

The Adventure of America's Great Loop

It's like a reset button for everything that's important!

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ON MARCH 28, 2024, my husband Ed and I began our American Loop journey. We just "crossed our wake" at the Harborage Marina in Stuart on March 7, 2025. It began as a dream and did indeed become reality.

In November of 2023, Ed retired after practicing as an oral and maxillofacial surgeon for over 35 years and I was no longer seated on the South Florida Water Management Governing Board. Getting older, like it or not, we knew we were entering a new phase of our lives. We decided to take it by the bullhorns.

Our Sewall's Point neighbors, Art and Marilyn Burr, founded Burr Yacht Sales and for decades had the exclusive sale of Fleming Yachts on the east coast of the United States. When the opportunity came to purchase a Fleming it took two tries and a leap of faith, but with Burr's assistance, now owned and operated by Burr employees, we achieved our goal!

A 55 Fleming in beautiful condition became ours and we named her "Finito." Finished. Finished with work! We had determined that America's Great Loop was the best use of Finito and a was to great way to ease into our new lives of retirement. The catch was she was a big craft and we had never run one like her before. We practiced a couple of times taking her to Fort Pierce and then to Vero. Fun, but as first mate, I had to take every direction of my Captain. Taking orders from my husband? This took some soul searching and was a bit of adjustment, but I adapted!

By the time Ed and I left Stuart, in 2024, we had done a lot of research on the American Great Loop Cruisers Association's website and we attended a Rendezvous, but we really had no idea what we were in for. As companions, we brought along our 11-year-old, 80 pound, Belgium Shepherd, Luna, and our cat Okee. Luna's bad hips limited anchoring out, so for the first half of the trip we stayed mostly in marinas.

There were great challenges and great beauty. The scenery, the wildlife, and the history! The simplicity of every day's goal: to get from A to B. We cruised the Intracoastal, Chesapeake Bay, the Atlantic Ocean, New York Harbor, the Hudson Valley, the Erie Canal, the St. Lawrence Seaway, Canada's Trans-Severn, Georgian Bay, Lake Huron and Michigan, Chicago's



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entry to America's great river system, side trips on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, Mobile Bay, Florida's panhandle, across the Gulf of Mexico/America, the Caloosahatchee, Lake Okeechobee, and the St. Lucie back to Stuart.

We made new friendships that will last our lifetime; we visited hundreds of towns and a few large cities, we went through over 100 locks! We were humbled by the conditions of nature, wind, tides, and weather of all sorts, even snow! We were dependent on each other, and we totally worked together.



On Lake Michigan, Luna passed. It was very difficult, but we wouldn't have had it any other way. She was with us. We had her cremated and a wonderful vet we met in Bay Harbor, Michigan sent the ashes to my sister, Jenny. When Jenny and her husband Mike visited us in Chicago, they brought Luna's ashes, so Luna completed the trip.

The AGLCA asked us for a quote to encapsulate our experience. We wrote: "It's hard to put into words what America's Great Loop brings to your life. It's like a reset button for everything that's important and a great way to get closer to your spouse."

If you're considering, give us a shout!

1. Locks, Canada

2. Macinac Island, Michigan

3. Captain Ed Lippisch, and first mate, Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch. Loopers are awarded the gold Burgie after they complete the Great Loop the first time.

4. Luna & Okee on Finito

5. New York Harbor