

# PALM BEACH TO FORT PIERCE

## March 2013

We were up before dawn both anxious to get on our way. Ziggy wasn't stirring yet so we sat at our computers a little longer, sipping our coffee and giving an old dog some extra time in bed.

It's finally calm and slack tide after days of rolling and rocking at the dock here in Palm Beach (perfect time for leaving the dock I think to myself). We are next to the wall and the back splash is terrible.

The boaters aren't out yet to make wakes. Even the slew of boats coming early to get set up for the Palm Beach International Boat Show weren't lining up yet. They were the worst wake makers because there were so many and the captains were on a time table.

## APHRODITE

It wasn't long before Ziggy started stirring, earlier than normal, as he does like to sleep in these days. Maybe he sensed we were heading out. Larry took him out and I walked down to the next dock to take some pictures of ***Aphrodite***. What a gorgeous boat! It was the feature story of the January 2013 issue of Yachting Magazine and was also on the cover. Once I saw the issue I was determined to find her. We did.



We soon were pushing ourselves off the dock and heading out the marina. I was glad that we got out before the rocking and rolling started especially since the dock was so high and our boat so low. It was difficult, maybe even dangerous, for a stiff jointed couple with an old, deaf and almost blind dog to get on and off of. What's wrong with floating docks around here?

## KATE EXPECTATIONS

As we left, I took a quick photo of Rush Limbaugh's boat which was docked three



boats down, called **Kate Expectations**, hailing port, Pittsburgh. The captain on the **Palm Beach** boat next to us said Jimmy Buffet also keeps one of his many yachts here.

We passed under the Quadrille Street Bridge which is one of two bridges and only thoroughfares that bring people to and from the mainland to Singer Island and the exclusive area called Palm Beach. The bridge is in jeopardy right now and quite frankly the talk of the town as a crack

was discovered and they are not sure whether they can save the historic landmark bridge.

## PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW



We passed by the staging area for the Palm Beach International Boat Show which will open in a few days. Boats were already lined up early waiting for instructions on where to go. They cram them in like sardines. It's amazing to watch and quite a transformation. Sheer brilliance I think, who ever does the layout and planning. The captain next door said he brought a new Hinckley down from Stuart for the show just yesterday.

We went by slowly not wanting to wake them as they were setting up. We now have lots of compassion for those getting waked at the dock. What's the hurry anyway? Lots to see around here.



## M/V GALEOCERDO

We headed up the ICW looking at the amazing mansions and anchored boats and, my favorite, the **Rybovich Marina**. Some of the most famous yachts in the world are docked here for service and repairs, some owned by the likes of Jimmy Buffet and Tiger Woods. We passed the inlet where we came in a couple years ago from the Bahamas after a terrifying ride across the Gulf in bad weather. No desire to do that again.

Today we get a special treat. There is a stealth looking yacht parked on the outer dock. It charcoal grey/green, sleek and dark, James Bond all the way. It's nothing like anything we've ever seen before. I google it and see it's a Wally Power Yacht.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/118\\_WallyPower](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/118_WallyPower)

## JUST ENJOYING THE DAY AND LEAVING OUR TROUBLES BEHIND...

The weather is perfect, no wind for a change and flat calm, pure white clouds in a pure blue sky.

Ziggy has settled in to a nice snooze. Since he has gotten older he sleeps when we are underway, something we never would have seen him do in his younger years. Most of the time he'd be out on the very edge of the bow giving us either heart attacks or bouts of laughter.

## THE WAKE BRIGADE

We pass Riviera Beach and the calm ceases...here comes the wake brigade. One after another in the short distance where there is no speed limit they race as fast as they can towards us with white flaring foam mustaches spitting out the sides into foamy curled waves.

I quickly stow everything valuable and vulnerable: computers, cameras, iPads, coffee cups. It was survival of the fittest and you have to join in or die. It's your wake against there's.





## AND THEN THE NO WAKE ZONE

A few moments of pure terror and outbursts of bad tempers, you are suddenly back into the No Wake Zone; either it's a manatee zone with complicated instructions on where, how fast and the dates when you can and cannot speed and what size wakes (like 15") you can make. or you can race as fast as 25-35 knots! It's crazy. It seems kind of silly as one place your speeding and a few yards later you have to crawl. How do the manatees know what area to stay in?

## JUPITER INLET

We pass through Jupiter Harbor and Inlet where the water suddenly becomes a beautiful light turquoise blue and is always busy with traffic: little boats, mixed with sports fishers, trawlers, and the police. Yes, the police are at each turn it seems, on little Boston Whalers. Where were the police to monitor wakes and such in Palm Beach? I think we could've used a few.



The dock master in Palm Beach said they were kind of lazy. Well, if so, that may be why it was so rough at the dock.

We are surprised at some of the boaters. Some drive on the wrong side of the ICW channel and some of the little skiffs ride right in front of you oblivious to the bigger boats with deeper drafts trying to maneuver around them. Larry had to honk at one guy. He turned around, looked and just kept going right in the center of the channel blocking us and a Kady Krogen. Other boats are racing and creating huge wakes, even waking kayakers, stand-up board paddlers and little old people in small boats who are off to the side just fishing. It's really quite incredible to watch. There is no consideration from some of these boaters.

## BAT OUTTA HELL

Just north of Jupiter a turquoise sports fisher who had been following us for quite awhile all of a sudden decided to pass us at a peddle to the metal speed with no warning. They passed ridiculously close on the starboard side and waked the hell out of us. I looked up and it was an older grey haired woman looking a bit like a bat out of hell.

Wow, what's the protocol here? There was plenty of room and when you know you are going to wake the crap out of somebody, couldn't you call on the radio first to let them know you want to pass and give them a chance to slow down and move over to let you by before you decide to destroy their day? I didn't expect to see





it was a woman at the helm, hailing port Delaware. I guess I would've thought a woman would have shown some courtesy.

The most maddening part is when they turn around to watch how you roll in their wake. Can you guess? SHE DID.

The water is kind of a milky green turquoise now. That's one thing that makes me sad and that is to leave the beautiful turquoise waters of south Florida but if we are going to make it to Maine by the summer and stop at all our favorite places along the way...then we need to start moving a bit.

Some of the homes we pass are beautiful

had an Italian style gazebo with Grecian goddesses as columns. Really over the top and so Gaudy.

From Jupiter on up, it's very scenic. Lots of preserves and lovely houses and wildlife.

## **DOLPHIN**

We begin to see dolphin. They seem to be in no hurry and play with our wake for a long time.

We are still paying attention to all the manatee signs which become a bit tiresome with all their instructions, like



with Bahama style white tiled roofs and swaying palms and some others look like gaudy stuccoed Italian mini villas. One

reading a book while driving. The locals know them and whiz by the signs but we

are still getting the binoculars out to read each one.

## **RHYTHM OF THE ICW**

It takes a while to get back into the rhythm of the ICW. Getting to know the signs, getting used to going slow then going fast, watching the wakes, passing the other boaters without waking them too much. We are pretty courteous to everyone except the sports fishers and the fast boats that don't seem to give a hoot about their wakes. We slow for the sailboats, trawlers, kayakers and the little guys on skiffs, and those retired folks on those rectangular things on pontoons and look like a floating dock.

As for the others, it's like roller ball, you have to be on the defense. Our lobster haul puts out a pretty good wake even when we don't want it to, so when it wants to, we have some defense. But, you know what? This is all just fun!

## **CRAZY INLET**

We're approaching Port St. Lucie Inlet now. Just before the inlet the ICW narrows through a peaceful preserve area and then like a shock, it opens up into this wide inlet from the ocean and harbor. It's like a huge congested intersection at work hour traffic with no traffic lights or controls to regulate anyone. It seems like a gazillion boats racing in from the ocean's inlet today. Well, the weather is beautiful and it's Sunday! Everyone is out and enjoying the day.

I'm driving at the moment and getting nervous about crossing between all these boats. Larry says to just keep going but it

didn't help to hear him say that it looks like a damn swarm of bees out here! He's right. They are everywhere, all kinds of boats and sizes and everyone is racing as fast as they can go all in different directions.

I continue our course and speed and head across somehow between the boats and wakes with no mishaps. It was actually quite exhilarating and hilarious at the same time. It's a bit like those chase scenes in the movies where they just blow through a blind intersection and miraculously manage to slip through the traffic unscathed. Us too, didn't get a scratch.

## **CRABBIN' UP THE CHANNEL**

The rest of the trip to Fort Pierce, about 10 miles, in my opinion is not too scenic but just a long narrow channel in a wide area of the ICW. The wind has picked up and the current is running pretty strong since we just passed the inlet.

I notice our depth has gone down to 5.9 below us. We've been pushed out of the channel by the winds and current. I turn to starboard to get back in the channel. I notice the guy ahead of us has done the same thing. We are open to the winds, not protected like before. Phew, I get her back in the channel again with about 8 feet below us again. I don't think Larry noticed. :) It's a constant struggle keeping the boat in the channel. Can't day dream for a minute

## FORT PIERCE

We see Fort Pierce ahead of us. We have stayed there before and so are familiar with the tricky entrance but today the place looks different and we double check to make sure we're in the right place. What's new are these huge white sand and coral mounds outside the marina. We soon learn they are the beginning of a new breakfront that will be landscaped. They will be adding many more docks and hoping to have it all completed by hurricane season. It's going to be spectacular I think and the birds have already discovered it, resting in masses on the moving islands. Barges and cranes and a little tug boat are busy at work moving the piles around even on weekends and long hours of the day.

Larry calls the dock master who gives him instructions on entering the channel. "Come all the way to the bridge captain and you will see the channel markers to the marina. Come down the markers until you get to marker 13 and then give me a call for further instructions." I head out to get the lines and fenders up for a port-side-bow-in-tie.

The inside marina looks exactly the same as when we were here a few years ago. It's a busy little marina. I see the dock master waving us standing to a slip. It's more of those high fixed docks and posts to tie too. Ah, I remember them well. They are a challenge to me but today we have a super dock master to help. I throw him the spring line and he makes the first wrap around a pole and then gets the stern line hooked. The dock is so high I can't get off from the stern as we are too low. I head up 3/4 mid ship and am able to step

off to help with the rest of the lines and put the fenders on. I'm always ranting about docking on the East Coast as these poles are so difficult and the fixed docks really baffle me, having to tie the lines to adjust to the different heights of the tide.

## PLEASE SOME CLEATS!

I ask the dock master what the trick is to tying up the line to the posts as it's been awhile and he gives me a quick demo: "around and under, around and over, then slip it through and make two hitches". I still wonder, why not just put some dang cleats on the docks? The tide is only a foot here so we adjust fenders for the movement and we are in.

It's St. Patrick's Day, and people are wearing green. The boat is so salty, not from bad seas but bad wakes. I hose her off top to bottom while Larry is busy inside. I'm tired but it's such a pleasure to have plenty of water to wash her after being in Snug Harbor, on San Juan Island with only a dribble to use. Here we have unlimited water where ever we go and trash pick up. What a treat and luxury! I've learned to be so thrifty where we live and not waste but here..no worries. Wow!

She deserves to be washed after what she's been through. I see more rust spots from the freighter that need attention. I'll work on those tomorrow when Larry takes the airport shuttle to Palm Beach to get the van and bring it up to Fort Pierce. At some point we will store the van for a few months, maybe in Titusville, FL, as we head north, but for now, it's nice to have it with us. It's a challenge and hassle to figure out where we can park it and how



to move it so in some ways will be nice to store it.

It's nice to be here in Fort Pierce. The dock is calm and we are enjoying watching the comical pelicans and three manatees that make the rounds in the marina. It is a contrast in lifestyle between here and Palm Beach.

We stroll down to ***Cobb's Landing***, a thatched roof outdoor bar and cafe for a late lunch/dinner. Larry has, what else, corned beef and cabbage for St. Patrick's Day and I try some coconut shrimp over rice and green beans. It really tasted good and nobody was uptight about Ziggy sitting nearby in his jeep buggy.

Some people stare but many smile when they see us pushing a dog around in a buggy like a baby. We've learned to live with the stares and laughs as you do watcha gotta do for an old pal who can't walk as far, see or hear as well. He likes to go. So that's the way it is now.

## GLAD TO BE BACK ON THE ICW

Wow, what a great feeling to be cruising the ICW again. It's never dull or boring and so much to see. Each stop is sO different. It was worth all the troubles we had.



