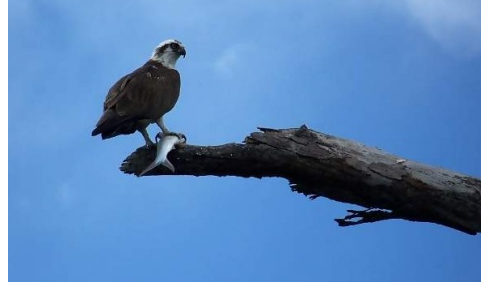
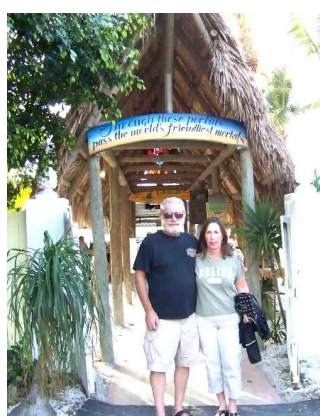


Month number two in Florida!

Following the end of the Holiday Celebration in Arcadia, Bob & I headed back up to the military campground on MacDill AFB for another two weeks. We prepared for a visit from son Tom, who was going to be in St. Petersburg, FL on business. We met him for dinner the day he arrived and, when he finished his business, he came and stayed with us for a few days. We have not seen him since Lana's high school graduation, so we were really excited. It gave him a chance to unwind from the stress of work.....as well as warm his bones from the cold chilly North East. Below is a great picture taken on the campground beach. After Tom left, we watched the Tampa Stadium get ready for the Super Bowl by putting up the big tents and all. It is just a couple of miles up the road from MacDill AFB. We don't know if the Super Bowl is following us or we are following it? We were in Phoenix last year.

We left MacDill AFB on the 18th of January and moved to Myakka River RV Resort in Venice, FL where we remained until the end of the month. This was a very pleasant and interesting stay. I really like the West Coast of Florida, as it is much calmer than the ocean side, has opportunities for 'shell' hunting on the beaches, is less congested than the East Coast, and is beautiful (old Florida). While down here we connected with Russ and Kathy, the couple we know from Lazy Days. They are looking to buy a home in the Venice area, but planned to take time off to accompany us to Key West in February. We hung around and waited for them to finish business.

While waiting, I did some research on where my sister and her husband were when they were here 40 years ago while in training for *Volunteers In Service To America*. They met in training and married down here. Periodically I had to call them for information so I could come close to where they were. Needless to say, we all agreed that Florida has changed quite a bit over the past 40 years. Some of my favorite pictures on the right.



First picture is an area run by the Gulf Coast Heritage Association, that dates back to 3,000 B.C. There is a *Midden* (an ancient Indian garbage dump). We also toured the home and other buildings occupied by the Webb family who lived here beginning in 1867. This was a pioneer family who moved here from New York. The only way in or out was by boat. It was purchased by visionary, Bertha Matilde Honore Palmer in 1910. She preserved the archaeological site and original buildings, plus built her own home and gardens.

I included a couple of shots I caught of local wild life. The armadillo was in the campground, but refused to lift his head for the picture. I just caught the osprey as he landed on the branch with the fish. I am kneeling on a beach covered with shells in Boca Grande State Park.