

Thurs, May 26, 1994 Con't

We are very tired. We called Bobbi and told him we were going to just relax for the afternoon.

At 1:00 P.M. we sighted a water spout to the West. The park ranger — The Fort is a National Park — called on VHF to all ~~boaters~~ boaters on anchor to "Keep Heads Up". It dissipated though and was followed by a long line of Thunderheads. I told Most, as they threatened us that I was going to open the curtain in the Salon, since everytime I open it the sun streams in. Sure enough I no sooner got it open than the line shifted to the east. (On radar this line of thunderheads was a mile wide and 48 miles long — the limits of our unit) The sun then came out and the afternoon was glorious. Huge sea turtles alongside. Birds of all description (Black Noddys, Frigatebirds, Terns, Gulls, Pelicans, Sandpeeps). We had tarpon jumping, dolphin. Someone on anchor caught two nurse sharks. The beauty of this place makes the long days run worthwhile.

At 5:00 we had a light cocktail, a short swim and by 7:00 we were showered and ready for dinner.

At this point we both felt ~~like~~ as though we had overextended ourselves. But, I made a huge salmon steak that we shared and a small salad each.

By 9:30^{P.M.} we were in bed. We hoped for an uneventful night.

Friday, May 27, 1994

* Dry Tortugas

We awoke at 6:30 A.M. after a fair night. We slept well when we slept, but were both off & on wakeful and alert regarding our position.

The anchor field, and this new day is beautiful. At the moment, 8:30 A.M., there is not a cloud in the sky.

At this time Mort is on the top deck polishing the new Suzuki engine. We plan to put the whaler down today to visit the fort. At nine each morning the park ranger calls on VHF to let those on anchor know what time the tours are given.

At 9:30 Bob came over to help with whaler. By 10:15 they had devised a weight balance (sq. balance) for the extra weight from the Suzuki. We tested and found that I can handle my end when Mort & I are alone. At 10:30 the little boat was in the water. Now we're free to see this place.

But, I hope Mort will rest first.

At 11:15 Mort is still puttering and I know he is tired.

I plan to take a swim before lunch and hope he will take one and rest.

Lunch was a hard salami sandwich (we shared) with tomatoes & lettuce on Dye.

Fri, May 27th Cont

After lunch we took the Whaler into the fort. I did part of the tour and decided to rest my knees. Mort & Bob continued. I sat at the pier of the fort while they were gone and watched a half dozen huge Tarpon feeding not 15 feet from me. In my view at that time was Miss Shergah looking absolutely gorgeous. (We are so happy with how she is shaping up.)

After the fort we - Mort & I - toiled around ^{in the whaler} looking at the small corals on the ocean floor (Actually this is the Gulf of Mexico.). Then we returned to the boat. Mort took a half hour nap - the sea plane woke him - and I read on the after deck.

It seems that here, in the hours between 3:00^{P.M.} and 7:00 P.M., everything alive is feeding. The Tarpon, the turtles, the small fish, the birds, and the boaters.

The wild life at this time presents a fantastic sunset show. This is the kind of thing ^{for which} we endure all the stress and work involved in maintaining and running our unusual "home."

Dinner on the after deck was steak & salad.

Note: Mort & I tried to take a dip before dinner to no avail. Everytime we put a foot in the water a huge Barracuda (maybe 3½ feet) came out ^{from under} the boat to within inches of where we would be setting our "Bums" down! - No swim this day.

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Fri, May 27th, Con't.

After dinner we sat on the foredeck to catch the breeze and watch the boats come in from Key West. It's a fairly long run for sailboaters, 12 hrs[±].

Shortly after dark we secured the VHF, our telephone on anchor. It was a Great Day!

Note: We loaned some tools to Flick of Brother Adventure

Saturday, May 28, 1994

Dry Tortugas

A different kind of day. Overcast - cooler since no full sun.

I did some hand laundry, straightened etc. Most did messin' engine room stuff and some varnish.

This shake down cruise reminds me of the time in Biscayne Bay before our great cruise of 1991-1992.

After lunch we got in the whaler and circumnavigated the Fort and the anchorage. I'm very tired so we were only out 1 1/2 hours. When we returned I tried for a nap but was disturbed just at the edge of sleep by Flick, a New Zealander, who is the owner of Brother Adventure, [~~at anchor~~ ^{here} she flew in yesterday on the sea plane to make repairs to the starter on the boat.

They have (Flick & her fella) begun a small charter business, but it is costing them more than they are making] She "begged" us to charge their battery.

Later on in the evening she came by to get the battery, "beg" some water and ask to use our SSB in the evening to make a call to the mainland. She missed the last plane out & had to sleep aboard the 29 footer with the 4 people who chartered it.

"Beg" was her choice of words.

Sat. May 28, Con't.

At 4:30^{P.M.} Bobbie came over for Rummy Tiles and "Pork Surprise", corn, Bean Salad, Apple Sauce and Coffee.

Note: At 6:00[±] we took up some chain since we were close to the shallows.

At 8:00^{P.M.} Fleck came over and we tried to make her calls at 9:00^{P.M.} we gave up. The High Seas Operator was busy with calls from cruise ships.

We went night night at 10:00 P.M.

A nice day.

Sunday, May 29, 1994

Dry Tortugas

Memorial Day weekend - the anchorage is a zoo, but it is a pretty morning.

I am going to try WOM early in hopes of getting Carol.

We puttered this A.M. I did a load of linen & towels. Mort did some varnish etc. It's wonderful that he is able to do cosmetics and not repairs. At 11:00 I finally got through to Carol over SSB/WOM. All OK.

After lunch we took our snorkel gear and snorkled the outer wall of the Fort's Moat.

A few fish some colorful, many big, but the corals are not as gorgeous as in the Bahamas. A good experience though and a test for my knee. We will see.