



WCTSS

NEWSLETTER

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Emerson Point Paddle

The past two months have featured cold, rainy and windy weather for the most part, especially on the days that we'd scheduled events! But nevertheless, we did manage to sneak in some weather good enough for outings. The January 16th Emerson Point Paddle and Row cosponsored by the WCTSS and the FGCTSCA (Florida Gulf Coast Traditional Small Craft Association) was quite well attended. This was the first time Joyce or I had ever been there. Years ago we used to anchor across the Manatee River from Emerson Point, and it appeared to be just a lot of vacant land. Now it's a recreation trail, small boat launch and beach! Michael Jones and spouse Judith, along with Rex and Kathy Payne headed up the FGCTSCA part of the expedition with Joyce and I getting a chance to use our We-No-Nah 15 foot, 35 pound canoe. That's about all we can manage these days, so I'm glad I bought it even though it doesn't really get much use. My fault. Rex and Kathy were paddling their fastest Chesapeake 16 sea Kayaks, and Michael and Judith were rowing their doggie Cooper about in his 16 foot Tom Hill lapstrake canoe rowboat. Randy Webster decided to bring his Nutshell Pram and do a little fishing while we mucked about in the mangroves. Of course we had to paddle about a mile northeast to find the entrance to the mangrove tunnel, and probably never would have without the kind assistance from a local who also was looking to fish from a hobie kayak. Lee Conrad rowed an Adirondack Guide boat with us. He lived close to the point. Richard and Betsy also joined us with their kayaks, and Dave Lucas powered over in one of his skiffs with Steve's Wee Lassie on board.

All in all a fun event. We had to leave early due to an lunch appointment with a high school friend of Joyce at Regatta Point on the Manatee River. Looking forward to more joint WCTSS/FGCTSCA events this year!

Ten Thousand Islands Meander

In January we had our usually scheduled Ten Thousand Islands event, but at the last minute a very bad weather system moved in and we cancelled it. Well, that was news to three intrepid boats, who hail from the Pine Island area. It wasn't so bad, or hadn't hit down there, and they managed to enjoy the weekend launching from Goodland Boating Park. Phil Garland and wife Carol, Mary and Bill Cyzewski and Dennis Bradley took their boats, a Turbo Charged Core Sound 17, a SunCat, and an Egret to Panther Key. From the photos it looks like they had a great time. Mary reported that the front hit just as they were headed home on the highway.

So we rescheduled for February, and this time the weather cooperated, but quite a few of the regulars, like Simon and Kristi were packing for the Washington's Birthday Regatta the following week, and couldn't make it. We did have four boats though, so it was an event! Jack Dirkes and I had SunCats which made it fun. Ric Valdes launched his Hunter 260 and we met Tom Steinmetz down at Panther Key

Tom was the lonely only who launched from Port of the Islands. The rest of us launched at Goodland Boating Park, and I highly recommend it! There was a bit of boat traffic on the 2 miles out to Gullivan Bay by Coon Key, but otherwise it's a nice way to get out to the Ten Thousand Islands area.

Friday, launch day offered a nice following breeze from Coon Key down to Panther Key. Not a lot of wind, but we had plenty of time. I set up the auto pilot and played with ProCharts, my new Navigation App, set up on my old iPad. It worked great, and I could clearly see where we were from the cockpit. One thing about iPad navigation is that it runs down the battery quite quickly, so even before turning it on I attached an external battery source. This allowed the iPad to keep running without running down it's own battery. I backed up and double checked the App ProCharts with my faithful Lowrance H2OC hand held GPS. One thing I didn't like is that when I tried to move the screen it would lock up and I'd have to restart it. This may be addressed in an update, and it may have something to do with the App attempting to re-orient itself via cell service, which this iPad had turned off. The one feature of ProCharts that I didn't get to try is Buddies. With this feature two or more boats running pro charts can see where their friends are on their charts, if they each turn on that feature. First I'll have to convince a couple of you to load it on your iPhones or iPads! It's a free App, but it's \$29/year for updates and unlimited chart downloads. I have to say it is the most like a stand alone GPS I've ever seen in a IOS app. Great product. I've given the author some feedback already and the product has already been improved.

When we got down to Panther Key, I saw a boxy boat bouncing around right off the beach. It was Tom Steinmetz's cabin sailboat, which shall henceforth be called a "Tomsboat," since he changed the original design to his own wishes. The wind had just picked up enough to give us a 4.9 - 5.0 mph kick in the pants, but it made anchoring off of Panther Key untenable since it was out of the west. So we convinced Tom to pick up his anchor and follow us around to a quiet anchorages near Four Brother's Key. Completely surrounded by mangrove islands, but with enough room for the four boats and more to swing at anchor we settled down to cook supper and enjoy the cool breezes of the Ten Thousand Islands from the comfort of our own cabins. I cooked up some rice with canned chicken and a can of peas and carrots, ate all I wanted, and the fish got the remainder. I brought along only a very small cooler, and a couple of beers. The rest of my food was dry or canned and didn't need to be kept cool. I usually only drink water, which I find easier to drink at room temperature. I suspected that we'd be infested with some mosquitos, so I lit up my butane repellent machine and left it inside near the hatch, but didn't hear or see any bugs. Prevention or were they just not there? Dunno, but not complaining. Got up a couple of time to ah.. enjoy the constellations overhead in the clear cool air. Orion and Ursa Major were outstanding, as was a great view of our own galaxy the Milky Way.

Next morning we slept in, had breakfast, and decided to cruise on down to Tiger and Picnic Key. Again a following light breeze. We all had plenty of fuel in our tanks in case the wind shifted and made it tough to sail back to Panther. Almost a carbon copy of the day before's wind, perhaps a bit stronger.

Washington's Birthday Regatta

We got down to Tiger Key around noon, and sailed into the beach that's on an elbow as far in as the beach goes. All four of us nosed up to the shore, and put our anchors in the sand before wandering off following some prominent raccoon tracks. Tiger Key is in the Everglades National Park, so to stay there over night would require a camping permit that can only be obtained at the Everglades City Ranger Station. We didn't want to do that, or be cited for a violation of park rules, so after walking down the beach to the "facility" and chatting up some fishermen and ladies, we returned to our boats and cast off to return to the Panther Key area. We sailed out of the Tiger Key Pass and into a hatful of wind! Where did this come from? Usually wind is good, but not right on the nose with the entire Gulf of Mexico offering an extra helping of fetch! Lumpy, Rolly, and Choppy, our new best friends, made our trip back to Panther less than fun. The sails came down and the Iron Jennies were fired up. An hour of pounding, rolling, and crashing brought us back to the east side of Panther where we cut into the Fakahatchee River to follow the trail back to Four Brothers for another calm night on the hook. Getting creative with rice and beans, I sliced a turkey summer sausage and fried it all up together. Pretty good, but half of it ended up feeding the fish again. Slept well with my head toward the bow for a change. That puts me on my left side, which agrees with my creaky back more than sleeping on my right side for some reason. I forgot my Kindle e-reader, so it was a long night.

Sunday was the day we'd planned to head home, and the wind was supposed to clock around to the NE or NNE giving us either a beam reach or a close reach back up the coast to Coon Key. While I ate a boiled egg and enjoyed my coffee, I looked around and SeaCups, Ric Valdez's Hunter 260 was GONE! I guessed he just wanted to get home early, but later he sent me a text that his dad was sick with pneumonia in the hospital and he needed to get back. Seeing that the later we left the better the wind would be for us, we dawdled about until almost 10am. By then we truly had a nice beam to close reach back up the coast and proceeded to put some sea miles behind us. Well, coastal miles in any case. I was using my faithful Lorance handheld GPS, and was not really familiar with coming into the Coon Key, Goodland area from the southeast. Enjoying the sail I kept heading up, thinking I was being headed, and aimed for an opening between what I thought was Coon Key and the main land. Not sure what it was that clued me in, but checking the track on the GPS map and the color of the water showed that I was a couple of islands short of Coon Key, and was sailing right over a marked reef on the chart! Falling off and signaling to Jack's SunCat "About Time" had us back on course with a grounding avoided. The islands in this area all look almost exactly alike. It's very important to keep track of where you are at all times. Imaging sailing here in a fog!

After sorting that out and actually bumping bottom while getting my sail down near the entrance to the channel leading back to Goodland, we arrived at Goodland Boating Park with a pretty good incoming tide. Thanks to the help of a quick handed fisherman on the windward dock I got lines to the dock keeping me off the dock while I fetched the trailer. Jack wasn't so lucky as he had the leeward side of the ramp but at least we both got our boats hauled out rather quickly. It's amazing how much attention our little 17 foot cat boats attract. While we lowered the masts and put the sail covers on we were approached by at least three couples asking about our boats. One was from France, and another from New Jersey. Another guy had a Hobie Tandem Island he was putting away, and was also interested in the Squadron and the Everglades Challenge next month. The four hour trip home was uneventful, if somewhat mind numbing. usually. Got home about 5:30 and enjoyed a really hot shower and a real bed!



The Washington's Birthday Regatta is held on Biscayne Bay right off of the historic home of Commodore Ralph Munroe, a founder and pioneer in the Miami area. Ralph Munroe, originally from New York, moved to Biscayne Bay before there were roads or railroads to the area! He built his innovative home, the Barnacle, right on the water, and today it is a State Park. The Rangers help run the Regatta which is run by the volunteers to the museum. One or two of the grandsons of the Commodore are usually in attendance! I was lucky enough to attend with Tim Horsman last year, but couldn't make it this year. We did have an amazing collection of WCTSS members there however. Two Egret copies (an original Munroe design) from the Squadron made it. Simon Lewandowski's Egret, and Dennis Bradley's Egret. Also there was Luke and Joy with Joyride their lovely Sakonnet 23, Michael Burwell with his CLC Skerry, and Frank Wentzel with his Florida Bay Bayhen 21. Phil Garland with his wife Carol sailed his Turbo Core Sound 17. Phil was awarded first place for winning 2 out of 3 races, with Luke and Joy winning the other one and taking second place overall.

The excitement for the day was provided by Frank Wentzel who managed to not only capsize his Bay Hen, but sink it! Lots of helping hands helped recover the boat and get it back on the trailer. Even his GPS, which apparently floated was picked up by Phil Garland as he sailed by it on the way to a win. What a guy!

It's a long drive down to Miami's Coconut Grove, but what a great day for sailing classic boats of Biscayne Bay!!



BayHen, Skerry, Egret - All WCTSS boats at the Barnacle dock - Coconut Grove Miami



Simon's Egret and Dennis' Egret after launching on Friday before the Washington's Birthday Regatta.

Upcoming Events!

1. Start of the Everglades Challenge - Saturday March 5th at Dawn (or 7am or whenever they blow a horn or play the bagpipes). If you've never made the start it's a fun time to see off our friends, and perpetual challengers such as Bill Fite, Josh Murphy, Joe Frohock, Randy Smyth!

This year Bill is actually starting in Alabama and attempting a new solo challenge - the Florida Coastal Challenge. The entire coastline of Florida! Squadron Member and National Sailing Hall of Famer - Meade Gougon can't make the starting line this year due to his recovery from some medical problems.

The EC Starting Line is above the high water mark on the East Beach of Ft. DeSoto Park - Tampa Bay Side. You'll need to get there early for a good spot to park. There is an entry fee to the park, which is \$5 or \$6. Afterwards those of us not heading down the coast in small sailboats or kayaks are heading over to the SeaHorse Restaurant on Pass-a-Grille Beach for a delightful and filling warm breakfast. You'll probably need it! <https://www.facebook.com/Seahorse-Restaurant-187756567911437/>

2. Cayo Costa Cruise Friday, March 18th - Sunday March 20th. This is one of our biggest gatherings, partly because of the great location in Pelican Bay's north end cove, and partly because it's easy to get to from all around the state.

Launch from Bokeelia Ramp north end of Pine Island, Eldreds Marina at Placida, or Pineland Marina on the west side of Pine Island on Friday, and head west to the north end of Cayo Costa State Park. Anchor inside the little cove on the north end of Pelican Bay. Bring bow and stern anchor to keep you off the beach but close enough to step off. Campfire after dark, bring small firewood, beach chairs and snacks to share. Saturday we sail off and return to same location. Sunday we head back to our ramps.

3. The Classic and Crafted Boat Festival is Friday April 15th - Sunday April 17th at the Sarasota Sailing Squadron. **Since there is no Crystal River Boat Bash this year,** this should be a big event! You can camp on the grounds, and leave your boat either on the trailer or on the water if space allows. This is a FGCTSCA event in cooperation with the Sarasota Sailing Squadron. Entering your boat may require some fees. Stay tuned.

4. Cedar Key Small Boat Festival - May 6th - May 8th (Friday - Sun).

This event is held each year in Cedar Key, and this year should be a great one! There will be a feast at the Community Center on Saturday, and we have invited Ida Little and Michael Walsh to give a talk and slide show about Beach Cruising and Coastal Camping. They are the authors of the seminal book, by the same name, on this subject, and we've wanted to get them to the event for years. Make your reservations at one of the many hotels in the area, and bring your small boats! Shallow draft is the key in this area with many sand bars and oyster reefs. If you don't know the area team up with one or two others who do. On Saturday plan to be on the Atsena Otie Island Beach right across from the town dock.



Phil Garland's Core Sound 17 and Mary and Bill's ComPac SunCat on Panther Key in January.



Tom Steinmetz's "Tomsboat" in the 10,000 Islands.



The Barnacle - Commodore Munroe's 1800s home on Biscayne Bay - now a State Park.