



# Newsletter

June 2009

All the adventure without all the cost!



## Caladesi Island State Park

SmarterSail ASA 104 students enjoyed a weekend trip to Caladesi Island June 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Caladesi Island was originally part of a large barrier island. Caladesi Island and Honeymoon Island to the north were formed in 1921 when a hurricane created Hurricane Pass, splitting the larger island into two parts. Caladesi Island is one of the few completely natural islands along Florida's Gulf Coast and its white sand shores have been rated as the nation's #1 best beach and is accessible only by boat or ferry.

Sailing up the ICW from Gulfport to Caladesi is about a 6 hour trip in which you really get to use the knowledge of navigating in the Inter Coastal Waterways, getting to know the different daymarkers and buoys, right of way and bridge openings as well as steering by compass and depth soundings. An added bonus is Dolphin sightings and the beautiful Florida sceneries and sunny weather.

From Marker 14 on the Dunedin Causeway Channel, which runs parallel to the causeway between Hurricane Pass and the Intracoastal Waterway, follow a compass heading of about 212 degrees for approximately 1 mile. Follow the channel markers into the Caladesi Island State Park marina. (Note: Do not turn 212 degrees from Marker 14 on the Intracoastal Waterway. Look for Marker 14 on the Causeway Channel, which has a brown park sign on it.)

We arrived on the Island and after a short walk past the snack bar, we were in awe at the beautiful scenery, white powder sand, clear water and clean beach. I definitely recommend this beach to anyone wanting to get away and who wants to feel like they are on a 5 star private island. We went for a swim in the crystal clear water (a few dolphins, although a little shy, came to join us at sunset. Island activities include fishing, shelling, kayaking, boating, hiking and nature studies. Picnic tables and shelters are located near the beach. The park also has a snack bar and gift shop.

The park marina has electric and water hookups for boaters. The air conditioning on SmarterSail's boat ensured a pleasant overnight at the Marina. Couples could take advantage of the full moon and virtually secluded beach after the last ferry left at 5pm. And the best pictures were taken at dawn. Caladesi is virtually a little piece of paradise. We will surely visit it again.

By Amelia Els

