

2/9/09

Hi,

We had a bit of a cold spell the first few days of February - farmers were irrigating blueberries and strawberries to keep them from freezing - but now it is in the mid to upper 70s - beautiful. Yesterday we visited a park and spotted 2 alligators, one 8-10 feet. Today we visited Honeymoon Island and watched dolphins surfacing as they fed off shore. I couldn't get pictures of the dolphins, but got the alligators. They are on my website: [www.stevharryssite.com](http://www.stevharryssite.com).

Tom was here with us the last week of January, flying in to Tampa from Colorado. He visited a lot of birdwatching spots with us. I've learned to look up the tide charts on the Internet to see when the tide is at its lowest at whatever spot we want to visit. That is when we see a lot of shorebirds poking around in the mud.

Last week, we drove to Orlando to visit Dawn and Bob and the kids. They'd been here a week to see Disney World and the space center.

Saturday was Gasparilla in Tampa. It is an annual Mardi Gras-like event named after a legendary pirate. There is a procession of boats in Tampa Bay and a parade, with floats carrying businessmen dressed up like pirates. Just like Mardi Gras, there are beads, drunks and overflowing porta potties. It is a really big deal for the locals, a cherished tradition. Every body has a great time except the homeowners along the parade route, many of whom erect steel fences to keep people out of their yards.

Our new place is on the 7th floor of a 15 story building on beach. The unit is OK, but starting to show its age. And the owner has left a lot of her stuff here - so many dishes, cups and pots and pans in the cupboards that there is little room for the few things we brought. And enough towels and linens to supply the whole building.

Steve and Carol