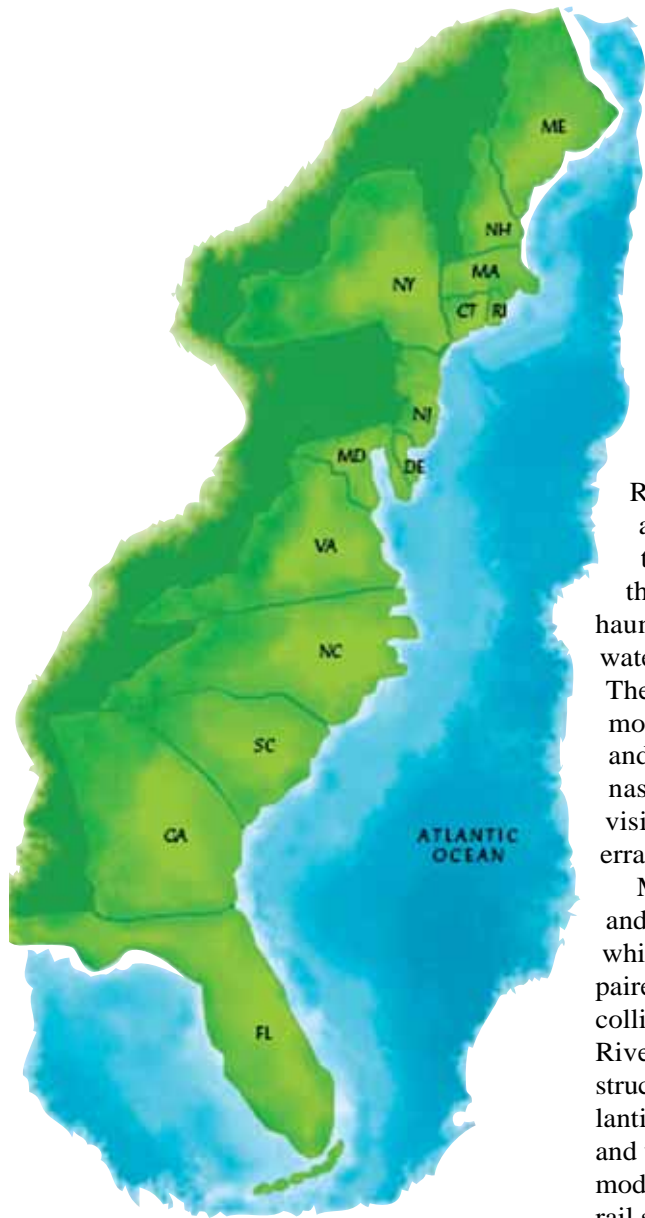


A TRIP DOWN THE ICW FROM CANADA TO FLORIDA - CONCLUSION

by Gordon Butler



prodded us into joining the party. We were in the Deep South, where American hospitality was founded, on our way to bucolic Florida where we would ultimately end up making a home on *Joy IV* that would prove to last for 14 years.

So, heading down the ICW from Little River, we stopped next at Myrtle Beach where there was another of the fabled wrecks that haunt the marinas on the waterway. You need a car. The marina is a local mom-and-pop business, and some of those marinas lend old wrecks to visiting boaters for local errands about town.



Ocean view at Myrtle Beach, SC

Myrtle Beach was nice and we treated ourselves to a big steak dinner while *Joy IV* had that stanchion welded and repaired at the yard after our little current-fraught collision with the steel fishing/tour boat at Little River. I learned something about *Joy IV*'s construction during this repair. The toe-rail on an Atlantic 44 has a 1/4-inch steel bar embedded in it and wrapped in fiberglass and gelcoat to accommodate the bolts, which tighten into it to hold the rail stanchions. This is a boat that's built like the proverbial brick house! The man assigned to do the fix had a huge time removing the screws for the stanchion bases! That rail survives today!

Myrtle Beach got us to Charleston, where we stayed at Wild Dunes, a gorgeous spot. On the dogs' walk that night, Sammy, our injured yellow lab, suddenly started crying and limping with his lone forefoot, and I discovered a sand spur in the foot. The crying stopped; Joe was most concerned and the offending burr was removed. Joe became much more attentive to his buddy – just for a few minutes – and we continued.

We progressed around the back of Charleston, past Fort Sumter, the site of the "shot heard 'round the world," and into the ICW again.

Florida, our goal, was getting closer with every revolution of those incredibly dependable diesels. After passing Hilton Head Island on the ICW side and Beaufort (BEW-fert) with its unique civil war setting, we stayed at the Beaufort city dock that evening.

Up bright and early the next morning, we wanted to call ahead for the best fuel deal we could find and a part for the unique raw water pump in our diesels. It all worked out, along with a deal to spend the night at Savannah Bend Marina, at that time a brand-new facility, not quite with the lore of the Palmer-Johnson yard, but

within sight of it. It all worked out: good fuel deal for a quantity, new facilities and a different sort of walk next door to a restaurant with the big sign in front that read "SHRIMP." Only they pronounce it "shry remp" in those parts. Crossing the Savannah River, which intersects at right angles with the ICW,

we had to stop for a boat being towed. It was a tug pulling the stern of a huge oil tanker. There were men working in the ship, but she showed no source of motor power whatever. The tug pulled the ship up the river heading toward downtown Savannah and we never saw her again.

Now we were in familiar territory as the ICW meandered through the coastal swampland, sometimes curving around so we could see a boat that looked to be perhaps a few hundred yards ahead of us, but was, in fact, ahead of us by possibly several miles on the waterway! This was the area where we had spent the entire Memorial Day weekend two years before while waiting for Tuit Power in Fort Lauderdale to send us a new starboard transmission. The mechanic had had to paint it and install it before we could continue, but the wait was nothing like our eight days in Cape May.

Beginning to reflect on the whole trip, I thought of the great distance we had covered and



Port of Fernandina, Fernandina Beach Florida

how much we'd seen. This trip turns the pages of history before the casual traveler's eyes. I was starting to get reflective, recalling the "great adventure" we'd undertaken. Would we do it again? In a minute! As a matter of fact, because we had so much local knowledge, and so many charts, we managed to lend our paper charts to a lot of people who were going to undertake the Great Circle trip - up the ICW, through the Great Lakes and down the various routes through the center of the country: the Mississippi or the Ohio and the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterways. We even returned once, to our beloved Georgian Bay, for a trip that lasted about two weeks, guiding some friends and their 56-footer from Port Severn to

continued on page 10

This is an account of the end of our adventure, including the arrival, finally, at our destination, our changing it, surviving a case of shingles and finding a place that Joe, one of our dogs, thinks is home.

It was time to regroup. After all, we'd been having an idyllic life on the ICW, and we'd heard tales of people starting the trip and not making it. Too hot, too onerous, too much time, fraught with mechanical trouble and thus too expensive are all valid concerns when you're undertaking a voyage on the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway from north to south.

It's a big job, and this trip was interrupted by a broken transmission in Cape May that was unnecessarily expensive, and the repair, to say the least, incompetent. Now a *grounding* in South Carolina. What's next?

Well, we'd made the trip before. We'd gone from Pompano Beach to Toronto in three weeks just two years before! So, the job is certainly doable.

Mechanical problems are fixable, and grounding is survivable – as long as the hull's integrity is not compromised. *Joy IV*'s was not.

After that incredible impromptu party at the little fishing shack on the dock at Little River, SC, we regained a lot of our faith in human nature. It was as if those strangers got together and



Sunrise over the North River, St. Mary's, Georgia

