



Gale Tales

Manatee Sailing Association

Volume 35 Number 7

www.msasailing.org

July 2020

AHOY MATES:

Another month and here we are again! Gina and I rode our bikes out to Anna Maria Island last week and were amazed that the crowds were back everywhere and very few masks were being worn and very little social distancing could be seen. As for us, we are still keeping busy at home and have now started remodeling the second bathroom. At least I am getting some of my ‘honey-do’s’ done. The boats will just have to wait for cooler weather for their turn and usual maintenance. We did manage to dingy around our neighborhood and had nice social distance conversation with Ed and Betty Burton.

They were on land and we stayed in our dingy.

As for Manatee Sailing Association we are still on hold with no activities scheduled in the foreseeable future. We all wish it was different but we must stay safe and do our part. On a more positive note Bob and Linda Lund have graciously offer the use of



the community room at their condominium complex for our MSA Christmas party on Saturday December 12. So please mark your calendars and think positively, details to follow. To them I say “THANK YOU”. We will just have to see how things play out between now and then perhaps we’ll get lucky and be able to schedule something else.

In the meantime, since MSA has nothing to report, Gail has provided us with the story of her recent sailing with Captain Chuck

Be safe and take care.

Mike Spellacy
Commodore
s/v Esprit de Mer

**SPECIAL FEATURE THIS ISSUE
GAIL GORDON'S JOURNAL**

SAILING SW FLORIDA JUNE 13 TO 25

While most of us were landside during the pandemic, Chuck Fulton and Gail Gordon were cruising SW Florida. Gail kindly let us use her journal for this publication.

THE LANDLUBBER GOES TO SEA.....AGAIN!

By Gail Gordon

June 13th

I woke up with the alarm screaming at me at 6:30 A.M.! I needed to get myself ready and pack up food for our little getaway. We were to get out on the water with the sailboat knowing full well that it would be hot wherever we went. Chuck thought it would be a nice change from camping. Plus, some of his favorite cafes had since opened up along the route south and he was excited for me to try them. I was always nervous when I was on a sailboat as I worried I would be asked to take over at some point or other. I didn't have the experience and knowhow but Chuck constantly put me at the helm so I would learn what to do when needed. On the boat, I was in training! But all in all I was just happy to be out of the house. I showered,



fixed my hair for what would be the last time in awhile and zipped up my duffle bag. When I went into the kitchen, I could see the morning light through

the windows. What? It was raining! The forecast for the next week was unusually nice weather. I turned on the news and the weathergirl apologized for the mistake. But she said by mid morning, the precipitation would quit. Once Chuck arrived, we waited! By 9:20 although not sunny, the rain had stopped enough to get everything loaded up in the car and finally we headed to the marina. After food and clothes were put away, we prepared Wanderin' Starr for departure. The unexpected rain this morning was not the only set back. Chuck had recently invested in a new laptop for his navigation since the old one was giving him trouble. He had tested the new device several



times and felt comfortable that it was all set up. But it wasn't working today! Apparently the face recognition failed and locked him out of the system. He was beyond frustrated! Chuck had toted the old computer with him and when he hooked it up, it did not work either. In desperation, Chuck said that we knew where we were going today so let's just do it. And we did!

There was little to no wind so we just motored to Long Boat Key, set the autopilot and headed south. Thankfully Chuck managed to get his new computer up and running once we all settled down. There were almost no other boats in the gulf as we had the water to ourselves. The seas flattened out and there was not a breeze to be had. Yes, it was hot and rather boring. After lunch, we saw lots of dark clouds looming around us. After checking the radar, they were headed exactly where we were going. All of a sudden about 3 P.M., ripples appeared on the glassy surface of the gulf and we could feel a cool puff of air on our checks. And in no time we had 10 knots of wind. We put up the jib and rejoiced for wind on our faces. We motor sailed for an hour and eventually a rain storm caught up to us but it was not severe. We were happy not to be sweating at least.

By the time we arrived at the entrance to the Venice Channel, the sun was shining and the skies were blue. We anchored



in the bay at 4:40 P.M. We relaxed had wine and cheese and a simple supper. We would be heading to Cayo Costa tomorrow and we were hoping to sail. Note: Today we noticed that the Venice jetty was packed with visitors and locals.

No social distancing there! And when we passed by the Crow's Nest we noticed about 10 small power boats all snubbed up together on the adjacent island with a large crowd closely grouped together. No wonder there had been a spike in the virus numbers!

June 14th

I woke up before the alarm went off and wondered where the heck I was. How did this happen? Here I was a landlubber, a white knuckle boater and a very nervous sailor on yet another water excursion. I was born in New England with a view of the sound from the kitchen window in every home I ever lived in as a child. My parents were terrified of the ocean and never took us to the beach. I would sneak down to the shore only to lie out and get a tan. I had 2 sisters who would rather clean public restrooms than get on a boat. So how did I end up being in a sailing club for over 24 years and on this boat today? It seemed like all the men in my life loved to sail and so I just tagged along for the ride. I guess it was finally my time, forgive the pun, to learn the ropes!

We left Venice at about 8:45 A.M. and by 9:30 we had the sails up. We had a little wind but it was reported that it would fall off completely by the afternoon, so we turned off the motor and enjoyed the quiet for as long as we could. We averaged about 3

knots but what the heck! It was a gorgeous morning, sunny and clear and not yet too hot. There were a few fishing boats out today close to the shoreline. And out on the horizon I could see a white dot or two of a sail. After lunch the seas were flat and we were not moving. We were floating with less than a knot of wind. We figured we would arrive in Boca Grande Inlet at about 1

A.M. at this rate. So we took down the sails and put the motor on.

We arrived in the harbor around 4 and we

were at anchor near the Cayo Costa Park entrance at 4:15. It had been a long day, 7 hours and 30 minutes on the move and most of it in slow motion. All afternoon we watched dark clouds forming over the mainland and by 7:30 P.M. we got hit with high winds and rain. I was glad we were tucked into our little anchorage on Pelican Bay. Note: The most exciting nature spotting today was a turtle bobbing conspicuously out of the water not far from the boat. I was worried that he was in distress or injured. But at a closer look with the binoculars, he was not alone. He was enjoying a fine time with his girlfriend. Other than a few dolphins and some water birds that was all we saw.



June 15th

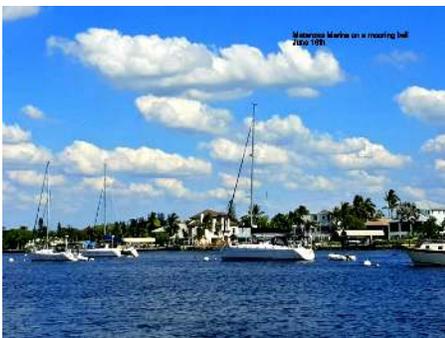
We woke up late and fixed a really big breakfast. We packed a snack and a few necessities in a day pack and took the dinghy to the docks where there was a ranger station and entrance to the trails. Even now I was in training. I had failed miserably at rowing the dinghy many times before but I was not to get off that easily today. I had to try again until I could get us

somewhere near the docks. After going around in circles and getting frustrated, Chuck rescued us and got us to where we needed to go. Note: During breakfast we watched a private helicopter fly very low back and forth around the island. We wondered if there was a problem. Well, we find out the hard way that there was! We got to the park and had to pay \$2 each for admission, got a



map and proceeded to walk to the gulf side. We passed a ranger and asked about the helicopter. He told us that that there was no problem, just spraying for mosquitoes. That was good news I thought, since we had a few in the cabin last night and goodness knows how they all seem to gravitate to me. When we left the ranger station area and started on the trail, the mosquitoes found us along the way. Fortunately I had brought the bug spray and after dousing ourselves in it we managed to get away without too many hits.

The gulf side of the island was always a stunner! The water was a clear aqua color, calm and inviting. There were only a few beach goers within view and very far away. We found a spot to leave our bags and jumped into the delicious gulf water. What a treat! We stayed there for a long time and enjoyed ourselves. We spent some time walking the beach and searching for shells.



About 1 P.M. we started back toward the bay and chose another trail to explore. It didn't take long before we knew we had made a big mistake.

The mosquitoes were attacking us! We pulled out more bug spray and covered ourselves with it including our clothes. It did not seem to make a difference. Bugs were covering us.....our legs, arms and faces! We took off our hats and used our towels to swat our bodies with them to try to discourage these tiny bloodsucking monsters from biting us. But it was no use! It was like the scene in the movie "The African Queen" where Hepburn and Bogie were in a cloud of swarming bugs. It was a nightmare. They were in my hair, my ears and under the lenses in my sunglasses. I kept looking at Chucks legs and they were completely covered with black dots. I avoided looking at mine. We ran as fast as we could to get out of the woods to the open area near the ranger station. When we finally reached the docks it thankfully had started to sprinkle. We were in shock. Neither of us had ever experienced anything like

that. I now understood how a person could actually go insane from a similar episode. It did not take long to see the



hundreds of welts puffing up on my limbs. Once back on Wanderin' Starr we swam in the bay water. It helped cool my burning and itchy body. Chuck was lucky, he only had a few bumps. After supper, I tried to count the bites but there were hundreds of them. And I had an allergic reaction on my upper arms which looked a lot like hives. It was going to be a rough few days!

June 16th

Thank goodness I was able to sleep but when I woke up and looked at myself, I appeared to have a terrible skin disease with bumps on top of bumps. Amazingly, I was not too itchy but just a bit uncomfortable. Chuck stated that he was unhappy with our anchorage. The wind started blowing after supper last evening and never let up. Waves slapped the pontoons all night. Yet we were too exhausted from our experiences yesterday to interfere with some sleep.

This morning we had wind which had been sorely lacking in the last few days.

I was already a nervous sailor while we had our breakfast. We left at 8:30 A.M. and since the anchorage was sparsely filled, it wasn't



too bad getting out. Of course I was at the helm! But it took a long time to get out of Captiva Pass and finally to get out into the deep water of the gulf. I would be at the helm for a while longer until we finally got the sails up at about 10:30. I took my first break and set the auto pilot heading

south to Fort Myers at about 5 knots. As I tried to cool off and relax I was filled again with trepidation. The plan was that we were going to get a mooring ball tonight. Yikes! In a busy harbor! Double yikes! I mentioned to the Captain that I didn't know how to do that and he replied, you'll learn! I'm locked into a perpetual sailing class!

As we cruised past Captiva and then Sanibel we had an east wind that would fluctuate from 14 down to 7 knots. At times we were flying at 6 -7 knots! Unfortunately, that all ended when we turned towards Fort Myers which then put the wind on our nose. We took down the main and the jib and motored the rest of the way. It took about 7 and ¾ hours to reach San Carlos Bay into Matanzas Marina where we were to take a mooring ball. I had to admit, I fretted about that

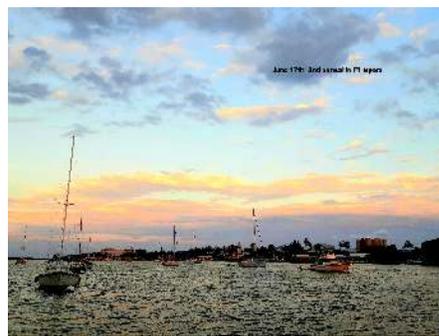


fact all day! When it came time, I asked Chuck where he wanted me and he couldn't decide. I volunteered to take the ball.

That way, if I messed up we would just have to go around again. Nobody would perish! No boats would be damaged! Although there was some confusion on which ball we were supposed to have, the actual maneuver wasn't bad at all. Mooring Ball lesson 101, accomplished! Note: San Carlos Bay pass into Fort Myers had the closest marker to the land that I have ever seen. It looked like it was sitting on the beach! Scary! We talked about going to shore tonight since we were surrounded by seaside restaurants including Doc Fords on the other side of the bridge. But we talked ourselves out of it. We were bums instead and stayed in and cooked. We would spend the day here tomorrow and we had plenty of time to explore. Note: The color of the gulf today was a magnificent hue of turquoise blue!

June 17th

Oh! What luxury not to have to get up and get going! We lounged around and took our blessed time. We didn't even cook breakfast!



Cold cereal instead as we were saving ourselves for....wait for it.....a real restaurant for lunch! Chuck got the dinghy ready and we proceeded to start our day. I tried to be a princess but no, the captain made me row again. Why was I so bad at this? Was I so uncoordinated? We went around in circles and actually back tracked. After humiliating myself once again, Chuck took pity on me and got us to the dinghy dock. Thank goodness! We walked down into the center of Estero Island, checked out the pier and beach and wandered around the tourist's shops to take in some well needed A/C. We stopped for a ridiculously expensive smoothie and then headed for the bridge to check out the choices for lunch. We looked at the menus at Doc Fords and Bonita Bill's but settled for a casual dockside open air restaurant, The Dixie Fish Company. We shared a scrumptious shrimp salad plate. This was the first public dining we had enjoyed since the virus hit. After lunch Chuck remembered a park that was interesting at

the far end of the island and we walked for what seemed like miles to get there. We started to hike one of the trails but in a flash, we were



swarmed by mosquitoes. So we just headed to the beach and looked for shells. The walk back to the marina took forever and we were hot and sweaty. The Matanzas Marina was connected to a resort and restaurant which included a pool on the property. We hoped that as we were paying for a mooring ball we would have some privileges, too.

But no, we were told that the pool was reserved for hotel guests only. We were more than willing to pay a fee but the answer was no. To make matters worse.....the pool was completely empty. Ugh! We just got back in the dinghy and I tried



to row us back to the boat. Between the current and the wind, we were on our way out to sea when Chuck decided that drastic measures were

in order. He rowed us back to Wanderin”Starr as I hung my head in shame.

June 18th

I woke up with the sun in my eyes! Wait a minute! All weather reports called for morning thunderstorms. We had breakfast and still the skies were clear and blue. Could we possibly get under way this morning without getting soaked? We stopped at Moss Marine for diesel and water and set out of the bay at about 8:30 A.M. I was at the helm and took us out into the gulf where off in the distance in several directions were storm clouds. Hopefully we would pass between them.

For most of the day the wind was on our nose so we motored the 36 miles to Marco Island. We would feel a drop or two of rain on and off most of the day



but somehow we missed the downpours. For some reason I was not nervous at all this morning. Yet Chuck had briefed me that coming into Capri Inlet at Marco could be dicey especially when we took the tight turns into Smokehouse Bay. Plus it would be low tide! As we turned at the markers, the sky was black around us. Great all I needed now was a lot of wind and rain. As we made the turn off the pass I

could feel the current pushing me. Chuck told me to “crab the turn”! What?

I made the turn O.K. and slowly curved around the narrow canals. At one section the depth was 2 feet to my right. I stayed as close as I could to the left. I made it past the worst of it! Chuck took over once we were in Smokehouse Bay. It was tight in there and there was one cruiser anchored right in the middle. Once again I struggled with finding neutral on the throttle! Chuck threw the anchor and we were set. I was dripping with sweat! We both were. It was hot in this protected cove and even though the water here was less than perfect, we took a swim to cool off. We were surrounded by lovely waterfront luxury homes on one side and a fancy marina and shopping area called “the Esplanade” on the other. And there was a Winn Dixie within walking distance. Tomorrow we would walk around the area, take a peek at the fancy shops, maybe have brunch out and get some needed groceries to restock the refrigerator. Hopefully we will have a bit of a breeze tonight when the sun goes down because it was pretty uncomfortable right then. Note: Chuck said there was a free dinghy dock supplied by Winn Dixie just around the corner. No wonder he liked this little hideaway.

Additional Note: We have a neighbor! Although the cruiser looked inoperable, Chuck noticed a dinghy tied up to it before we turned in for the night.



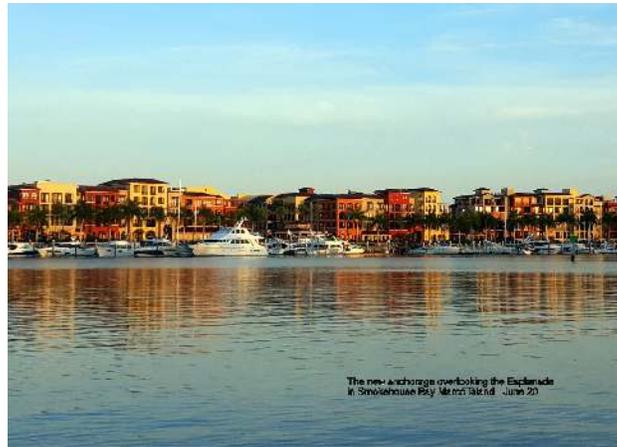
June 19th

We were lazy bums today and didn’t get moving until almost 9 A. M. Other than a tea and coffee and a few crackers for breakfast, we staved off our appetites for a big brunch at one of Chuck’s favorite restaurants. I got ready, Chuck got the dinghy in the water and we left for our Marco Island exploration. The skies looked threatening and rain was forecasted. We

welcomed the overcast conditions and somewhat cooler temps. I, of course, was required to row the dinghy to the somewhat nearby dock by Winn Dixie. And I'm happy to report that I actually got us to where we needed to go! I was so proud. Yes, it took us a lot longer but I did it. No wind and a miniscule current helped a lot! But what was this? There was a sign at the dinghy dock for 1 hour parking only! Chuck was stunned! The dinghy dock was empty and only one vessel, our neighbor, at anchor besides us. So what was the problem? We decided to leave the dinghy there for however long it took us today and hoped for the best. Maybe that sign was only for the busy season.



We walked across the bridge and down about 3/4 of a mile to 2 breakfast restaurants, Ne-Ne's and Doreen's Cup of Joe. There was a long line at Doreen's and I was convinced that was because it was the better place. I was right! The menu was outstanding! The food and service were amazing! And I loved the décor. A 5-star from me! Yum! From there we continued our trek for another mile or two to hotel row. We stopped to check out the massive and gorgeous beach front Marriot. Chuck's son worked for Marriot and Chuck was familiar with the hotel. We relaxed in the large parlor off the lobby and soaked up the A/C. While we were inside, the skies opened up and it rained. Lucky us! We remained there in total comfort until the



The new anchorage overlooking the Esplanade in Smokeyhouse Bay, Miraflores Island June 20

weather lifted. Afterwards we walked down to the beach and finally to one of the several pool areas. We took a lounge chair under an umbrella and pretended to be spoiled guests until mid afternoon. The hotel looked very busy and we guessed it to be almost 80% occupancy. The only people wearing masks were the employees.

By the time we started back to the anchorage, it was steaming and extremely hot. Our clothes were drenched with perspiration. It seemed to take forever to get back to the bay. After crossing the bridge Chuck had a cool idea to get a smoothie at another of his choice locations. We walked a few more blocks but found that it was closed. For a reward however on our walk back we stumbled upon a borrowing owl who warned us to keep a distance. I had never seen one before and it was a surprise to see the hole in the ground that was this little guy's home. When we got to the dinghy dock, our boat was there but there was a big notice attached to it warning us that it would be towed if we left it again. Bummer! As far as we knew and we

researched, there were no other places to legally leave the dinghy. Chuck was disappointed as we planned to stay another day. Tomorrow we would check out if the fancy marina would allow us to leave the dinghy there even if we had to pay.

June 20th

It was a hot night and it promised to be a scorcher today. Almost no chance of rain either. We were in no hurry to get going because we didn't know where we would go. So after breakfast, we read and tended to emails. We also planned our remaining days of the trip getting me back home by the end of the day June 25th. At about 1 P.M. we got in the dinghy and rowed to the Esplanade Marina just across the bay. We called the dock master and he met us at the dock. We talked to

him about the Winn Dixie free dock and he was totally surprised to hear about the 1 hour rule. After much discussion he agreed to look the other way if we left our dinghy past his 2 hour limit. He also told us about our neighbor in the cruiser and that he was an unsavory fellow not to be



messed with. This guy had been arrested numerous times and had an extensive rap sheet. When the dock master saw us anchor in the bay yesterday he was concerned for our wellbeing. So far, the community was unable to get this bad guy to leave.

Feeling somewhat committed, we ate at the marina restaurant and actually had a good lunch. We sat by the water and studied all the luxury yachts parked in the marina. Such opulence! Dessert was a yummy and refreshing smoothie that we wanted to enjoy yesterday. On the way back to Winn Dixie we stopped to visit our new friend, the owl and met 2 of his offspring. So Cute!

We did a little grocery shopping but before we left Chuck felt compelled to talk to the manager about the dinghy dock problem. After a lot of small talk and excuses the real story came to surface. Apparently, our neighbor, the bad guy, made himself such an antagonistic nuisance with the homeowners around the bay that a virtual vendetta was organized. This fellow used the Winn Dixie dinghy dock daily to get to his car for work. The homeowners found out about it and ended up harassing the manager at the Winn Dixie citing him as aiding and abetting this criminal. So in response to his customers, the manager created 1 hour rule. He told us that one night the bad guy had a woman on his boat and that he ended up beating her senseless. To escape the police, the fellow submerged

himself and sat in the water on the bay floor using a hookah to breathe. He was eventually discovered and arrested. So when we got back to Wanderin' Starr, Chuck moved the boat to the far side of the bay. No sense taking any chances, right? Tomorrow, we would try to get underway early for a short ride to Naples, about 3 hours. Hopefully we would have a few hours to explore.

Sunday June 21st Father's Day

It was sprinkling when we left this morning. It was early since we wanted to enjoy some time in Naples. There was no wind and it would be a short cruise so we didn't plan to sail. I had some difficulty this morning. I struggled with finding neutral when we were getting up the anchor. It seemed to be the bane of my existence...that and rowing! Ugh! Will I ever get it? We took it slow coming out of Capri Pass since it was so low in several areas. Once out in the gulf we headed north along the shoreline.

Chuck had had it with the extreme heat and after all, it was Father's Day. He was going to try to find us a marina so we could get some power and A/C. He called several places and it appeared



that no slips were available. How could that be? It was low season! Only by a fluke did he find one after calling back to the wrong marina. We were going to stay at Naples Boat Club! Yea! It was pricy but it included some nice amenities. As we were coming into the channel in Gordon Pass I was met with a million "go fast" boats running circles around me and stirring up big wakes. Give a girl a break, will ya! As we approached the marina I handed the helm over to Chuck. He had to back in between 2 pilings. I was not ready for that yet! Maybe, never! He did a masterful job!

We were again dripping in sweat! First things first! Plug in the power cord!!! Ahhhhhhh! We had lunch on board and then explored the area. This was a great place to be. The location was in the heart of Old Florida Naples; the scenic pier and beach and 3rd Ave better known to women as Rodeo Drive on the Gulf Coast which included some great restaurants, too. After checking out all the hot spots we returned to our luxurious home base. We languished in the pool, enjoyed endless hot showers and even did laundry for free. We wandered around the quiet marina gawking at all the highly polished and impeccably detailed mega yachts that could be described as small ocean liners. Chuck remarked when we found our way back to Wanderin' Starr that it felt like "The Clampetts had come to Naples!"

June 22nd

We left the luxurious Naples Boat Club at about 8 A.M. to no wind and calm seas. Chuck got the boat away from the dock and handed over the helm to me. It was much quieter this morning and we marveled at the mansions

and Florida palaces that lined the shores of Gordon Pass. I had totally missed the view yesterday as I was trying not to hit anything as we came in. This waterway looked like we could be somewhere in Europe. Beautiful! Once we were



back out into the gulf, I felt totally alone. There was not a boat in sight. I set the course on autopilot and we kept the same heading for almost the entire way to Fort Myers. Note: Along the cruise we noticed a film on the water's surface. It was the color of coffee with cream and in spots was very thick. There was no detectable odor or bad effects but it just didn't look very pretty. At about 12:30 we made our turn into San Carlos Bay and finally to Moss Marina just before going under the big bridge. We had this only other opportunity

for a break from the heat as we made our way back north and we took it. By the time we got the boat settled in the slip the thermometer in the cabin read 96 degrees. Phew! A/C was turned on and we tried to revive ourselves. The marina was nice and everyone most helpful but Naples had



spoiled us for awhile. Once we felt able, we took a walk down to the beach to people watch from the pier. But finally went back to the boat to literally "chill out". We made a monumental conclusion that sailing south in Florida in June was not for wimps! We stayed on board for dinner not wanting to leave the A/C and only later after dark did we venture out to have one last endless shower until we got home.

June 23rd

We left the marina about 8:45 A.M. after feasting on Chuck's famous blueberry pancakes. We headed out of Matanzas Channel

making a wide sweep out of San Carlos Bay in the wrong direction to flat seas with a mere 2 knots of wind. We knew that the possibility of sailing was slim but we were always hopeful that conditions could change. When we finally left the last marker and turned north, I picked a course and tried to set the autopilot. Oops! "Rudder Not Responsive!" What have I done now? Chuck jumped on the problem and started taking the control panel apart to look for a loose connection. Nothing appeared to be the problem. I tried again! "Rudder Not Responsive!"

By now the temp on deck was in the low 90's and the prospect at standing at the helm for the rest of the trip did not sit well with either of us. Chuck in a heroic and brilliant reply to the issue turned the system off and then back on! The auto pilot registered the selected course and we went on our merry way. Wonderful! I took my seat on the port side in the little shade we had and enjoyed a gentle breeze to cool off. It seemed that every day on the boat, something broke, or needed a repair or had to be replaced. It was an ongoing process. Chuck had a list of reminders he would have to address once we got home. I realized that it was a lot of work to have a sailboat!

The thermometer on the deck registered 96 degrees as we cruised along the long coastline of Sanibel. We put our swim suits on and set up the "summer shower" system in the cockpit. We would soak ourselves with tepid water and that would keep us comfortable for awhile. After a quick lunch we had Captiva Pass to our right and I made the turn inside. There was quite a bit of activity in the bay and I had to pay attention. We ultimately wound



around a narrow section of water just deep enough for us on the south end of Punta Blanca Island. I made Chuck take the helm when the depth got down to 3 feet and he got us through to one of his favorite hidden coves in Pelican Bay. I still had nightmares about being around Cayo Costa and I had leftover reminders still visible on my body. Chuck hoped there would be enough of a breeze in this anchorage to keep the mosquitoes away. We cooled off with a swim around the boat but I noticed that some of that oily residue that we had seen on the gulf before was floating around in here. Chuck worked on trying to scrub it off the boat and I got out of the water and rinsed off. Yuk!

June 24th

Hot! Hot! Hot! Sticky night with a sprinkling of mosquitoes! As far as I was concerned, summer in Cayo Costa was not for the faint of heart! We worked together this morning to make our special but abridged version of guacamole eggs Benedict. It wasn't as good as home but not bad either. At 9 A.M. we were greeted with a group of frisky dolphins who bid us farewell as we left the cove. Easy does it in these shallow waters. Chuck maneuvered the boat a little further away from the shore and we had more depth than we needed. I took over the helm once we got into the channel. The sun was directly on me and I was dripping sweat onto the deck. My hands were so wet, that it was difficult to hold tight to the wheel. I could hardly wait to get out into the gulf. We took a shortcut around a row of broken down pilings that lined the shore. It was shallow here but it never got below 5 feet. It saved us a lot of time. I set the autopilot and that course took us almost all the way to Venice. We noticed that the caramel colored gunk was on the surface of the water all

the way up to Venice. We looked it up on line and found out it was in fact a diatom algae that was different than red tide, less bothersome but none the less nasty to swim in. Another thing that happened on this leg our journey was a nature sighting. Chuck spotted something large that splashed right in front of the boat. I looked for it while he got his camera. We both saw what looked like 2 grey fins in the water.....what we believed to be dolphins. Then we looked down into the water on the port side of the vessel where we were standing and we both saw what looked like 2 sharks swim directly under the boat. We each got a good photo of the fins and Chuck got a blurring photo of the sharks but who knows what exactly we really saw.

Not far from Venice we had enough of a breeze to put up the jib for a little while to give a little assistance to the engine.....simple to put up and down with little

effort. Finally we could see the rocky jetty that lined the entrance to Venice. I was at the helm and took Wanderin' Starr all the way into the bay where Chuck wanted to anchor. I was waiting for him to tell me to and he finally did, "put it in neutral, Gail". I sighed and gave it a try. I used 2 hands this time and closed my eyes. The throttle clicked into place! Yeah! I did it! He threw out the anchor and we were set. I turned off the engine and beamed! Maybe, I could actually be somewhat useful on a boat after all! Wouldn't that be something!

June 25th

We were anxious to get underway this morning. I was ready to be home but I wasn't ready to have

to think about all that was waiting for me when I got there. That was one of the benefits about being out to sea was that you were focused with what was happening around you and not much else. I was happy that I had learned so many things in these past 13 days. I felt less nervous about being on the water than ever before and I had more confidence that I could handle a few sailing duties without letting anyone down. I still had a lot to learn and the only way to accomplish that was to get out there and do it. We left Venice at about 8:30 and the seas were weird looking! The gulf was a sheet of blue



glass. And looking west, one couldn't find a horizon. Everything blended together. At one point we saw a white dot, a cruiser, in the distance that looked like it was floating in the sky. It felt like we were in the Twilight Zone. I didn't know if this was a product of the Sahara dust storm or some weird visual phenomenon due to the heat. It did not take long

before we saw Anna Maria Island and ultimately the Long Boat Key Bridge. Up until now, I had been at the helm for the best part of this getaway. I asked Chuck to take her home from here. And he did! We were back at the slip at his marina by 2 P.M. My motto for any getaway has always been if you make it back home and never had a bigger problem than a band aid could fix, you had a good trip. We had a very good trip.

Gail Gordon, Sailor

Contact MSA at:
msa@msasailing.org
or
www.msasailing.org

MSA 2020 Board

COMMODORE	MIKE SPELLACY
VICE COMMODORE	PATTI KORN
CRUISING CAPT.	RICK & ADELIA JACKERSON
RACING CAPT.	JOHN CASTELLANA
SECRETARY	CLAUDE SALOMON
SOCIAL SECRETARY	GAIL GORDON
TREASURER	LINDA BRIGGLE
MEMBERSHIP	DIANA JORGENSEN
PAST COMMODORE	CHARLES ZAJACZKOWSKI



OPTAVIA™



Betty Burton
Certified Independent Health Coach
Health Coach ID # 18694301
941.518.4493
Email Jlua416@gmail.com
www.boatbabebetty.ichooseoptimalhealth.com



Whiteaker
YACHT SALES

Mike Fauser
Broker

Preferred Yachts, Exceptional Service

941.776.0616 or 888.717.7327
Cell 941.518.5614/ Fax 941.721.0203
Email: mike@whiteakeryachtsales.com
www.whiteakeryachtsales.com



1035 Riverside Dr.
Palmetto, FL 34221



Thankful Heart Creations
Custom Gift Baskets and Promotions
KATHY GARCIA
941.545.3571
Thankfulheartcreations@yahoo.com

Spice Sailing Charters

Half Day & Sunset Charters
Sailing Lessons
Boat Detailing

Cell: (941) 704-0773
www.spicesailingcharters.com
ed@spicesailingcharters.com



Ed Hartung
USCG Licensed Capt.

P.O. Box 4101
Anna Maria, FL 34216