

Our First Foray in 2019 will be Somewhere New... and Something a Bit Different.

Let's take a quick hop down to Hudson, Florida for an abbreviated visit (arrive back 5:10-5:40) to

Robert J. Strickland Memorial Park

Where the heck is Hudson, you ask?

About 1 ½ hrs. from the Villages on the Gulf

This could become your secret family or friends get-away, as we believe this location may be the Villages' closest, Gulf-front, open-water, sand-between-your-toes, traffic-free beach destination.

This community park consists of 6 acres located on the beautiful Gulf of Mexico. The beach frontage is about 1,900 feet and the swimming area is 290 feet for our Polar Bear Club members. Unfortunately, we couldn't find any Florida water north of Key West above 69-70 degrees in March. This is a great place to bask in the sun, read a good book, share in interesting conversation, or cast a line. From the beach, boardwalk, lawn swings, or the observation area above the pavilion, keep your eyes open for the dolphins, fish, crabs and sea turtles passing by.

No chair or umbrella rentals are available here.

Many people simply come out to enjoy the view or grab lunch at Sam's On the Beach or the Inn on the Gulf restaurants, which are both located right on the property.

Contrary to most of our trips, plan on enjoying your dinner in the comfort of your home or at your favorite local haunt.

On our way home, we will stop for ½ hour at The Florida Exotic Bird Sanctuary whose mission is to care for the well-being of parrots and other exotic birds. They do not breed, sell, trade, or offer for adoption the birds in their care. Instead, they endeavor to provide them with a permanent home that allows them to mingle with other compatible birds in outdoor open-flight aviaries. They also strive to provide a permanent, caring home for birds with special needs. Finally, they are committed to raising public awareness regarding the moral responsibilities and physical demands of keeping parrots or other wild animals as pets.

And if you gentlemen think your wives make a bit too much noise at times, you may have a different perspective after visiting up close and personal with over 750 Parrots, including 75 Free Flying Macaws in an 80-Foot Flight Aviary and over 50 playful African Greys.

As you might imagine, some of the parrots can talk and they make the tour a fun but **loud** educational experience. Bring earplugs if it would be helpful.

A \$5 minimum donation for their aerial residents' care would be greatly appreciated.

We should arrive home in time for husbands to prepare dinner.