

Florida Trip – Naples Florida February 14-28, 2016

Sunday, February 14, Valentine's Day

Up at 4:00 to catch 7:10 Frontier flight. First time on Frontier. Charge for all drinks and seats don't recline. Leave ¾ hour late but make it in pretty much on time to Ft. Meyers. Pick up car at offsite lot and eat next door at Jimmy John's. Jan has a lettuce wrap "unsandwich." Go up to Sarasota to see Ringling Museum and grounds. Large model of a big top and associated activities of a circus encampment. In a second museum see the Ringling train car and various circus cars. Grounds nice but not spectacular. Few flowers were out. Ringling seaside house has a very ornate exterior. See tricolored heron and an anhinga on grounds. Eat dinner at Sweet Tomato. Jan watches Downton Abbey and Randy crashes.

- Tricolored heron
- Anhinga

Monday, February 15, President's Day

Sleep until 10:30. We needed it after yesterday's early rise. Eat breakfast at IHOP, faster than the old days. Good meal, too! Go to Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp and walk boardwalk. Not as many flowers as last time. Species list is below. Chipotles for dinner after going to the store. Back at the hotel at 8:00. Can't get the safe open – E-error.

- Garter snake
- Water moccasin
- Yellow rumped warbler
- Alligator and young
- Painted bunting
- Little blue heron
- Anhinga (male – black head; female – brown)
- Red shouldered hawk
- Salvia fern
- Leather fern

Tuesday February 16

In morning, plan to go to Naples Preserve for a lecture on forestry and fire. Problem: safe does not open. Have to wait for maintenance man who drills a hole into safe and it releases. Get to lecture ½ hour late. Take walk with forester through preserve. Go back to room for lunch. Jan naps and Randy reads and does puzzles. Go to Thai restaurant for dinner and then watch NCIS through evening.

Wednesday, February 17

Up early to meet group going to Fakahatchee Preserve. Drive to preserve entrance and carpool to gate. Walk the same trail we did last time but go much further this time. Trail is very muddy. Don't quite get to the end because trail is flooded. Come back and have lunch by cabin on trail. On the way back, we have to pass three alligators that have pulled themselves out to sun on the trail. Get by each just fine. Get back, shower, and go to dinner at Olde Naples Pub. Randy has "Sheboygan style" bratwurst. Come back and watch television.

- Alligator
- Great white egret
- Little blue heron
- African spotted orchid (in seed)
- Vanilla orchid
- Tooth pedal orchid
- Cardinal bromeliad
- Southern needle bromeliad
- Hand fern

Thursday, February 18

Sleep in. Do wash in morning. Eat lunch in room. Go shopping in the afternoon. Get Annabelle a birthday present. Have pizza at chopping center for dinner. They advertise two sizes of gluten free pizza! Go to see "Reverent" in the evening. Beautiful mountain photography. Bloody. Leave feeling that there wasn't too much of a point to the story.

Friday, February 19

Clam Pass board and beach walk. Learn (again) the difference among black, white, and red mangroves. Black has a powdery white substance on leaves. Red has splayed roots. White has a little dimple at the end of the leaf and two "necteraries" on stem. Buttonwood is also a "mangrove" meaning it can stand salt water. Osprey flies over as we are on the boardwalk. After a lot of looking finally find a mangrove crab on a tree. Get to beach. Pros look at birds way out to sea. Do some shelling and then investigate flock of birds by creek. Walk beach back and take tram through boardwalk.

Go to Freedom Park for lunch. Walk out to find rare hummingbird. No luck. Go back to hotel for a snooze, then to Barnes and Noble for an Everglades flower book, then to store, and then home in time for Grimm.

- Black and white warbler
- Catbird
- Raven
- Raccoon
- Tricolored heron
- Little blue heron
- Dowager
- Willet
- White ibis
- Beach sunflower
- Black racer
- Mangrove crab
- Black skimmer
- Royal tern
- Lesser black-backed gull
- Laughing gull
- Anhinga
- Red shouldered hawk

Saturday, February 20

Sleep in and have breakfast in the motel. Go to Collier-Seminole State park and rent a canoe. Have lunch overlooking a small harbor and see at least one manatee stick his/her nose above the water. Paddle one marker past turn-off to Mud Lake, paddle back, and then paddle to Mud Lake and back; 5.9 miles total paddling. On the way down, see a great blue heron, white egrets, and a black crowned night heron hiding in the trees. Also saw mangrove crabs and snails on the mangroves which line the canoe trail. Toward Mud Lake, an osprey flies over us several times and then is sitting in a tree as we enter the lake. On the way back, we spend a lot of time communing with a yellow crowned night heron.

After putting away the canoe, we walk the boardwalk trail. Not much new. There is not much to see at the observation deck either; the water is probably too high. Lots of mosquitos.

Have dinner at Chick-fil-a.

Come back to find out we can get a room upgrade even though they told us nothing was available in the morning. Quickly change rooms.

Sunday, February 21

Jan goes to church; Randy gets coffee. We then go to Panera for lunch after finding out that Einstein Bagels has nothing gluten-free. Decide to go to Naples Art Show in downtown after finding out that the antique show costs \$20/person plus \$5 parking. It was a huge, wonderful show. Jan gets a ring and a purse. For dinner, we have leftovers which are mainly frozen because the refrigerator is set too high. We finish in time for Downton Abbey.

Monday, February 22

Go on Sweet Liberty boat trip. Motor out of Naples harbor and along island shore. Land and do an hour of shelling. (Get some good ones including a top sail but no olives or augers.) Then sail back. Eat lunch on boat on way back. See some pelicans and cormorants on way. Go to Sugden Regional Park for some bird-watching (see list below). Walk around lake.

Come home, shower and meet group at Bamz for a big dinner. Come back, journal and compute as we watch Castle.

- Northern shrike
- American coot
- Black throated green warbler
- Chat
- Osprey
- Anhinga
- Blue-grey gnat catcher

Tuesday, February 23

Went to Naples Preserve for a talk by a Big Cypress park ranger about "Surprise of the Swamp." Come back to the room for lunch and laundry. Go to Nature Conservancy for hor d'orves and a lecture on the manatees at the Florida Power and Light power plants. Go to the store and get a DQ on the way back. Return in time for NCIS I and II.

Wednesday, February 24

After breakfast, go back to Fakahatchee for Jack's fern walk. At the lake at the "potty" meeting place we see a snowy egret (yellow feet), and an immature little blue heron (white with silvery beak and legs). See many ferns (see list below), one orchid (delicate violet orchid), and a number of air plants

(bromeliads). Lots of alligators in the pond at the end of the trail and one on the trail sunning himself. He was there both ways. See lily and rare fern on the drive back.

Rain was expected at 11:00, but it holds off until we get back to Naples. Nap and go to Chipotles for dinner. Come back to room, compute, and journal.

- Ferns (15)
 - Marsh fern
 - Hottentot fern
 - Southern shield fern
 - Sword fern/Boston fern
 - Swamp fern
 - Chinese ladder fern
 - Strap fern
 - Giant leather fern
 - Resurrection fern
 - Shoestring fern (on sable palm)
 - Golden foot fern (on sable palm)
 - Hand fern
 - Wisk fern
 - Bracken fern
 - Goldenrod fern
- Bromeliads (5)
 - Northern needle leaf
 - Southern needle leaf
 - Guzmania monostachia
 - Fuzzywuzzy bromeliad
 - Soft needle bromeliad

Thursday February 25

Go to Naples Botanical Garden. Spend the day there. Wonderful gardens. They also have a Lego display which we enjoyed. Missed two small ones but we finally find the others. There seemed to be orchids everywhere. Plus, there was a special orchid area. Lots of bromeliads too with many in bloom. Nice children's garden where we (after asking) we finally find the praying mantis. Went to the wetland platform to see birds but there were only a few coots. We were impressed and Jan wants to come back again the next time we are in Naples.

Friday, February 26

Go down to Everglade City Museum to hear two lectures by the local Native Americans. A little culture and a lot of ranting about the condition of the land. Quite boring. Go to seafood place for lunch. Quite good! Go to Great Cypress Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and see manatees. Take off for boardwalk but turn around before we get there so that we have time to shower and change before dinner. Meet the gang at a Mexican hole-in-the-wall. Say good bye to everyone.

Saturday, February 27

Go to IHOP for a late breakfast. Then go to the Naples zoo. Large alligator pond. Watch the giraffe feeding and a snake presentation. Take the boat trip around the monkey islands. Big exhibit of lions, tigers and bears (Wizard of Oz?). They also had a fosa, a carnivore which eats lemurs. At the alligator pond there were lots of great white egrets in breeding plumage. Tried to get a good picture but

probably didn't. Back to motel for a shower for Jan and then to church. Randy goes to Barnes and Noble looking for a Florida fern book but doesn't find one. He gets back just as church is letting out. Leftovers for dinner and then pack while a NCIS rerun is on.

Sunday, February 28

Get up at 7:00 and finish packing. Red Roof Inn does not charge us for the upgrade or for the safe. Get away and have a comfortable ride to Ft. Meyers. This is a long line at check-in (my suitcase weighs 49.5 lbs and Jan has all the books – where did the extra weight come from?) and at security but we get through in plenty of time. Board on time and get back to Cincinnati without problems.