

"PILGRIM'S PROGRESS"

The Newsletter of Pilgrim Marine

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T.G.I.S. - Thank God It's SPRING !

Sometimes, in the middle of a winter whiteout (an entertaining combination of wind and snow), one wonders if things will ever warm up again, turning everything those wonderful shades of SPRING green and sparkling blue - but we know it always will.

SPRING is a natural time for rejuvenation, advancement, growth, achievement - an annual event that bump starts one's Spirit - towards one's goals.

Accordingly, SPRING is an excellent time to renew commitment to one's future.

As you're on our Mailing List, we hope that includes owning your very own **Pilgrim 40** - our MEANS to an enviable END, offering you a medium for the continuation of adventure and enjoyment in our Nautical Living Environment.

We recommend SPRING is a good time to make a firm commitment and assure your spot in our production schedule, but more important, to commit to the plans YOU have for YOUR future. It's THE perfect time to turn your thinking - your Dreams - into action.

The Gulf Coast SHOWBOAT Cruise '86

We shouldn't complain too much about our Canadian winter this year because we spent a major portion of it on the Gulf of Mexico - CRUISING - or trying to.

We launched our SHOWBOAT just before Christmas in St. Petersburg and had her fairly well outfitted early in the New Year. Mind you, we did experience several nights where Mother Nature decided to remind us of home with some 25 degree wintery blasts.

However, we had lots of **Pilgrim** People keeping us too busy to worry about a little cold. Motoring in and out of the marina regularly, we were nicknamed the 'Ghost' because we couldn't be heard. This was quite a departure from the roar of the 'average' power yacht there which muscled into everyone's peace. It's a mystery to us how this kind of pollution - noise pollution - has become so fashionable. No wonder the owners of these boats want them to go fast - they can't take the noise for more than a few hours either. And then, there's the cigarette type boats, another example of the minority disturbing the majority's peace for miles around. Suffice it to say that quiet is a primary ingredient of the **Pilgrim** Philosophy - Peace of Mind on the Water.

Boy, Are We Dumb !

Another dumb thing you can do to eliminate a great deal of the pleasure and enjoyment Boating can offer is to cruise on a schedule. We do that all the time - Boat Show Routes and/or SHOWBOAT Tours. At least we're quiet. On top of that, who else would go cruising out of season? In over 1000 miles, we didn't really see any other boats cruising. We were alone everywhere we went and learned why the hard way.

Let us tell you a little story about our CRUISE to illustrate our position on some serious questions we are continually asked by potential **Pilgrim** People.

Worst Case Scenario? . . . A Little Cruising Story

Day One - Why Aren't They All Like This?

On February 22nd, with 2/3 of winter gone, our SHOWBOAT departed St. Pete mid-day for Tarpon Springs, up the very interesting and scenic final stretch of the central west coast Florida Intracoastal. The crew consisted of Gary Ferguson, his wife Christine, Christine's father Bryce, and PIPPIN - our famous Boat Show dog and corporate mascot.

It was one of those beautiful Boating days - brilliantly sunny and 75 degrees, with a cooling 10 knot breeze blowing off the Gulf. If only they were all like this one.

At a very steady 8.5 knot cruise, you knock off a nautical mile every 7 minutes. In such an interesting stretch of water, it's almost too fast to take in all the scenery - what, a **Pilgrim** too fast? We arrived just at dusk, fought the inevitable ebb tide as we motored tranquilly up the long scenic channel, had a great dinner at a famous waterfront spot - PAPPAS - and spent a peaceful night right at the restaurant dock.

(For those unfamiliar with the north west Florida coast, it can be the nastiest offshore stretch of water from Maine to Mexico - more so in a winter fog. You see, there are no major marine centres for hundreds of miles. This is because it is very shallow with numerous unmarked shoals and has never been developed. For example, we had to run up to 15 miles offshore, still running in about 15 feet of water. Also, the climate is not as hospitable or predictable as the rest of Florida and there isn't even an Intracoastal as an alternative choice, available almost everywhere else.)

Day Two - A Little Winter Returns To Florida

Dawn surprised us with a steady drizzle and fog, reminding us it was still winter. We got under way as soon as PIPPIN had his walk. We were off to unknown experiences.

Our goal for our first major day offshore was Cedar Key, almost 100 miles north up the coast. With only a short amount of winter daylight, about 12 hours, we had little margin for error if we didn't want to cruise at night in these unfamiliar waters.

The fog and rain of the morning cleared off just after noon, making it much easier to navigate. We just had the ever-present sea swell. We made good time arriving at the outer mark of the channel 8 miles out, zig-zagging it's way in to town. We had heard it had been hit quite hard by last fall's hurricanes but we were quite unprepared to find no facilities for anything but runabouts in one of the only stops on this coast. The remains of the re-inforced cement town dock had two shrimpers on it - that was it. We tied up to the remnants of the supports to one of the very high commercial docks, boarded up at one end as it was broken in more than one place.

PIPPIN the wonder dog (we'll explain why later) a 65 lb. high strung Airedale (sort of a big hairy Greyhound), was very pleased to make port as this was the first day of getting his kidneys into offshore cruising trim. However, the tide was ebbing again and it was almost impossible to lift him high enough to get him off this big commercial dock. We finally had to pull the bow under the dock, to get him off and back on again.

We bought some huge fresh shrimp from one of the large shrimpers and had a wonderful Italian seafood dinner on board. After a peaceful brandy out on deck, the crew soon passed out after an interesting and successful first day offshore at sea.

The third day, we were to try for St. Marks, a little over 100 miles further north, at the top of the Florida peninsula. We had to meet People from Tallahassee there.

Day Three - The Fun Continues

We awoke to more fog and drizzle and a very low winter tide, so low PIPPIN would not allow us to get him off for his morning constitutional. He would regret this later.

We took the smaller north channel out of the picturesque old Florida town of Cedar Key to save a few miles from the way we came in. We went to cruising speed as soon as we left the dock and started settling down for another long days' run. Except for almost running aground, due to a missing marker in the confusion of the two zig-zagging channels merging, we had no major complications and quickly solved this navigational mystery, with just a few added emotional experiences for the crew.

The fog closed in even thicker as we headed offshore about 12 miles to the sea buoys. However, we still had half mile visibility and were accurate enough in our navigation to hit our markers spaced about 10 miles apart. After about 4 hours running, visibility reduced down to only 100 yards. With an onshore tidal current, we didn't find the next marker. We decided to continue despite this, as we expected to run out of this pea soup fog soon, as the day before. This time we guessed right. It started to lift steadily and soon after, we were running in bright sunlight on as flat a calm as the Gulf gets.

We went up to the sunbridge to enjoy the positive change in weather. It had turned into a glorious day. (Running half a day in fog is much like driving in a winter whiteout. Coming out of fog is like the coming of SPRING - your Spirit is lifted by the sun and you find yourself humming for no reason at all.)

The north breeze that blew the fog away began to build right on our bow, reminding us again it was still winter. Coming back down to the **Pilgrim's** protected wheelhouse, we double checked the weather report - "sunny with variable winds 5 to 10 knots". We decided to bypass a half way stopover point and continue on to St. Marks.

However, the breeze increased to a wind of about 15 to 18 knots, steadily turning a small sea into a frothy chop, but still no problem for our **Pilgrim 40**. We confirmed

our decision to go on 40 miles, rather than back 10 to our only alternative. We were betting we had reached the limits of inaccuracy of the optimistic weather forecast.

We Guess Wrong Times Two

The sea continued to build and the wind started to veer to the west. One of the considerations in our decision to proceed was that with the wind being off the shore we were making for, the seas would diminish as we approached, even if the winds increased. HA! . . . It turned out we guessed wrong about strength and direction. The calm sea had built to a steep 3 foot chop on the port bow, with winds building to around 20. At least it was still sunny and we were protected and dry, still with good visibility as the sea spray beat against our weather tight wheelhouse. After all, it could have been a lot worse. We could have been stuck in a sailboat's cold and wet cockpit or on some open fly bridge, making a challenging day at sea even more uncomfortable for the crew.

We checked for any changes - still "5 to 10 knots variable" with no strengths above 15 knots for the 300 plus mile forecast range. HA! . . . again. In real life, they were about 25 knots, with the whitecaps starting to blow off the still building 4 foot waves.

Running in under 15 feet of water, well offshore and out of sight of land, the waves were steep and close together - one of the most awkward waves you would ever want to run in, already 8 feet high from trough to crest and only about 50 feet apart.

The Rum and Pickle Syndrome

Finally, the captain called for the crew to stow the Home part of the Boat before things got any worse. Plants, TV, table lamps, and the like were stowed. Galley lockers and the fridge were stuffed with towels to reduce the movement of things like the pickle and rum bottles, trying to make some wierd new cocktail all by themselves.

The seas turned a brighter blue with the setting sun and the still increasing wind, agitated all surfaces, from tiny frantic baby wavelets to mother waves. Suddenly the bow plunged 10 feet as we came off a 5 footer, forcing tons of water into the air. The captain grumbled something about that one being a Mother. The sea was too uncomfortable now on our favoured course so we tacked to head directly into the confusion of the major waves, re-occurring about every seventh one, adding even more time to our run to port. Nothing to do but to keep going and get through as best we could.

We were now running almost parallel to the north shore trying to get westerley enough to turn and run with the sea just aft of our beam, the best 'point of sail' for the **Pilgrim** in large seas such as these. We checked again - "5 to 10 knots variable". Boy, did the captain ever want to have a few words of wisdom with the weather man. The spray was now blowing straight off the tops of those crazy seas. The wind strength was over 30 knots. (If they'd told us this was coming, we could have decided to run a little late on our CRUISE schedule and force the crew to enjoy the sun and wind in calm harbor. On such an inhospitable coast, an incorrect weather report is almost criminal.)

The captain was having to drive selectively over each wave now, throttling up and down, trying to minimize the bow's tendency to become airborne off those square waves, while still maintaining steerage and as much headway to our destination as possible. The **Pilgrim** just kept going through it, again . . . and again . . . and again. The crew were getting a little tense (who wouldn't after hours on a three dimensional roller coaster), but the Boat was taking it in her stride. We can't help thinking, if this sea was a road, how would a Mercedes - any car - go over these 'potholes'?

The Captain Works Up A Sweat

The captain perspired freely, getting a good workout, at the wheel already for over three hours. Our depthsounder read 23 feet now, confirming a dead reckoning position on our chart as we weathered offshore. Time to turn downwind. We waited 'til the next big ones passed, then put the wheel hard over to starboard and full power. The **Pilgrim** swung quickly to her new course and the motion change was immediate. Everyone exhaled . . . slightly, but we could still see nothing but crazed water.

Now we had to find our harbor on an unseen, unfamiliar shoreline. We had been running off course for hours at non-consistent speeds and headings. We throttled up to 10 knots, sometimes surfing down steep waves at 14 or 15 knots, with everything humming. (Where most power yachts have what we call a 'chain saw transom', our

Pilgrim is almost double ended at the waterline. As a result, she is much more manageable downwind than her 'chain sawed' cousins, especially after the work-out of fighting a stiff head sea. Our large rudder is certainly a big plus too.)

At last, land started to become visible on the horizon as the sun closed within a half hour of her western bed. A lighthouse appeared in the binoculars. Shortly after, channel markers. We had been lucky with our navigation because we were right on the money. The crew broke out the martinis but the day certainly wasn't over yet.

We arrived at the outer mark of the 9 mile twisting St. Marks' river channel, just as darkness fell and the wind began to drop. At least the wave action had ended. Hitting ebb tide coupled with a flood spring current, it took almost 2 hours of searchlighting an unknown, meandering channel and unfamiliar harbor before we finally tied up.

Now you'll remember that PIPPIN the wonder dog, had not been ashore since the previous evening - 27 hours earlier - a new record. We tried to talk him into a siddeck or shower sump, but no, that was not his style. He did however bounce around like a coil spring, barking excitedly while we tied the Boat up. He must have thought SPRING had come after a record breaking winter whiteout.

It had been a L - O - N - G day for everybody but, we were right on our schedule. The crew however, did not seem impressed by this fact.

So What's The Moral Of Our Story?

"How does she handle in a rough sea?" We get asked this over and over by **Pilgrim** People looking for re-assurance about our **Pilgrim 40's** seaworthiness.

We don't know if others glorify their rough sea capability - we don't. That's why we just told you this Story. A rough sea is a rough sea! To us, advertising a 4x4 truck jumping over a hill or a sportfisherman flying off a 10 foot wave is irresponsible.

Let us stretch a point and use the analogy of cars on a road. If you put your Mercedes on the rough 'road' of our Story, wider than your line of vision, covered everywhere in big, moving bumps and potholes, with no highway lines, say at 25 miles an hour, would you expect your trauma about this situation to be less if you were in a BMW? . . . Well, in our opinion, it's the same comparison with two well made boats.

You see, it is our intention the main problem in such a situation is not with the boat but with the 'road'. The second problem is with the crew. Are they comfortable driving in such uncomfortable conditions? Most accidents in bad weather occur from the emotional fatigue on the crew, not the boat. We know you can get caught, like we did, but most boats can handle it if you can address the Rum and Pickle Syndrome.

What we have tried to illustrate in our Story is this: The Boating Life can be absolutely wonderful, if only you season it with a just little patience and common sense. We want to offer you a means to materialize your 'Dreams', not confront your nightmares? There's enough adventure in living on the water without seeking out extraneous thrills. We suggest you read our brochure again and remind yourself of what you want from your new Boating Lifestyle on one of our **Pilgrim 40's**.

Mother Nature's unpredictability, is predictable - even in the off-season. If the wind blows for a few days, it will usually subside for a few days. Therefore, you can turn your potential nightmares into your 'Dreams' by just throwing out your schedule. If you want to cruise in an area like the Caribbean, in a more regular sea, no problem. We can even suggest a few details to make life easier in such constant trade wind areas.

Remember, our very truthful Story was about one of the only major offshore stretches of water from Maine to Mexico, in the middle of winter, on an inflexible schedule, verging on a **Worst Case Scenario** that lawyers, bankers and accountants like to allow for. We wanted to give you some insight into one extreme we experienced.

We told it to prove if you have to go through it, if you're caught by surprise, our **Pilgrim 40** can handle it. We didn't bruise ourselves, our Boat, or even break a glass, but if we could, we would have avoided it. If you don't have to go or you don't know how, don't go. The worst you can be is a little late, an envious part of your new Lifestyle.

'Bye for Now'

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