



WCTSS

NEWSLETTER

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Punta Gorda Weekend

July 24th - 26th, 2015

The first Punta Gorda weekend ever for the Squadron was planned to include some hotel accommodations, some decent restaurants and even some shopping. Imagine my surprise when this plan brought out more couples than usual! This kind of event turned out very well last year at Cedar Key in November, so we looked for a suitable place to do a similar activity and Laishley Marina popped up! The great thing about launching at this county marina is the launching and parking are all free! And since it was a rainy weekend, there was almost no other boats in the parking lot, and no pressure at the ramps. The facility itself was very new and there were dockside spaces to tie up over night for those who wished to do so. If you wanted a slip, that could also be arranged at normal transient slip prices. The hotel we booked was in plain sight of the marina, and about a block away. To walk there, the best way was along a sea wall walk way from the marina, under the Highway 41 bridge, to the hotel entrance. Along the way you could visit the Tiki Hut bar, which is where many of us found ourselves on Friday afternoon during the monsoon.

I'd actually gotten out on Nomad during the morning hours for a short spin. Ron Pierce came along while Joyce (my wife) and Ron's wife, Joan, toured the Crab House Restaurant and Ice Cream Shoppe that are also at the Marina. Billy and Joyce VanDeusen with their SunCat, Cayo Gato, were setting up when we arrived, and Billy put his boat into a spot along the inner pier nearest the marina office. Tom and Barb Lincoln arrived and set up their SunCat, Gatito, or "Little Cat." Tom has created his own version of the block and tackle arrangement to raise and lower the mast from the comfort of his cockpit! ComPac offers their version of it on all the SunCat day sailers, known as the Sunday Cat.

We weren't out long before the clouds from the northwest began to gather. We just made it in to the dock and put Nomad on her trailer before the clouds opened up drenching Ron and myself as we put her away. Luckily we had rooms at the hotel and they were as ready for us as we were for them! After wringing out my clothes, getting a hot shower, and changing into dry things, we headed down to the lobby where a great number of us were gathered. It was determined that the Tiki Hut bar was our next stop.

Eric and Jane DeVoe, Russ and Marilyn Blagg, Dennis and Carol Marshall, and Jack Dirkes came minus their boats, and enjoyed just being with the group at the hotel and restaurants. Rex and Kathy Payne trailered their Caldonia Yawl all the way there, but decided there wasn't enough dry sailing to warrant putting her in the water on Saturday. We really appreciated their help when the boats came into the ramps too! New members Lowell and Doreen Stephens were the proud new owners of Rosie Pearl, the SeaPearl Trimaran owned previously by Bill Prater and before that by Brenda Bell.

Lowell and Doreen are avid kayakers and canoeists and appreciated the speed and handiness of the SeaPearl Trimaran. Speaking of speed, Ray Almodovar was there with friend Chris, and they were showing off Ray's Hunter 216 sloop. Lowell said he was faster than the SeaPearl! Chris and Susan Behnke trailered their O'Day DS2 to the party, and got out sailing quite a bit. Kevin Riley was the only solo sailor among us on this trip with his WW Potter 15 named "Hank." Love that name.

So what did we do with all the time it was raining - Friday night, Saturday afternoon and evening? Well we went to the Tiki Bar for happy hour, where it was National Tiquila Day, then we had a huge table set up for 26 over at the Laishley Crab House for dinner. The menu was so extensive that I'll have to go back several times to check out the items I couldn't get to! Everyone enjoyed their meal from the looks of it. On Saturday after the storms came in a bunch of us jumped in trucks and cars and headed a mile west along the shore line to Fisherman's Village where there were shops and more restaurants. A couple of hours of shopping and it was time to think about dinner for later in the evening. We decided it was "go your own way" night, and several of us headed over to the "Celtic Ray" Irish Pub. I think I've only been in one Irish Pub in my life, but it was very authentic according to the Irish Pub experts in our group. You had to go to the bar to order your food, and drink, and then then somehow figured out where you were seated and brought the food to your table. I enjoyed the conversation, and the atmosphere more than the food personally. I don't think Irish food is all that tasty, but what do I know.

This seems to be another fine venue for a cool weather event for the Squadron, or at least DRY weather event. Maybe February? It certainly got the women to accompany their sailor boys, and everyone enjoyed the hotel and food! Speaking of the hotel, the Four Points Sheraton was a nautical themed hotel. Even our bathroom door looked like a sliding hatch with a porthole! Very cool. I kept thinking that we were all on a cruise together!



Nomad prepares to leave the ramp area. Note the long dock for loading up.

Lake Tarpon and the Turtle 8/15/15

We were hoping for a break in the rain and we got it! A good group of Squadron members gathered at Anderson Park boat ramp on Saturday, August 15th to sail on Lake Tarpon. Members with sailboats were Chris Throop with his Sovereign Antares 17, Dennis and Carol Marshall with Duckling, Dan Roeder with his Wayfarer, Rex and Kathy Payne with Kathleen, their Caldonia Yawl, Terry and Ruth Nagle with their sailing canoe, Tom Steinmetz with a sailing kayak trimaran that he put together, Tim Horsman with his SeaPearl, and myself, Ron Hoddinott with Nomad, my ComPac SunCat 17. So not bad numbers for a hot day in August! We had the morning breezes before any storms were forecast, so we got underway as soon as we were all rigged.

The Tarpon Turtle was notified of our arrival about 11:30, and they had their dock boys down on the dock helping folks tie up, not that we needed much help. I had Dan and Leann Baker with me, who are new members still looking for a boat to purchase. It was nice to have someone to talk to while out sailing! Dan helped me tie up at the dock and generally made himself useful aboard. It was LeAnne's first time on a sailboat, and she squealed when we finally got enough wind to heel over a bit. But after seeing Tim's SeaPearl at 30 degrees, she didn't mind our mild angle of heel so much.

At the restaurant we were joined by a number of members who'd decided to make the trip by land. Holly and Robert Bird, Michael and Judith Jones, and Bill and Sandy Stevens boosted the total number of members in attendance to well over 20! I lost count. Also Francis, an artist, sailed with Dan Roeder aboard the Wayfarer this day, and made sketches of some of the members, myself included while we waited for our food to be delivered. Francis is quite good at making people look better than then do in real life!

The food was good and service about what you'd expect with a large group, which is to say fair, I guess. After lunches were paid for we got back out on the lake and enjoyed an increasing breeze for a half hour or so before we noticed two storms which seemed to be converging on our. One from the north and one from the southwest! We all headed for the docks, and everyone made it out and back on the trailers without getting wet.

I was great to see Michael Jones again, who is the new President of the Traditional Small Craft Association in our area. Rex and Kathy Payne are the Secretary and Treasurer for the organization also. We briefly talked about how the TSCA was going to do a joint event with the WCtSS at Ft. DeSoto Sept 12th. With both groups attending, we should have a great turnout, weather permitting of course!



The Squadron takes over the docks at the Turtle on Lake Tarpon.

Ron and Joyce's Getaway

Looks like Joyce and I are going to get to go away for three weeks to the Smoky Mountains starting on Sept 16. We have caregivers taking care of my mother, and my brother Tom just retired, so he'll be available while we're gone also. We'll be traveling with our Fifth Wheel trailer and truck and using RV Parks and Campgrounds along the way. No set itinerary, which is as we like it. We are wanderers. Back in time for Cayo Costa for sure!

Upcoming Events!

- 1. Fort DeSoto Reunion - Sept 12th** - daysail or overnigher. Southern tip of Pinellas County. Great ramps (12), \$6 ramp/24 hr storage fee. Watch out for strong tides in Bunces Pass. Beach picnic.
- 2. Cayo Costa Cruise - Oct 16th - 18th** - Fri - Sun. Many folks come a day early and stay a day late. Friday afternoon gathering at Cayo Costa's Pelican Bay, north cove. Anchor right off the beach and step off. Friday and Saturday night campfire (small). Bring some sticks. Bring a dinghy or kayak to explore Pelican Bay on Saturday, or paddle to Cabbage Key for lunch!
- 3. Cedar Key in November! November 20th - 22nd** Friday - Sunday. This is a Hotel/Daysail event, so get your reservations quickly. Last year's inaugural CK in Nov was very well attended. Lots of couples! Joyce is joining me in our condo at the Island Place (206) overlooking the water. Bring your sweetie. Dinner's out at Tony's on Friday and Island Hotel on Saturday! Breakfast at Annies on Saturday and Sunday! Hope the weather is as great as it was last year!
- 4. December is YTBD** - so get thinking caps on and make suggestions! We probably should make it a daysail, since it's going to be near the holidays and the weather could be difficult.
- 5. 10,000 Islands** - January after the holidays stay tuned for exact dates.



Sunset over the Cayo Costa Cove