

Trip #6 – Episode 2: From Savannah to Santa!

Much time and many miles/kms have passed since my first blog about our Charleston trip. After leaving Charleston, we zigzagged south, stopping at a couple of state parks by or near the water. Along the way, we saw a lot of lowlands and water.



Our second stop, still in South Carolina was Hunting Island, where we were advised by the woman in the office to go to an area at one end of the park called the Beach Boneyard. We were a little skeptical, but we walked the jungle-like trail anyway.



We definitely weren't going to take *this* trail.



Eventually we got to the bridge that would take us over to “the bone yard”.



And when we got there, we discovered that it was a bone yard of trees. And really quite dramatic.









The rest of the park had some nice spots for stopping and enjoying the view.



After a couple of days there, we hit the road again ...



... On our way to one of our favourite cities, Savannah, Georgia.



It's such an elegant city, graced with hundreds of trees, many of them live oaks, as well as palms.



Its oldest live oak, the Candler Oak, is estimated to have been there since the 1700s.



The heart of the city has a series of parks, each different, some with statues or fountains, others with lovely gardens or play areas.



Although we'd been to the city before we decided to take the Hop On Hop Off Tour, from which we learned a lot. Most of which we've forgotten. But it was fun, and animated by a few historical guests who came aboard at different times to tell some stories about Savannah's rich history.



But mostly we just enjoyed seeing the lovely architecture of the homes and buildings, in amongst the trees.







This one is apparently the oldest in the city, now home to a restaurant called The Pirate’s House, which apparently it was, back in the 1750s.



There are always fun things to look at in Savannah. This is “Il Porcellino”, an Italian bronze sculpture in front of one of their many mansions.



And the “groovy” Thunderbird Motel, where Jim and I stayed during our first visit to Savannah.



One of the more hair-raising moments was when the driver took us down to the waterfront on this winding narrow pathway. (We were glad we didn't have to drive Charles down this!)



Once we got there, safely, we decided to get out and enjoy the busy waterfront and one of its restaurants.



Then we returned to our lovely campground, River's End on Tybee Island, which we'd been to and enjoyed last spring.



They were getting ready for their Christmas parade, which would probably have been fun, but we missed it by a day.



Instead, we continued south to



Like many people we know, we had some reservations about visiting the state that has made so many decisions we find morally and ethically abhorrent.

But then, we looked at the temperature ...



And, well, there went our objections - and some might say, our principles!

We looked forward to seeing the beach. However, when we stopped at this one beach, we could hear the ocean, but could only barely see it.



But we did see a tortoise!



We stopped briefly in St. Augustine, which is a beautiful town. But there we saw the ugliness we'd been dreading.



Eventually we made our way to the campground at Long Point Park, where we planned to stay for 2 days and wound up staying 4.



What a spot! Set on a spit of land that runs parallel to the Florida coast south of Cape Canaveral, this park is on the Sebastian Inlet, so it's sheltered from the ocean, and is home to so much wildlife. We couldn't believe how many birds we saw, right up close. Pelicans, Herons, Wood Storks, Ibis, Great Egrets.



Regularly, we would hear these loud splashes, as pelicans plunged into the water from great heights to catch fish.



This fisherman had a constant companion in this wood stork, who waited patiently for any catch the fisherman might toss his way.



And his patience was rewarded. When the fisherman decided to walk over to another area to try his luck there, the stork followed him. Recognizing that there might be more freebies, a couple of ibis trailed behind the stork. Unfortunately, I didn't get a shot of it, but it was a pretty cute parade.



This guy was expecting table service.



At all times of day, there were beautiful birds to watch, right at our doorstep.





And then there were the dolphins who swam by every morning and afternoon. They were so close, we could hear them breathe as they came up and then dove. Sometimes just one...



Often two...



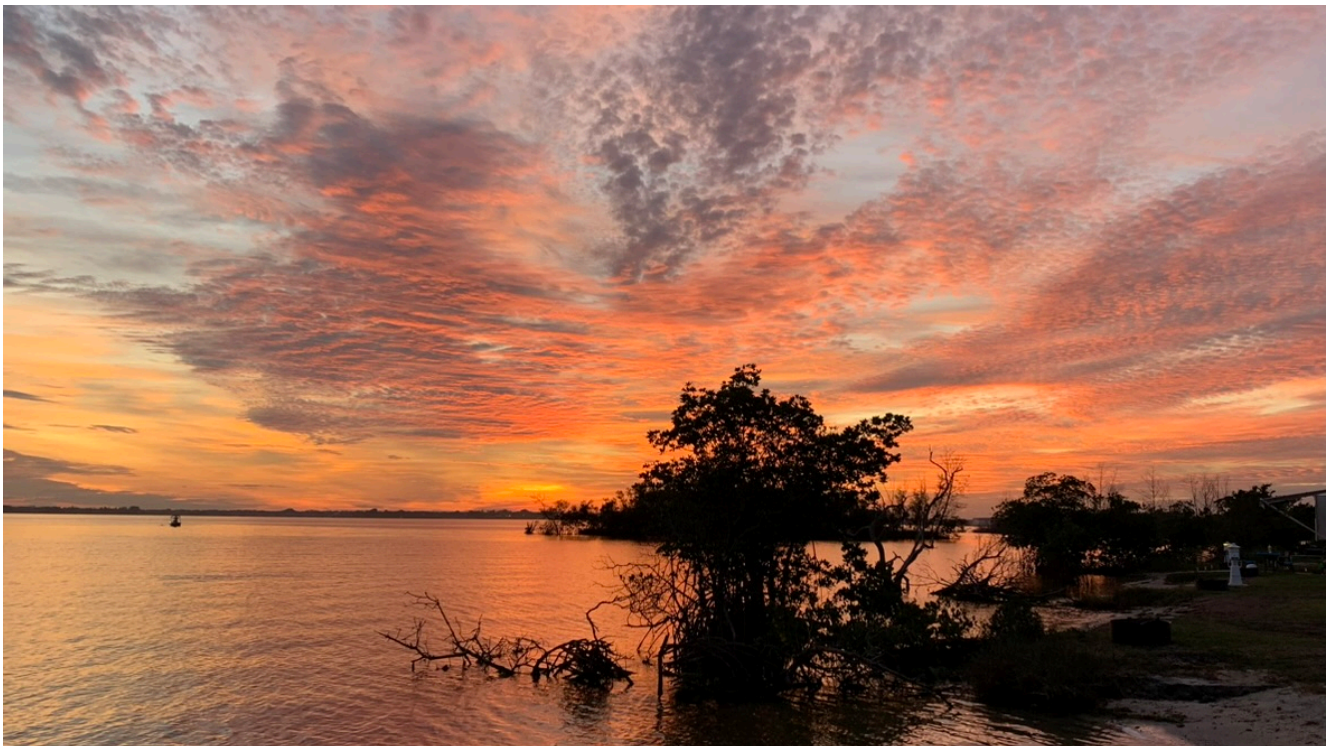
And this time, four dolphins! (Plus the flock of ibis!)



And when we weren't gawking at the wildlife, we were admiring the dramatic skies.







We would've stayed longer, except for one little thing. Actually, thousands of little things: No-see-ums! While I had dozens of bites, Jim had a bad reaction and had hundreds. It's now two and a half weeks later, and he's still itchy!



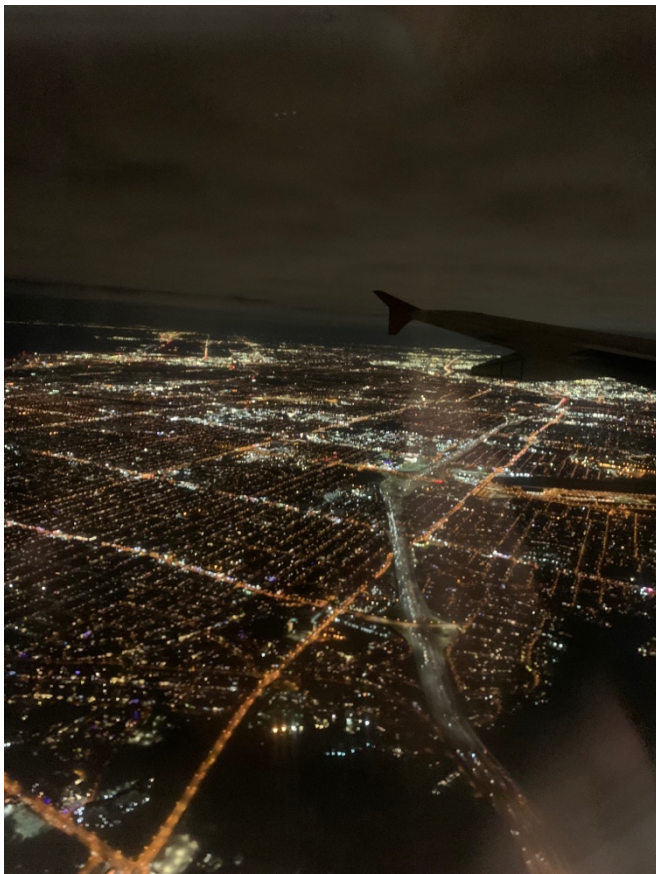
So, we left Long Point, sadly, and headed west into Central Florida. We stayed one night in this little campground, where we were at risk of being bitten by something much worse than No-see-ums.



Finally, we reached New Port Richey (just north of Tampa) to visit my cousins Diane & Jerry, where WE were doing the eating at their beautifully set Christmas dinner table.



And of course, we had to go to the Greek haven, Tarpon Springs for some flaming cheese. Opa!



Finally, we parked Charles in an RV storage lot and said goodbye to him for a few weeks. Next stop, YYZ.

So now, here we are, home to spend the holidays with family, and friends, and of course, Santa!



This year, especially, we have to pause and reflect on how fortunate we are in so many ways: To have so many wonderful people in our lives, to have the opportunities we have, to live in the country we live in, to enjoy our travelling adventures and to be able to share them with you. We are two very, very lucky people!

We wish you all the happiest of holidays and a happy, healthy and peaceful 2024.