



NEW SMYRNA TO MARINE- LAND, FLORIDA -APRIL 2013



THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

We woke up to a spectacular sunrise this Morning. The birds, all kinds, were crowded together (egrets, cormorants, pelicans) on a little mound of an island just off the marina. It was fun to sip our morning coffee and watch their antics. The water this morning was flat and reflective. A dolphin broke that mirrored surface as it came up for a breath. The town wasn't awake yet so the first thing we heard today was the breath of a dolphin. They are so quiet, calm and elegant as they slowly break the surface coming up for a breath of air, it's body, a glistening wet surface, reflecting the orange glow of the morning and then without a splash, it makes a perfect dive back into the

deep water, arching it's back, it's tail gracefully following first up and then down into the water. There's no wind to break the water's surface and the brilliant orange of the sky washes over it and makes for a striking morning. Such perfect conditions always seem to be the calm before the storm.

We are heading to a place called Marineland today and it is true, this perfect weather is a warning of a storm front that is coming and we will probably need to hunker down for a couple days. We know there isn't a town at Marineland, just the 1930's marine park, but we have plenty of food and Larry says he has read that it's a pleasant stop, quiet, with natural surroundings and the people are nice. Sounds good to us, like a place to get some rest.

Deep Blue, the wake maker, left at the crack of dawn. Before the evening was over yesterday they apologized to Larry for waking us so bad, claiming that they thought we were going full throttle. I'm still having a hard time believing that especially when I watched them from the back deck as they approached us from behind. He can't be that naive.

NEW SMYRNA A PLEASANT STOP

Even though short, New Smyrna was a nice break. Right near the marina is a fish restaurant overlooking the ICW. Since we got in late in the afternoon we decided to walk over to get a glass of wine and check



the place out for dinner. What a surprise as we timed it just right. The day excursion fishing boat called **Pastime Princess** had just come back to the dock and everyone was gathering by the boat to get their catch for the day and if they liked, to have one of the crew clean and fillet their catch for them. What fun to watch! We had a glass of wine on the restaurant deck and watched the activity but ended up eating on the boat as everything on the menu of the restaurant favored deep frying. It's a fun place to watch the boats on the ICW and the pelicans beg for scraps from the fishing boat.

Larry does the lines this morning and I take her out because my back hurts. We take our time winding through New Smyrna and scoot under the causeway bridge that leads to a beach that you can drive

on. It's a cute little area with lots of shops and cafes. It was too far to walk for us from the marina but I think there is a shuttle that will take you over if you stay at the marina longer.

It's a beautiful "S" shaped cruise through New Smyrna. We see lots of areas to anchor and many that are shoaling with some boats sitting precariously on dry bottoms. Must be a regular thing around here as I remember seeing boats on the ground coming through here before.

We pass the red brick Ponce de Leon Lighthouse. It's a nice area with lush natural landscape and the shores are covered in white shells dug up when they dredged the ICW.

PASSING DAYTONA BEACH

We can see the outskirts of Daytona up ahead. The morning sun is washing the tall buildings. I'm surprised to see some charming old houses, palm tree and mangrove covered islands and rows of quaint wooden docks and old Floridian styled houses. My memories of Daytona were concrete, tall buildings and bridges but I was wrong, there is some resemblance of an earlier day here.

We see a stoic looking osprey on a dried tree commanding the highest perch in the area to survey his habitat. But...that's when it stops and the condos begin. Some are so dang ugly. What a way to ruin some nice scenery.

CURSE OF THE FIXED DOCKS

Last night we were treated to some nice floating docks again. I was anticipating those old wooden fixed docks but was pleasantly surprised. There is nothing worse than coming into port after a long day of cruising and



VERY CIVILIZED TODAY

We pass a few sailboats and a couple slow trawlers. I guess it's true, the migration north is on. It's very civilized out here today. We call the boat ahead on the radio, tell them our intention, they move over and we give them a slow pass and everyone is happy and waving and no computers or old dogs are unnecessarily tossed from their perches.

have to deal with tying to posts you can't reach. Even in good conditions they are a pain in the "ars". Well, surprise again, we just read that Marineland is supposed to have floating docks! Wow, what a treat, again. How nice and easy it will be to get on and off the boat for a change rather than climb up and down those fixed docks. You really appreciate the difference when you have to lug Ziggy and his buggy on and off of them multiple times a day. Whew!



We pass the marina we stayed at before when we stopped in Daytona. It's right next to the Chart House. Not sure why we didn't stay next door at the Halifax Marina last time. We were the smallest little peanut boat in the place. I guess Larry likes to stay where the

It's a gorgeous day out today. Larry has the video camera on to see traffic coming from behind. That is about the only use we can find for that thing but it does come in handy on the ICW. So far no wakers today.

It's a beautiful stretch of waterway north of Daytona, called Ormond Beach area. Houses are built on narrow strips of land to the right. They seem to be taking advantage of their minimal square footage by building double and triple deckers as there is not an extra inch of land between their concrete breakwater and the road immediately on other side. Across the water on the other side they have an unimpeded view, just miles of beautiful grey, green and gold colored grass, palm and pine tree mounds with lush undergrowth. There are lots of beautiful sun bleached uprooted trees adding a nice texture to the landscape.



big boys are even if we are the smallest.

Ahead are a maze of bridges we will go under, none too low that we have to call for an opening (another thing I like about this boat). That's another good thing about being a peanut.

HALIFAX RIVER AREA

Halifax river and beach area is another beautiful area.



More of the same but lots of little fishermen.

Flager Beach area is particularly spectacular. There are deep stretches of marsh lands with clumps of trees and here and there is a beautiful house tucked in nicely to the landscape as if it belonged, not an intrusion.

BUTTERFLIES

We were joined all day by thousands of little yellowwhite butterflies. It was like spring had burst. Someone told us that when they come out it marks the uncoming of hurricane season.

MANATEES

This is interesting...we must have passed a line demarcating weather change as now the NO WAKE Manatee Zones now say effective May 1st - Sept 1 now. So looks like we can speed on through since it's still April.

You can feel the front coming. the pressure is changing and suddenly it's changing from a really warm muggy day to a chill in the air. We arrived at Marineland about 1:00. A nice crew of young guys got us docked and gave us a nice welcome as we were told.

We are docked behind a Great Harbor boat. It looks familiar. A guy comes out and says he remembers us from the Bahamas when we were there in the Nordhavn years ago. Small world again.

Looks like it will be a nice stay. We are surrounded by 70,000 acres of Federal preserves and the only sound we hear are the waves on the beach behind us and the squawking seagulls warning of the oncoming bad weather. I look over at the smallish buildings of Marineland and can see a dolphin flipping above a wall and back down with a splash! Like he got a shot glimpse of a new arrival.

We hunker in and watch as other cruisers check their lines before settling in for the evening.



