

Red Ranger

ANNUAL REPORT # 5 2014-2015

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POTTERING AROUND THE BAY

More life-style changes.

Last year, as we basked in the Florida sunshine in Coconut Grove, Steve got “The Call.”

When we bought *Red Ranger*, we had high-tech Work From Home (WFH) jobs that allowed us to move to Norfolk and spend every weekend refitting Red Ranger. When we decided to head south in Year Three, we simply quit those day jobs.

For Steve, the work had more-or-less dried up. After 35 years as an Information Technology consultant, he was feeling like a washed-up has-been. Time to do something new. Cindy Ann was not quite so washed-up, but she was willing to forgo career aspirations and see more of the world.

It was all fun and games until Steve got “The Call.”

The sailing life leaves one with plenty of free time. The *Red Ranger* blog makes it look like each day was packed with sailing, exploring, and boat chores. That’s not quite accurate. Each day was packed with technical writing, sailing, exploring, or boat chores or long stretches of not much. Steve wrote two books on Python programming during year three and year four. He dabbled away at his technical blogging in addition to the *Red Ranger* blog. CA became Floating Leaf and made Tiny Quilts.

Steve’s high-tech on-line presence had consequences.

One of these is that it attracts recruiters. The kinds of recruiters who can — with confidence — put Steve’s resume in front of software companies in Silicon Valley.

I’ll repeat that for those who are skimming.

Silicon Valley. High Tech Shangri-La.

It turns out that Steve is not a broken down old washed-up former high-tech geek. He still has Geek Cred. And Geek Cred means a job, which means money, which means more elaborate refits and upgrades for *Red Ranger*. Yes, it cuts into the travel in the short term. But it extends the travel in the long term.

Silicon Valley, it turns out, didn’t work out well. But the idea stuck with us.

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Mission

*To see as much of the world as we can,
Using the smallest carbon footprint we can,
Spending the least amount of money we can,
Making as many friends we can.*

Vision

Small Boat, Big View

Values

Don’t come home until you have a story.

Red Ranger

Pottering

[from page 1]

Independence Day

Year Four's report ended with significant offshore passages from Coconut Grove to Fernandina and Fernandina to Beaufort. After that we had a quick trip through the ICW to Norfolk, VA, and some more serious job hunting.

We spent June sniffing around the high-tech employers in Norfolk. We liked Norfolk, but Norfolk didn't really like us. That's not a real setback, however, because we had tried to find a job in Norfolk without too much help from recruiters.

Once we reconnected with recruiters, they steered us to Richmond.

We stayed in Norfolk for the July fourth fireworks. Fireworks from the water. Wow.

This is not to be missed. We will make this a standing date in future years. We'll take a week of vacation if we have to so that we don't miss those fireworks ever again.

In July, we chugged up the Bay to Deltaville to dock *Red Ranger* and start contacting employers in the Richmond area.

The Summer and Fall devolved into a blur of job, car, apartment, and



Richmond. We tackled a few boat jobs. We spent most of our time getting back into the swing of working instead of playing all day.

CA's Delivery

Since CA's so well-known in the Whitby community, she was tapped to help deliver a Whitby from Marathon, bound for Galveston. She and Jerry moved *Puffin* across the Gulf of Mexico. This was an immense off-shore journey for her. It added significant off-shore miles to her resume.

It taught her some more about boat handling, also. In particular, it taught her that she really does know what she's doing, and she shouldn't quietly acquiesce when the skipper doesn't seem to be paying attention to building wind and sea state.

Winter Haulout

In early November, we winterized *Red Ranger*, and had her hauled out of the creek.

While she was out of the water, we did two things. First, we had a surveyor

look her over so that our insurance could be renewed. There's a short list of things that need to be repaired.

We also had a carpenter address the damage we did to the bang rail (rub strake) in Vero Beach. We'd bashed out a big piece

of wood and bent the stainless steel plate that caps the rail.

While sitting at the boatyard, we had a carpenter carefully cut away the damaged wood and scarf in a "dutchman" or patch. The old holes used to bolt the bang rail to the hull were filled with epoxy and new screws used instead of bolts.

When she's on the hard, rain gets into the bilge. The most common ingress in through the cold drinks locker on deck. The water in the bilge hoses, however, froze and expanded, popping a fitting off the bilge pump. This pump ran, spraying water uselessly around the engine room.

Fortunately, the carpenter saw the pump running, shut it off, and used some pads to clean up some of the mess.

The backup pump, however, worked well at keeping the bilge water low enough, in spite of freezing temperatures.

Spring Commissioning

In spring, we relaunched and tackled a few more weekend jobs. We cleaned the water tanks, replaced some pumps. Since we're weekenders, jobs that only took a day now tie up the entire weekend. We have to be a bit more judicious in the jobs we tackle.

We've had friends come up to Deltaville to take *Red Ranger* for spin around the river. Things are working

really well. She's a big and comfortable as ever. Having three sleepover guests works out well for us.

While things have changed a great deal for the crew, It was another great year on *Red Ranger*.



Red Ranger

Year Five Refit

- Reverse self-tailing on two winches to improve line handling
- Redesign interior window shades
- Rebed chain plates with butyl tape
- Add Racor LG100 Fuel Air Separator and move vent higher on the deck
- Repair cover of Lifesling container
- Add 6# zinc fish
- Rebuild Whale manual bilge pump
- Replace broken circuit breaker
- Replace broken bang rail by scarfing in patches and using screws instead of through-bolts*
- Put Dri-Dek panels under jerry jugs on deck
- Replace freshwater pump with PAR-Max 3.0 pump
- Replace wire nuts on macerator pump*



Maintenance

These are the ordinary maintenance tasks required to keep *Red Ranger* working optimally.

- Inspect rig; lube mast tracks
- Repair small deck leaks
- Clean water tanks. Rinse. Dry. Vacuum. Soak with 4.5 gal vinegar per tank for 1 week. Empty. Rinse. Fill.
- Clean interior with vinegar solution.
- Scrape propellor
- Replace shaft zinc, outboard zinc and engine zinc*
- Replace nature's head biscuit fan. Twice
- Annual oil change
- Replace primary and secondary fuel filters
- Install 2015 charts in chart plotter
- Replace expired flares*
- Replace batteries in smoke detector and CO detector*



* Required by marine surveyor.

Red Ranger



You're Invited

You can pick either the time or the place, but not both.

If you pick a time to visit, we'll stay in close contact so you know where to meet us. We're at the mercy of weather and currents, and can't keep a tight schedule.

If you pick a place to visit, we'll tell you when we get there, and we'll wait for you. This prevents missed connections and related problems.



MONTH	DAYS	LOCALE	DISTANCE
2014 June	3	Deltaville	88
2014 July	0	Deltaville	0
2014 August	1	Deltaville	12
2014 September	0	Deltaville	0
2014 October	0	Deltaville	0
2014 November	—	Hauled Out	—
2014 December	—	Hauled Out	—
2015 January	—	Hauled Out	—
2015 February	—	Hauled Out	—
2015 March	—	Hauled Out	—
2015 April	0	Launched	0
2015 May	3	Deltaville	27
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Red Ranger



Living Aboard

After two years of living aboard, what have we learned? What was the point of it all?

When we told my mother we were moving south to buy a boat and sail around to see the watery parts of the world she had this advice.

“Leaving?” she said, “then don’t come home.”

That’s her advice. Don’t come home.

Until.

“Don’t come home until you have a story.”

This became our values statement. We would sail around until we had a story. It’s what sailors do.

We have a few.

The big picture — the overall story arc — seems important to us. We had a dream and we were able to follow that dream. We learned to sail over a period of about 10 years, doing lessons and chartering. We looked at boats over a similar span. We found a boat, rebuilt parts of it, and sailed it safely to the Bahamas and back. We had problems, and we solved problems. Stuff broke and we fixed it. We learned parts of a whole new way of life.

There are small moments, also.

We do four-hour watches when we’re at sea. CA makes dinner at about 18:00 and sleeps until 20:00. She watches from 20:00 to midnight. I do midnight to 04:00. She does dawn from 04:00 to 08:00.

It’s hard to cook at night at sea. It can be hard to eat, also. CA makes instant rice dishes: boil water, add rice and flavor, cook and leave it in the pot. We can spoon it into a mug. It keeps warm in the pressure cooker.

Sometimes, we can only eat granola bars.

One night, she relieved me at 04:00. It was dark. The seas were big. The wind had been shifty. There were cruise ships and container ships everywhere.

“Know what I’ve been thinking about?” I asked.

She looked around to see what was most important; what had changed while she was asleep. The weather? The tangle of shipping? The engine? The autopilot?

“Bacon, eggs, grits, home fries and black coffee,” I told her. “Enjoy your granola bar.”

You can’t have everything: enjoy what you do have.



Guest Accommodations

Red Ranger can comfortably sleep two additional couples. The V-berth sleeps two and the saloon sleeps two. There are two working heads, with showers.

We carry 200 gallons of fresh water. We carry 100 gallons of fuel, which gives us a cruising range of almost 600 nautical miles.

We have three VHF radios, two GPS chart plotters, paper charts, pilot guides, and

several thousand miles of cruising experience.

You’ll need to bring your clothes for fair weather and foul. That’s about all you need.