

Monday, April 23rd – Day 2nd

We slept like babies until 7:30 a.m., did our morning things and joined our friends who had already been up. Our girls fixed breakfast. Dan meantime went on the beach for some nice pictures.



The morning was beautiful with the full sun and the blue sky, about 86 F ... a fairytale in the Florida Keys. And on top of that ... we didn't feel any jetlag. Experienced travelers ...

When Dan returned back Susie and Hana set the table with cheese, boiled eggs, olives, bananas, kiwis, ham, croissants, juice and coffee on the porch and we all enjoyed our first breakfast together on that vacation. When we finished, we surprised our friends with gifts that we brought along from our country. A necklace made of gemstones and a book about Chotebor for Zuzanka, a Pilsner Urquell cap and knife for Dan and Pilsner Urquell pensils, a paper game about Czech castles and a small ceramic bell for both of them. They loved all of those gifts ! There was a lot of pleasure ! Donees of gifts and givers of donatory's pleasure ... the great experience.

Then we went walking along a shore among palm trees, we swung in hammocks, fed sea gulls on a wooden pier and relished wonderful views of incredible sceneries. The beach with the palm trees and deep blue sky, together with colorful fishing houses and boats ... „Amazing !”

11:00 a.m. – we checked-out, said our good bye to Long Key, loaded up Toyota and „Let's go !”.

At first we did a short detour to the island of Islamorada to Robbie's for tarpons (<http://www.robbies.com/default.htm>).

Wow ! The tarpon is the really big fish. It can be 8 feet long and it can be 200 pounds in weight ! And it is a predator of course so Zuzanka bought a bucket of small fish and we threw it to the tarpons for our and their joy. But it wasn't so easy as you can think. There were a lot of sea gulls all over that flew at a high speed and they stole much fish from the tarpons. We had to kneeled on a wooden pier and threw the fish close to a surface, close to the tarpon's maw. Then



there was a quick boiling of water and the small fish was over ... and other and other. There was also a curious audience. Two pelicans that hoped for some of our small fish too. But not from both of us ! We could read a sign above on a column ,Do not feed the pelicans !'. But warm hearted Zuzanka did not notice it and gave both of them some fish ... and more. Only when she got our pantomime toward the sign, she made a guilty grimace and we burst out laughing what was an impuls for Dan fotographing the tarpons turn toward us. When we told him a point of that joke, he laughed at it with us too ☺. Then we took a short stroll around ,traps for tourists' in shops. There were things made from coconuts, shells and other souvenirs in them and there I was admiring nice hats made palm tree leaves for the first time.

After a while we returned back to our car, jumped in, went back on the Overseas Highway and continued our way down the South.

A merriment stayed in Toyota with us. Susie made jokes about the tarpons, asked Dan for something and then she pretended to be angry at him because he didn't listen to her. She complained about woman's fate, when men do not listen to their women and they have to reapeat and repeat their opinions and views. And I played her teasing back and told her that it is the similar situation to that one when you had turned on a radio. It plays and plays but you almost do not perceive it. In at one ear and out at the other. Wow ! It was something for Dan. He erupted into laughter. „You

got it, Mirek ! Exactly ! You're right ! Susie is like a radio ! She is my radio !” and during joking and laughing we took a break for a short walk along the nice Anne's Beach with marvelous sceneries.

(<http://floridakeystreasures.com/Beaches/annesbeach.shtml>)

We took off sandals and paddled in a shallow, limpid water and went along a seashore, lastly we went on the coast and continued along a raised wooden sidewalk among a tropical vegetation, above pools of salt water left there by a high tide. And Dan from time to time burst out laughing again : „Like a radio ! Mirek, you got it !”.

The sun beat down by power of Caribbean, by power of the afternoon ... and we breathed in that heady ocean air, relished that feeling of freedom and liberty. We all were happy.

Then we took the same way back, cleaned our feet from a sand, jumped in Toyota again and zoomed along that elevated concrete band in the middle of blue waters. The Atlantic Ocean on the left side and the Gulf of Mexico on the right side. We went over Seven Mile Bridge, through a juicy greenery of the islands of Marathon, Big Pine Key and others all the way to our thatday's destination, the island of Key West what is the southernmost point of that Florida islands necklace as well as the States.



Dan slowly rode down streets of that town that was full of tourists and heavy traffic. Zuzanka

navigated and at length we came to an check-in office, then we drove in one side, quiet lane and parked the car in front of our temporary home, a wooden house with two storys and high palm tree nearby the entrance.

,The Sailor House in Zero Whalton Lane in Key West, Florida '

(<http://www.andrewsinn.com/sailor.html>).

Yes, we had that whole dreamy and shi shi house only for ourselves ! There were a big living room with a TV set, a dining room, both perfectly equipped with everything what you can imagine. There were comfortable rattan-upholstery seating group in the living room. Chairs and table in the dining room were the same. And then there was an outside porch with rattan chairs and table, with a grill place and with ... Holly cow ! ... jacuzzi !

On the second story were two bedrooms with balconies and also a bathroom. I forgot to mention a kitchen on the first story with all things that you can need in that room and maybe more. And of course ... there was a wonderful tropical vegetation all around ! Juicy green palm trees of all kinds, unbelievably beautiful flowers of all colors. Hibiscuses, oleanders and others and others. We keep staying on cloud nine ...



After we settled in and after we familiarized ourselves with our dreamy house we set out to



explore beauties of Key West. At first we satisfied our stomachs in the Crabby Dicks' restaurant (<http://www.crabbydickskeywest.com>), on its second floor, at a nice



veranda with an interesting view of Duval Street. In a good mood we sat at the table, full of vacation atmosphere this laid back town. From a menu we chose genuine sea fish specialities, I think it was Buffalo Shrimps for me and Fried Shrimps for Hana. And Coronas and for us guys and Cuba Libre for our sweet honeys. It was a nice and casual lunch with a lot of smiling, friendly joking and talking. Laid-back time again.

After that pleasant lunch we left Crabby Dicks and went seeing the town, at first all those small, neat shops with everything what we, tourists, can need. And more, there we could see things that we never did know about them. In shops there were beach skirts, T-shirts, Bermudas, sun glasses, hammocks, swing chairs, sunshades, sandals, bath towels (Zuzanka took advantage of the opportunity when they offered three

towels for price of two, bought them and gave two of them to us for memory, as well as a beautiful beach shoulder bag for Hana with her monogram on it). And there were also a lot of places that they sold nice hats of palm tree leaves. It was my choice! They got me ! But you don't think I bought the first that I saw. No, no. I did browsing in shops with others, chose T-shirts and so on but my eyes belonged to hats ... yes, of course, finally I bought one. It was in the fourth shop that we visited where they caught me. That one was simply perfect ! And jump ! The hat was on my head ! And there it stayed for almost all our vacation ...

Walking we returned to our cute house, had coffee, enjoyed beauty of the vegetation and wonderful weather.

About 6 p.m. we went out, took direction to the sea and strolled among old wooden residences, beautiful bushes with blooms of all colors, high palm trees to a seafront in Mallory Square for our first sunset in Key West. There were so many people in the seafront ! So we joined them and relished that special and calm early-evening atmosphere of that place. Susie went ahead to gain good sitting places for nice views of sunset scenery, us two kept slow walking with Dan taking pictures. And there were a lot of objects to photograph ! Luxurious hotels, yachts, palm trees, blooms ... multicolored palette. The sun was still burning, even if it was already on its way down to bath into waters of Gulf of Mexico. But it was nice because there was a pleasant fresh wind but time to time too much ... One bigger squall took Pilsner Urquell cap away from Dan's head and blew it about 100 feet far from him toward the ocean. Dan started running to the cap, me too. But the wind, that teaser, blew once again and carried the cap into the water. The Czech cap floated in the American harbor. It was not so far just about 60 feet from a quay but it was enough to be beyond our arms reach. There was a hope when a sailboat with a young couple slowly came to quay and they tried to catch the cap by a bargepole. Dan lay on the quay, I sat and keep the boat away from a wall by my legs ... but nothing worked. An ocean current were slowly carrying the cap under the seashore. In a moment the cap was over. Dan stood there like sad sack. „*What a bad luck, Mirek. I'm so sad !*”. I tried to comfort him and told him that it will be good again (*it was easy for me when I knew ...*) but I was not much successful. We fast got to one of many outside sittings where Zuzanka occupied a sunshade with wicker chairs a Dan immediately told her that sad news. „*Oh, Dan, Dan !!!*” and she had a gentle reproof in her



eyes. „*What a shame !*”.

Anyway ... our vacation, early evening atmosphere, pinacoladas, coronas and splashing waves did well their job and in a minute transformed that cheerless experience into funnier one when we were describing Susie our effort to rescue the cap. But it is true that Dan's eyes remained a bit sad.

In the meantime the sun came really close to the ocean surface, we paid for our drinks, stood up and went to the same cap of the seashore for better view of the sunset. Along our way we could see one of many street acrobats there who were performing his jugglery with torches, knives and play with two dogs. He was really good at it so he deserved some bucks from us.

07:45 p.m – we were fascinated by the sunset show. First a red-hot sun disk was slowly going down but in a second it changed into the really fast move and the next moment the sun made „*SPLASH !*” and was over. The evening started. Susie and Dan set direction and fourth of us were casually walking back to ‚*Sailor House*’ through evening tourist bustle in downtown. We passed by bars, dance halls and returned ‚home’.

And Coronas and wine and ... „*I have something for your pleasure !*”, I was handing another brand-new cap of Pilsner Urquell to Dan. „*Wow !!! Mirek, how do you do it ??? You must be a magician !!! Wow !!! Big thanks to you !*”. And he gave me a warm hug. Yes, yes I had a lucky idea to buy two caps back in the Czech Republic, not only

one and brought both of them along. Really the lucky idea. Thus ... we spent a rest of the evening in peace of minds and smiles. We had a black and black sky with many silver stars above, balmy summer's feeling all around...

We asked our friends whether there had ever been winter in Key West and how could we recognize it. Susie answered : „*Yes, they get cold times over here too and you can recognize it by that fact that residents have socks put on. ☺* ". Lucky people over there !

About 10 p.m. we climbed upstairs, said „*Sleep well !*” together, had a shower and went to sleep. We switched an air-conditioner on for a while but it was quite noisy so we rather turned it off and opened a door of our balcony. This way we could be one part of nocturnal atmosphere of that magic place on the Earth and in a moment we fell asleep into the sleep of just.