derelict boat with an equally derelict looking old salt came in the channel marker in strong cross winds. He almost hit our boat trying to get to the dock. All that was powering his old run down sailboat was an old outboard that kept stalling on



his direct but unwanted approach to our stern. The staff quickly came aboard our boat and fended off a sure collision. Once the staff figured out that he wasn't the usual cruiser and not here for the scenery, they quickly shooed him off. He didn't argue or even question it, kind of like he was used to it. He slowly managed with their help to turn around and sputter out of the marina and back into the storm, satisfied I with their justification for turning him away: that only sea worthy boats are allowed in the marina, boats that are not a threat to damaging other boats in



the radio with cheerful voices talking about the nice weather. Even the birds seemed to join in as they were flying in large groups almost dancing together across the sky, riding the last tail winds of the exiting front. After 2 days of strong winds it was a welcome reprieve. This area is pristine, acres and acres of it, so the scenery to St. Augustine was equally beautiful.

I'm always impressed when we get a view of St. Augustine's skyline. It looks like a beautiful old European seaport from the water. There is really no other port in the US that we know that is as beautiful in this way. We docked at the public docks today.

their marina. We all watched as he slowly made his way back out into the stormy ICW and we all crawled back into our hunkered down positions.

After three days wind and rain we finally had a break so took advantage to get up the road to St. Augustine, only 15-20 miles north of us. We left about 8:00 in the morning. The storm had passed and left behind a beautiful sunny day and everything washed clean. You could hear people on

across the bridge and it was too far for us to walk to anything. This time we wanted to have the city more accessible to us. We figured we had the buggy to put Ziggy in and will be able walk anywhere.

We had a heck of a time getting into the slip as the current was running quite a clip and there was a large boat in the next slip that was sticking out from the dock. After 2 ½ tries Larry got her in.





COPYRIGHTED BY JAYNE HEMMERICH

We were surprised to find out that St. Augustine was celebrating it's 500 Year Anniversary the weekend we arrived and there would be all sorts of special activities going on throughout the city. Looks like we'll have a fun two days!!

What a crazy insane two days it was in St. Augustine during this festival. Costumed historical reenactments were going on at various locations throughout the colonial city, some of which included cannons and muskets firing off and others including folklorico dancing and American native music. We saw everything from belly dancers to Spaniards to Miss St. Augustine. Since the city has a colorful history with several different countries claiming sovereignty throughout it's 500 year history, it was a smorgasboard of historical figures dressed in Spanish and French and British costumes wandering the narrow cobble stoned avenues. Guns and cannons were going off and music everywhere. The streets were crowded, and horse drawn carriages and trollys looking like toy choo choos were hauling tourists around the city, including us, as they even allowed Ziggy! We took the silly looking choo choo ride. It was great in one respect though we felt a bit silly because it shuttled us all over town. You could get on and off at all the inter-

esting spots. That ride had it plus's and minus's as the seats were torturous, hard and cramped, and I don't think the wheels had any shocks. We were jolted every which way, all over town and felt every bump intimately. It was 1 ½ hours long and we were wishing it was shorter but I guess you could say we sure got our money's worth.

The public docks turned out to be a bit noisy but



COPYRIGHTED BY JAYNE HEMMERICH

From the Logs of the Knotty Dog 2013



COPYRIGHTED BY JAYNE HEMMERICH

Left the dock at 8:00, current running in from the inlet but had no problems getting out, just have to be quick about it. Dock master was out at 7:00 AM hosing off the bird poop from the decks and I have to say there was a lot of it. They have by far the loudest seagulls I've ever heard at St. Augustine and they were really making a mess of the docks. Maybe it's spring fever making them so crazy as they were quite the characters.

convenient. They werer in the midst of construction, replacing the old docks with new and had put a plywood walkway down the center, I guess to give them temporary acces to the electrical and plumbing. I don't know if it is temporary but for one whole day, three little kids spent most of their time running up and down that plywood stomping as hard as they could on the plywood planks because they made such a loud neat noise. Then that night the guy in the boat next to us had a loud party on his boat that went on well after 2:00 AM. Around midnight, without any let up I lifted our stateroom hatch above our bed and yelled out "come on guys, it's past midnight and some of us are trying to sleep". They were too enebriated to hear me or care. We managed to find several places to dine outwith Ziggy so that was nice. It is a beautiful city but hope the tourist business doesn't destroy it. I had to get up at dawn one morning just to get some shots of the city without a million people & choo choo trains in it. Hope they think about preserving the future of that city as it is so special.

ST. AUGUSTINE TO FERNANDINO

From the Logs of the Knotty Dog 2013

The first time we stayed at the public dockse, we heard strange noises in the water (when you are



COPYRIGHTED BY JAYNE HEMMERICH



COPYRIGHTED BY JAYNE HEMMERICH

inside your boat). We heard it again this time. It sounds like popcorn popping. We think that it is little fish nibbling on the bottom of the boat.

The party guy in the slip next to us sheepishly came out of his boat this morning and snuck up the dock maybe feeling a little embarrassed about his late night partying that kept the cruisers around him up half the night.

It was foggy this morning and Larry turned on the radar on just in case it got worse. The humidity must be 90% as the boat and windows were sopping wet like as if it had rained. Again, the landscape is beautiful and remote as we head

north to Fernandino. We are now almost to the border to Georgia.

The landscape now is grass marshes with hammocks of trees and sun bleached tree branches that occasionally are crowned with a perched egret or bald eagle. It's really a beautiful place and unbuildable so will always be this way as it always has been. That's rare these days. The only thing that puts damper on it are the bugs, especially those no see ums. We've got so many bites, it's almost like we are allergic to them as they feel inflamed. I guess there's always a price for beauty.



COPYRIGHTED BY JAYNE HEMMERICH

From the Logs of the Knotty Dog 2013

It's flat calm out. We have a pretty long day today, at least for Ziggy. 50 miles doesn't seem like much, but to him it's hard. He had some stomach problems in St. Augustine and what a nightmare for everyone with two nights of very little sleep and lots of stress. Now that he is older, it seems each new place is very hard for him to get adjusted to and then just when he gets adjusted, we leave and it starts all over again.

This whole leg of Florida's northeast ICW is absolutely beautiful. You just don't get to see or know the beauty of this area unless you are on a boat. So amazing.

The area is called Tolomato reserve.

Sun is out now, no wind, so water is totally reflective. The solitary great white egret is spaced every tenth of a mile like a navigation marker. Inner water areas meander through the grassland only interrupted by the trees hammocks. As we near Fernandino, the tides are almost minus. The oyster beds are drying out like ant mounds on both sides as far as we can see. We are following a sailboat and watching carefully the low depths. We can see the stacks of the Fernandino pulp mill up ahead so know we are near our destination, almost there.

Suddenly the sailboat ahead comes to a jolting dead stop. They are grounded. There's nothing we can do to help them and must pass them or risk getting stuck too. The captain is pushing the throttle forward and backward trying to free their boat from the mud. We pass slowly wishing we could help. Finally they get free and head quickly to the anchorage.

By now we are just off the Fernandino docks. We hail the dock master. They give us instructions to come inside to one of the inner docks. I warn Larry that the last time we were here, this area was a mud flat at low tide with boats sitting at angles in the mud. He says they've dredged the marina so no problem.

We head in and sure enough we are grounded 10 feet from the slip. Larry quickly backed her off the mud mound and turned her away. They ended up putting us on the inside of the face dock. They are supposed to have a trawler rally here in a few days with 60 boats so wonder how that will go. Maybe it was because of the minus tides but beware of the inner marina.

It's so nice to be in Fernandino again and luckily the wind is blowing in the right direction, away from the pulp mill. We always find the people that live here to be so friendly, the friendliest on the ICW. Let's see if it's still true!



COPYRIGHTED BY JAYNE HEMMERICH

From the Logs of the Knotty Dog 2013