



## Bahamas - 2004 Trip Log

Vessel - Arcon  
1974 Post... A 40 Ft. Sports Fisherman



Crew - Tommy Lingan (Captain)  
Fred Phelps  
Ralph Morgan  
James Erskine  
Kim O'Haver (Chronicler)



### ***5/18/04 Tuesday – Tampa to Cape Sable***

We have an early start from Imperial Yacht Basin... The trip out of Tampa Bay is uneventful. A moderate breeze remains with us for several hours as we cruise south. The decision to cross over to Stuart, by way of the Okeechobee Waterway, for a run to Freeport or to continue south in the Gulf for a crossing to Bimini had yet to be made. Some of the crew wants to go one way and some the other. As we approach Boca Grande, Tommy makes the decision to continue south and make for Cape Sable where we will "gunk-out" for the night. By this time the wind has calmed and we expect to make good time. About 2 hours before sunset, the wind still calm, Tommy spots some birds diving on a pod of bait. He changes course to interest the action. We are already trolling but had not yet had a hit. As we pull a circle around the bait, both reels sing-out. Two fish on... two very nice [Spanish mackerel](#) are boarded. For the next hour we have a fishing bonanza... Spanish mackerel, [king fish](#), and even a [Bonito \(or Little Tunny\)](#). It is fast and furious. With many miles to go we leave the still feeding fish. We clean our catch and, since it's still early, I decide to cook some of the fresh fish while still under way. Bad decision! As I start preparations, the winds pick up. In fact, very shortly it becomes obvious that cooking at this time is out of the question. As night closes in, the wind continues to increase. By this time, we are below Marco Island and are really starting to take a pounding. It is pitch black and while we knew better, but because of the calm seas, we had neglected to make the boat ship-shape. Stuff was falling everywhere. It is sit-down and hold on to your butt time. When it got dark we were probably 30 miles off-shore following a course that would have brought us to [Cape Sable](#) around midnight provided we maintain our pre-storm speed. However,

after reducing speed and recalculating, our ETA is closer to 3-4 am. A long bumpy night faces us. Even after reaching the shallower waters inshore, we are still plagued with having to dodge crab traps in the dark. It is slow going and we finally have an uneventful anchoring south of Cape Sable near Flamingo at around 0400. We are a tired, beat-up crew. There has been no supper this evening... a snatched cracker or hand-full of potato chips has had to suffice. The bunks in the forward stateroom and the captain's cabin are wet from improperly secured portholes so wet beds greeted the sleepy crew. Surprisingly this didn't seem to keep everyone from getting a good night's sleep.

### ***5/19/04 Wednesday – Cape Sable to Caesar's Creek***

Engine Readings:

Main – 4218

Gen-Set – 5117

Oil:

Port – 2 qt

Star – 1 ½ qt

Gen – ½ qt

The crew sleeps in and it is mid morning before this smell of coffee wafts through the vessel. After making things ship-shape, Fred cranks up the stove and whips up a batch of pancakes for everyone. It is 1220 before we weigh anchor and continue south to Plantation Key to refuel. The course we are following pretty much follows the Everglades National Park [Boundary](#). Our plan is to cruise up the ICW to [Caesar's Creek](#) where we will anchor out in preparation for an early Gulf Stream crossing tomorrow. We get securely anchored before sundown (2010) and I finally have my chance to cook the fish dinner. Fried mackerel and kingfish with hushpuppies, baked beans and salad are enjoyed by all. A cool temperature and brisk wind allows us to enjoy a quiet night without the air conditioning.

#### [Plantation Yacht Harbor Marina:](#)

Engine Readings:

Main – 4222

Gen-Set – 5122

Fuel – 299 Gal

### ***5/20/04 Thursday – Caesar's Creek to Bimini***

Engine Readings:

Main – 4226  
Gen-Set – 5135

We wake up early... Forecast is for 5-7 feet with seas higher in the stream and we are hoping for more favorable while early in the day. We pull anchor at 0700 and head for the Atlantic. Though we would be unable to keep any catch before clearly Bahrainis Customs we decide to troll anyway releasing any catch we might have. It will take us 7 hours to reach Bimini and we catch 2 [Dolphin](#) (Dolphin Fish... not the mammal.) This beautiful fish is also known as Mahi Mahi or Dorado in other parts of the Americas). Although I am crediting the second, larger fish as a catch (Ralph), the 80 pound stranded leader (new rig) snapped right in the middle as we try to bring the fish onboard thereby losing us both fish and lure. I suspect a defect in the leader as it was the last off that roll.

We arrive at [Bimini](#) around 1430 docking at the [Bimini Big Game Resort and Marina](#). It takes us about an hour to clear Customs after which we take a walking tour of Alice Town. James buys an island shirt and I some new wire leader. We spend some time visiting the [Bimini Museum](#) and "The Complete Angler" bar and hotel... Hemingway's favorite haunt. It is full of old photos and other artifacts from a bygone era.



While we we're doing our thing, Ralph tracks down the local launder mat which he finds to be a nicely maintained, clean business run by a friendly, talkative woman who had recently celebrated her 70th birthday. Ralph, wet the worse by our first night's storm, wants badly to wash some of the salt out of his bedclothes. The old woman and her husband own not only the laundry, but also several rental apartments all nicely maintained. While waiting for the wash to finish, the woman invites Ralph into her home for drink and pie and plies him with this story. It seems she was from the Exumas and while working as a maid met her husband, who was a mate on a fishing boat, got married, saved their money and bought this property on Bimini. She also related that they have a son who is a civil engineer working in Great Britain. Recently, they met the boat to receive

friends traveling from the Exumas for her birthday to discover that her son had booked passage as well to surprise her. She said that so many people showed up for the celebration that she just had to order additional birthday cake so that she could send some to each of her friends. When Ralph's clothes were dry, she insisted on folding them for him.



Back at the boat, we decide to try out the attractive pool and new shower facilities. When we docked here 2 years ago the Big Game Fishing Club was in the throws of massive reconstruction and I am glad to report that it had a pleasing outcome. The brisk wind over the past several weeks has kept the marina almost empty so we pretty

much have the facilities to ourselves. We note another 40 foot Post of similar vintage to the Arcon and spend some time looking her over. The boat has been well maintained but is rigged with a different flying Bridge arrangement and top than is the Arcon. No one is on board so we are unable to see the inside.

### ***5/21/04 Friday – Bimini to Chub Cay***

Engine Readings:  
Main – 4233  
Gen-Set – 5143

We depart Bimini at 0925 for Chub Cay.



Our route will take us through the [Gun Cay/Cat Cay Pass](#) and across some 80 miles of the Great Bohama Bank to the "[Tongue of the Ocean](#)" and [Chub Cay](#) in the [Berry Islands](#). It is an easy crossing with us trolling the entire trip. Only one fish is caught but what a fish it is. We are about 20 miles from the east side of the Bank when James is the first to grab the singing rod and reel. We could tell at once that it is a big fish... something much bigger than we have hooked so far. Twenty minutes later, we boat a 40-50 pound kingfish... one of the biggest kings I have ever seen. James is ecstatic. The Fish is too

big for the fish box so it has to be dressed out before it can be iced. We arrive at [Chub Cay Club Marina](#) at 1700.

### ***5/22/04 Saturday – Chub Cay***

Engine Readings:  
Main – 4242  
Gen-Set – 5152

Oil:  
Port – 1 ¼ Qt.  
Star – 1 pt.  
Gen – 1 pt.

We have a full day of fishing off Chub Cay. We keep one large (~40 pounds) Dolphin. The Post we had seen at Bimini has followed us to Chub. Tommy learns that the two man crew is taking the boat from St Augustine to someplace in Venezuela. We are likely to cross paths with them again on this trip. They seem very friendly even offering us a roll of wire leader and trolling lures when they find we are running short.

### ***5/23/04 Sunday – Chub Cay to Nassau***

We depart Chub Cay at 0905 for Nassau arriving at 1545. It is an uneventful crossing with one or two hookups on the way. However, we keep

only one small skip jack tuna that we hooked just after leaving Chub Cay. We find dockage at [Nassau Harbour Club](#). After washing down the boat we clean ourselves up and take off walking to the Outback Steak House just a few blocks from our dock. It has been another long hard day so after dinner, instead of making a night of it, we return to the boat and sack out.

Engine Readings:  
Main – 4257  
Gen-Set – 5167

### ***5/24/04 Monday - Nassau***

The wind, which picked up yesterday, continues strong today so we will remain in port to facilitate re-provisioning, doing laundry and making minor repairs to the Arcon. We also need to purchase additional fishing tackle before heading south to the Exumas.

Ralph takes a walking tour of the water front and spots two sleek looking sailboats. Upon investigation they turn out to be America's Cup Class vessels being prepared for crew training. Ralph is invited aboard for an inspection and joins the preparation crew for lunch at the Nassau Hard Rock Café. Tommy and James spend the morning repairing a leak that had developed in one of the forward salon windows while Fred and I do several loads of laundry. Tommy, James and Fred spend the afternoon at the Atlantis Casino/Resort checking out their giant aquarium while Ralph and I remain with the boat.

### ***5/25/04 Tuesday – Nassau to Warderick Wells Cay (Exuma Park)***

The wind is calmer this morning. Ralph and I head for Winn Dixie as soon as they open at 0900 to top off on supplies before we head for the Exumas today. Yesterday both Tommy and I stocked up on additional lures, hooks, leader and extra swivels. I also purchase 2 additional [chart books](#) of the Bahamas. One of these chart books covers the Exumas and the other the "Near Bahamas". They will prove to be excellent reference sources. James purchases a "Hawaiian Sling" in hopes of doing some dive fishing along the way.

The decision is made to head south to the [Exumas](#). After refueling it is about 1230 as we get under way. Our plan is to cross the Yellow Bank and to seek anchorage at the [Exuma Park](#) moorings at Warderick Wells Cay. The Exuma Park is a large marine/sea life sanctuary and, while fishing and shelling are not allowed, it is listed as a great place to visit.



We arrive at the park well before sundown (1709). Calling ahead, Tommy secures us a mooring buoy (#11) near the park office. We hear that these mooring buoys can be hard to come by at peak seasons and boaters are advised to make reservations well in advance. We were lucky. There are perhaps 10 or so other boats moored and probably that many more mooring

buoys available. It is a very beautiful cove with good wind protection from most compass points. Be aware though that anchoring is not allowed anywhere in the park so if mooring buoys are not available, one must seek anchorage outside park boundaries.

After securing to our assigned buoy, we shut down everything including the gen-set and launch the dingy. Tommy and James are the first to explore. They find that to do much exploration they will need shoes which are back at the boat. They take a short walk none the less discovering a bridge across a lagoon in which small snapper and a conch were casually during their thing.



As the others of us take it easy watching the sun get closer to the horizon, we are startled to see a park ranger (?) swimming next to our boat which was one of several lined up on moorings. As we watched, he visits each boat's mooring checking to ensure proper securing. It is really a lovely evening with near calm winds. Tommy and James return to the boat and we retire early after a makeshift supper.

## 5/26/04 – Wednesday - Warderick Wells Cay to Bitter Guana Cay

Engine Readings:  
Main – 4262  
Gen-Set – 5179

Oil:  
Port – 1 ½ Qt.  
Star – 1 ½ Qt.



Another beautiful calm morning... Ralph and I take the dingy ashore and follow one of the Exuma Park trails a short distance before deciding we would need to walk further than we really wanted to this morning before reaching any vistas. By the time we return to the beach, the park office is open and we pay our bill preparing to leave for someplace we can fish. The

park also sports a small book store well stocked with new and used publications dealing mostly with things of local interest and we spend some time browsing before returning to the Arcon. Mid morning, we unhook and head out into the Exuma Sound, beyond the park boundary, and start trolling. After a short time,

Tommy calls out that we should look at a big fish jumping off starboard. It is a big billfish walking and dancing across the surface of the water. James runs to get his camera (the only one onboard having a long lens) and Tommy turns the Arcon to follow. At this point, nobody realizes that this fish is on one of our trolling lines... the reel



clicker had not been set. Tommy is the first to put two and two together and, putting the boat on auto pilot, makes a dash down from the flying bridge and grabs the rod. "Fish On" he yells! The fish, a [White Marlin](#), had by this time ripped several hundred yards of line off the reel and was a mere dot dancing on the horizon. A long battle ensues...Tommy vs. the fish with Tommy finally getting the upper hand. As the fish is brought to the boat, James prepares to handle it. He is determined to recover our tackle and release the marlin unharmed. It is a successful catch & release and we all watch as this big, beautiful fish swims away. This will be our only billfish for

the day but we will catch three large dolphins and have several other fish on before days end. This is also the first billfish for the Arcon. We continue south and arrive and anchor behind [Bitter Guana Cay](#) around 1630 for the night.

Tommy and James explore the uninhabited island and find some [iguana](#). Fred and I clean the 3 dolphin and accidentally throw ½ of one overboard. Oops, we must be getting tired. Tommy and James return and James dives and retrieves the fish. We grill some of the fish for supper. It is a quiet night enjoyed by all.

### **5/27/04 – Thursday - Bitter Guana Cay to Georgetown**

No fish today even though we troll the full distance between Bitter Guana Cay and Georgetown.

Arrive [Georgetown](#) at 1700

Engine Readings:      Fuel:  
Main – 4277              100 Gal  
Gen-Set – 5209



I am not feeling good... I think I have picked up a bug of some sort. The rest of crew has drinks and dinner at the Tiki Bar in Georgetown while I remain onboard.

### **5/28/04 – Friday - Georgetown to Staniel Cay**



We leave Georgetown 1400. We tag our 2<sup>nd</sup> large marlin a short time after reaching the dropoff. It's a [Blue Marlin](#) this time and is caught by Ralph after a 30-40 minute fight. James once again is able to save the tackle and release this 200 plus pound fish unharmed. This fish gives us all a shock as it strikes near the boat and [tail](#)

[dances](#) to within a few feet of the Arcon giving the illusion it might actually jump into the boat with us.

We arrive at [Staniel Cay Yacht Club](#) around 1800.

Engine Readings:  
Main – 4285  
Gen-Set – 5218





[Staniel Cay](#) has an attractive fishing club/marina where we dock for the evening. Lots of expensive boats with fishermen dressed right out of the Orvis catalog. Good food and drinks and free Wi-Fi. We are able to contact Sandra, Irene and Marc by Yahoo and send several photos out by email.

James and Fred take the dingy

over to an adjacent cay and attempt a dive into [Thunderball Grotto](#). This cavern was used for scenes from James Bond's "Thunderball" and "Never Say Never Again" as well Disney's "Splash". Heavy tidal action, however, made it too dangerous for them to make the dive.

### ***5/29/04 – Saturday - Staniel Cay to Highbourne Cay***

Depart Staniel Cay 1015.

Again, no fish... We have noticed an almost full moon the last night or two. Perhaps this has something to do with the slow fishing. However, it didn't seem to keep the marlin from feeding yesterday.



We anchor west off the south end of [Highbourne Cay](#) in calm seas. Tommy and James take the dingy over to Allan's Cay for the ride and to see the [iguanas](#) that live there. Later, they stop off at the Highbourne Cay Club Marina and find that there is a Saturday evening buffet, but since we have already started preparing supper onboard, we

pass but will remember this for future trips.

## **5/30/04 – Sunday - Highbourne Cay to Spanish Wells.**

Engine Readings:  
Main – 4301  
Gen-Set – 5249

We have a pleasant ride across the Yellow Banks exiting into deeper water through Fleeming Channel west of Spanish Wells. It is early and we spend some time trolling the [N. E. Providence Channel](#). We have a few strikes, but no fish. We do run across a pod of small whales basking in the calm waters and spend time viewing them. Later we are told by a fisherman in Spanish Wells that these were [Blackfish](#) feeding on the tuna in the area. It looked as though they were having about as much luck in finding the tuna as were we. Soon, we have enough of this slow fishing and we head back to Spanish Wells for the evening. [Spanish Wells](#) is an attractive clean town with friendly people. It is an affluent fishing community and not a tourist attraction. The homes we see are mostly older, small structures well maintained and brightly painted with pastel Bahamian colors. Beautifully



landscaped lawns and gardens are the order. Many flowering trees including [Royal Poinciana](#) are in evidence everywhere. It would be a nice community in which to spend a little extra time... possibly a great place for a permanent residence. We have supper at a small

diner after which we walk back to the boat at twilight strolling along some of the side streets of the town. Since tomorrow will be Memorial Day (also celebrated by the Bahamians) we are told that not much will be open. We hope we will be able to find fuel.

## **5/31/04 – Monday - Spanish Wells to Tilloo Cut**

Oil:

Port – 1 ½ Qt.

Star – 1 Qt.

Gen – ¼ Qt.



We are up early and are successful in finding fuel after which we take off for the [Abacos](#). The wind is light and we have a comfortable trip trolling most of the way. We get several strikes and land 2 [Skipjack Tuna](#). We also encounter several larger whales. One had a young calf in tow. As we approached, mother sounded, but not the calf. It stuck its head out of the water and observed us as we were observing it. One can only imagine what

mother was thinking. We thought it better that we not get too close and so continue on our way.

We arrive at [Tilloo Cut](#) around 1700 and anchor just inside the cut between Lubbers Quarters and Elbow Cay just off [Tahiti Beach](#). James cleans the fish and we have grilled tuna for supper. It is a beautiful, calm evening with a gorgeous sunset.

Shortly after dark, we are entertained by an impressive fireworks display in the distance but close enough to hear. We suspect they are from Marsh Harbour on mainland Abaco just east of us.



Engine Readings:

Main – 4308

Gen-Set – 5272

## 6/01/04 – Tuesday - Hope Town and Mash Harbour

Tommy cruises into Hope Town harbor early dropping Fred and me off at the Government Dock. We walk around Hope Town collecting photos and end up at Captain Jack's for drinks while waiting for the rest of the crew to join us. Finally, James and Tommy do just that and we have dinner at Captain Jack's. Great Couch Fritters and



Cracked Conch... the best I've yet had in the Bahamas.

Before returning to the Arcon, I purchase a bottle of cheap rum and some fresh limes for the boat. While sightseeing, Tommy notes a plaque at the base of an unusual tree that identified it as a [breadfruit tree](#) descendant from the original batch brought to the Bahamas by Capt. Bligh. James buys some boat shoes. We depart Hope Town for Marsh Harbour at 1530 catching the high tide. This is shallow country around here and it is best to wait for high water. The trip is short and uneventful and we arrive at Harbour View Yacht Club in Marsh Harbour around 1630.



## **6/02/04 – Wednesday - Mash Harbour to Great Guana Cay**

We arrive at [Great Guana Cay](#) around 1700 and Moor in the Harbor... just a short walk to Nippers.

Engine Readings:	Oil:
Main – 4318	Port – 1 ½ Qt.
Gen-Set – 5317	Star – ¾ Qt.
	Gen – ½ Qt.



After securing the boat and launching the dingy, we go ashore and have supper and drinks at [Nippers](#). Not a large crowd but a gorgeous, quiet evening greets us. The last time I visited this place it was on a Sunday during one of its celebrated “Wild Pig Roasts” and it was very crowded and, as the saying goes, “the joint was jumping”. This evening, we have the place pretty much to ourselves. We order drinks and chat some with the bartender before ordering food. Ralph tries Cracked Conch for the first time and is amazed at how good it is. After a couple additional rounds of Bahama Mamas, we return to the Arcon and to bed.

## **6/03/04 – Thursday - Great Guana Cay to Little Harbour**

Before leaving, Tommy and James attempt a fix on our saltwater wash-down pump with no success. It will need replacement once we get back to the States. We will continue to adapt and use the live bait pump for this trip.

Only one barracuda caught today (Fred)... Fishing is slow. Large schools of Tuna (?) are spotted, but they would hit nothing we had... We are having trouble finding fish willing to take what we have to offer. Seas are moderately rough with south east winds.

While trolling, the port side outrigger support bracket breaks. James is successful in grabbing the outrigger pole before it sinks out of sight and he and Tommy hoist it back aboard. A solid, cast brass piece of the “V” holding bracket has broken in two. I suspect metal fatigue and/or a flawed original casting. A new bracket or braising repair is in order before this outrigger can be used again.



We quit fishing at 1500 and anchor outside entrance to [Little Harbor](#) awaiting a higher tide for entry. James dives a nearby reef and I start a pot of beans for later. Using ingredients purchased in Marsh Harbour, Fred whips up a batch of [Bahama Mamas](#)

while we wait. From the hoots and hollers emanating from the crew, he must be a "great" bartender. At 1800 we have enough water to move into Little Harbour. We decide to dine at Pete's Pub, a shack bar on the beach, instead of eating the beans tonight. They will



keep for tomorrow. Pete's Pub is an experience. It appears to have been constructed from ship wreckage with nothing but beach sand for its floor. The food is good... especially the spicy beans & rice that is served with everything including their hamburgers. They also offer an excellent selection of exotically seasoned seafood entrées at reasonable prices. The rolls of toilet paper provided to be used as napkins is a nice touch too. Dinner jackets are not needed here. We have an enjoyable evening watching the sunset and it is dark before we return to the Arcon. There are probably a dozen or so other



vessels joining us this night in the Little Harbour Anchorage... It is a quiet, calm night for sleeping.

Engine Readings:  
Main – 4324  
Gen-Set – 5329

### **6/04/04 – Friday - Little Harbour to Great Harbour Cay**



We get an early start leaving Little Harbour at 0745. It is breezy this morning and bumpy as we exit to the Atlantic. As we head south, the wind dies somewhat so that by the time we are off "[Hole-in-the-Wall](#)" it is a pleasant ride. So far this morning we have had no hook-ups and few bird sightings. Coming in closer to better see the hole in the wall (it really exists), several large flocks of feeding birds are spotted. Approaching one we can see an acre of

slashing/feeding fish below. It is a feeding frenzy... probably tuna. Zinnnng... Fish on. For better than an hour we have multiple strikes and end up catching 4 skip jack and 1 black fin tuna. Every crew member gets some action. As I reel in large skip jack it is struck by something much larger leaving the back half of its body in threads. We are definitely in a school of hungry fish. Once again however,



we are faced with the decision of having to leave feeding fish in order to allow us sufficient time to reach our next anchorage before dark. Increasing our speed to around 12 knots, we attempt to catch up some of the lost time. Later, as we approach the Berry I islands, we spot another flock of feeding birds. Changing course slightly to intercept, we give up a little more daylight and catch 2 more skip jack tuna before continuing to our intended anchorage at Great Harbour. Great Harbour, near the north end of [Great Harbour Cay](#) in the Berry I islands, offers only limited protection and after looking the area over and noting a significant surge, we decide to move on to the safer, calmer Great Harbour Cay Marina farther south. We arrive and dock at 1900.

Engine Readings:  
Main – 4335  
Gen-Set – 5356

We don't have the right power connector for here so will have to remain on ship's power for the evening. Before dark, James and I clean, package and freeze the tuna. Our freezer is now about half full of frozen fish. We have beans, rice and hotdogs for supper before turning in.



### ***6/05/04 – Saturday - Great Harbour Cay to Hoffmans Cay***

We fill up with fresh water... 41 gallons at 35 cents/gal. We find that Great Harbour Cay Marina will not accept credit cards but will deal in cash only. We scrounge together the \$70 necessary to pay dockage and head for the Esso fuel docks to top off before heading south. Unfortunately, like the marina, they deal only in cash and we are forced to pass on purchasing fuel here. Too bad as diesel fuel is only \$2.41/gal here compared to \$3.60/gal at our next proposed stop at Chub Cay. It looks like we will need to detour back to Nassau for cheaper fuel.

We plan on making this a short fishing day. Yesterday has sated everyone's fish catching appetite for the moment. We need a break. Looking at the charts, we see a nearby anchorage between Hoffmans Cay and Devils Cay. It looks like it will be a quiet, protected spot sporting good beaches and even a "blue-hole" on Hoffmans Cay nearby to explore. In route, Tommy catches and releases one barracuda. We arrive and anchor behind a small beach (White Cay) nestled



between the two larger cays at 1430. There is another smaller boat already at anchor, but there is plenty of room and they turn out to be only snorkeling and leave shortly anyway. There is some current and plenty of shallow water around us so we take some time setting out our 2 anchors. For insurance, Tommy has James dive down to help place them. The bottom is heavily covered in grass and we can see long white gashes everywhere where other anchors have not held. It is a lovely spot. We are encircled by numerous, small deserted islands... truly an "out-island" encounter.

Engine Readings:  
Main – 4340  
Gen-Set – 5372

Fred chooses to go ashore shelling while Tommy and James take off in the dingy to explore the "blue-hole". Ralph and I decide to wait until the sun is lower and cooler remaining onboard. Shelling is good and Fred returns with a nice collection. Tommy and James find the



“blue-hole” interesting meeting up there with the folks that had been snorkeling at our anchorage when we arrived. This “blue-hole” has been compared to the Sacred Well at Chichen I tza (excepting the custom of sacrificing virgins). Following the trail from shore one experiences a sense of shock when first coming upon it. Suddenly you’re right on the rim of this great sheer-sided hole, the water far below you, unfathomable but looking deep and very blue. Climbing down under an overhang you can reach a point from which you can access the water for a scuba dive or swim. The people swimming there said at some time in the past it had been stocked with grouper which can now be caught.



Returning to the Arcon, James and Tommy render the dingy to Ralph who retrieves Fred from the beach. Ralph and James return to White Cay for more exploration while Fred whips up a fresh batch of Bahama Mamas for the day. The sun is still a little too hot for me and my blistered lips so I pass on the

exploration for the day. Using yesterday's left over beans (pinto) I start a pot of Chili for supper.

In the south we see a thunder storm brewing. Distant lightning is already visible. By the time James and Ralph return it is ominous and the wind is increasing. We clear everything from the bridge and prepare for the worst. By this time the sun is setting as well and it's getting dark. As the wind continues to increase, a guy approaches the Arcon in a dingy. We wonder where he is coming from as we are the only boat apparent in this anchorage. He is from a sailboat outside the harbor looking for an entrance and place to weather the storm. We loan him our chart and share what information we have. By this time its dark and the wind is strong and, though the rain and full bunt of the storm has yet to hit us, a spectacular display of lightning surrounds us. We appear to be nested among several large thunderheads.

The sailboat, which has finally entered protected waters, is having trouble getting its anchors to hold. Finally, after several tries and dispatching a diver with under water spotlight, they are successful. The boat swings at anchor some 50 yards upwind of us. It turns out to be about a 30 foot trimaran sporting a large crew... some of which seem to be sans cloths on its brightly illuminated deck. Later they dispatch their dingy again to return our chart. We learn that they are a nudist, motorcycle club from Key Largo out on a yearly cruise. This would explain their deck attire. The guy returning the charts has a business ([Huckleberry Adventures](#)) in Islamorada in the Florida Keys. He pilots a small seaplane and, among other things, hires himself out as a fish-spotter and also gives lessons on how to find fish. They had been heading for



Chub Cay when the storm materialized and decide to seek shelter from the seas. According to him, all onboard but two are seasick and even though they didn't have charts for Hoffmans Cay they decide to explore possibilities with the dingy. Luckily, we were there to help with charts and some daylight observations. Had they continued to enter through the first pass they were considering they could easily have ended up awash on the shallow rocks spanning that opening. We are all lucky this night. Though it provides intense illumination and moderately stiff winds, the storm fails to move in upon us. We do get a considerable surge through the passes so it is a rock-n-roll night but not so much that we couldn't sleep.

Note: Shortly before dark we hear by way of XM Radio that Ronald Regan has died. A great man is gone this day.

### ***6/06/04 – Sunday - Hoffmans Cay to Nassau***

We leave for Nassau at 1030 and pass a large 4-masted sailing vessel anchored just outside our cove. We suspect it is a windjammer cruise as there is a crowd of tourist looking people onboard watching and waving at us as we pass.

We see feeding birds and catch 3 more tuna before heading to Nassau.



We arrive in Nassau Harbour around 1530 passing the US Coastguard sailing clipper, "Eagle", at the wharf as we enter. Ralph suspects it is in transit to the "Tall Ship" festival in Jacksonville later this month. Once again we choose Nassau Harbour Club & Marina to stay. The facilities are nice and it is situated close enough to most supply points to be convenient... a Winn Dixie is just across the street as is a DQ and Dominos Pizza. An Outback Steakhouse is just several blocks away too. Almost like being back home in Tampa offering a little break from the slim pickings of the "out-islands".

We have dinner at the Outback and return to the Arcon for a good nights rest.

Engine Readings:  
Main – 4346  
Gen-Set – 5396

### **6/07/04 – Monday - Nassau**

We spend the day in Nassau sightseeing and re-provisioning. Ralph and Fred take a walking tour of the



city. I find that for \$10/day I can get Wi-Fi internet access directly from the boat so I take the opportunity to communicate with some of our friends

& family. We also learn that there is a US Navy research base on Andros, our next port of call, and send them email asking if it would be possible for us to get access to their commissary. Tommy is a retired Army officer and we thought it worth a shot. However, we did not receive a reply so assume it not possible.

Tommy, while checking the water filter on the port engine, discovers a broken mounting bracket holding its alternator in place. It is a lucky find... something that could have caused us grief in a very short time. He removes the bracket and James finds a place that can weld it for us. Twenty dollars and a little labor and everything is right again.

### ***6/08/04 – Tuesday - Nassau to Fresh Creek, Andros***

After refueling, we leave Nassau Harbor at 0900 for the 20 or so mile trip to Fresh Creek on [Andros](#). The seas are moderate but by this time we are used to the rock-n-roll of the Arcon. Fishing is slow as we catch only one skip jack tuna before our early arrival at 1400.

Engine Readings:  
Main – 4351  
Gen-Set – 5407



We find dockage at the [Lighthouse Yacht Club & Marina](#) right inside the mouth of Fresh Creek from which the community gets its name. Actually, Fresh Creek is 2 communities one on each side of the Creek... Andros Town on the south and Coakley Town on the north shore of the creek. It gets its

name from the fresh water creek that runs back into the wilderness of Andros for some forty miles where it joins up with some fresh water lakes. The locals say that if you head upstream far enough that you can drink the water surrounding your boat. Fresh Creek is also home to the [Androsia](#)

[Batik Factory](#), which several of our guide books recommended visiting, and happens to be only a short distance from the marina. Fred, Ralph and I did so while Tommy and James take off for longer walking tours elsewhere.

James investigates an old light house while Tommy takes a longer walk across the bridge over to Coakley Town. Tommy returns with some exceptionally beautiful conch shells.



We end the afternoon soaking in the clubs pool and sampling the local drinks. As the sun sets, the dingy is lowered and we motor across the creek to have supper at [Hank's Place](#)... recommended by one of the locals. Good food but the service was definitely "I land Time". It takes two plus hours to get our food after which we return to the Arcon for the night.

### **6/09/04 – Wednesday - Fresh Creek, Andros to Chub Cay**

Oil:  
Port – ¾ Qt  
Star – ¾ Qt  
Gen-Set – 1/3 Qt.

We depart Fresh Creek at 0930 into a freshening breeze. Yesterday we received some local fishing information that sounded good. Both Yellow Fin Tuna and Dolphin were being caught near a Buoy maintained by the US Navy and we intend to check it out. It is located in the Tongue of the Ocean in the general direction we are taking to Chub Cay. As we approach its location, "Fish On" is yelled by someone and this starts one of the best fishing days we will have. Over a period of about 2 hours, we have many hook-ups and land 3 large (one very large) dolphin. Several more are brought to the boat but not



landed. It was a windy day and the boat is all over the place but we don't care... we're catching fish, and big ones at that. For a while, we have the place to ourselves but before we continued on, several other boats join us. We do not catch any of the yellow fin tuna, but do see one boat apparently fishing for them using [kites](#). We may have to look into trying this on a future trip as one fisherman at Fresh Water claims it has become a preferred method for catching big tuna.

We arrive at the Chub Cay Club Marina a little after 1600. It has been a rough trip and all are in need of a little relaxation. However, we still have 3 "big" fish to clean before kicking-back...



James and I clean the fish and then relax for awhile in the club pool. I cook beef stroganoff for supper and we have a relaxing evening sitting on the poop-deck listening to music before turning in for the evening. I have brought my XM radio on the trip and we have good music available to us throughout the trip. We do have some dissension among the crew however as to just what is "good" music... we sort of switch around among the "oldies", "island music" and "acoustic rock" channels. Occasionally we tune into Fox and CNN for a news update... but not too often. It really is good to get away from that stuff for a while.

### ***6/10/04 – Thursday - Chub Cay to Bimini***

Our original plan has us leaving here and heading to Freeport on Grand Bahama Island. However, after listening to the weather report we decide to change the plans and head back to Bimini for a crossing to either Miami or Ft. Lauderdale. I think we are all starting to "smell the barn". We have a freezer full of fish "home" is calling.

We pull out of the Chub Cay Club Marina at 0800 and have an uneventful trip across the banks to Bimini. We did stop to fish around some birds located just before entering the banks but didn't get any



strikes after a short time so we move on. We arrive at Bimini at 1650 and dock at Bimini Bluewater Marina for the night. As we approach the entrance to Bimini we overtake and pass the trimaran we had med at Hoffmans Cay. Later that evening we met its crew having dinner and drinks at the "End of the World Saloon." This place is a real hole-in-the-wall, but they do offer excellent food at a reasonable price. We also ran into a all-girl fishing team that was in Bimini for some fishing tournament. They are very interested in what fish we have caught and where. They claim to be the only all-girl team in the tournament and have high hopes of winning a prize.



### **6/11/04 – Friday – Bimini to Jupiter Inlet**

We awake to a beautiful morning with little wind and head out of Bimini at 0830. The seas are flat enough that we could head directly for Stewart and entrance to the Okeechobee waterway but some of the crew wants to get a look at the intercostal waterway between Ft. Lauderdale and Stewart so we cross to Ft. Lauderdale. It is the calmest crossing I have ever made and we note a very large number of boats of all sizes heading for Bimini during our passage. We arrive early at Port Everglades near Ft. Lauderdale surrounded by a large flotilla of local boaters. It is a madhouse and we are sorry we have decided to travel the intercoastal waterway. Not only do we have to contend with the heavy boat traffic, but there are numerous "no wake" zones and low bridges that require us to lower our outriggers... some even requiring a wait before opening. This has been a mistake. Somewhere around Pompano Beach, we find a small pass ([Hillsboro Inlet](#)) and re-enter the Atlantic where we run outside to Lake Worth near Palm Beach where we once again go inside hoping to find a place to anchor for the night. I had a mental picture of Lake Worth being a secluded place that would offer a peaceful shelter for the night. Not so. Lake Worth is very busy with way too much traffic and a proliferation of mooring buoys (mostly occupied). The sun is low, but we still have time before dark so we continue on. After leaving Lake Worth, the intercoastal traffic lessens and we look for a place to anchor. We do not have good charts for the intercoastal waterway and the few places we check out are all too shallow for the Arcon. As dusk disappears, we dock at [Jupiter Seaport Marina](#) at Jupiter Inlet.

Engine Readings:  
Main – 4377

Gen-Set – 5448

It is late when we return from Schooner's Restaurant where we had an excellent dinner. It's been a great trip, but it is good to be back in the USA.

**6/12-13/04 – Saturday - Sunday –Jupiter Inlet to Tampa**



The trip from Jupiter Inlet through the [Okeechobee Waterway](#) and back to Tampa is uneventful. We spend Saturday night just on the west side of the W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam close to Ft. Myers.

Engine Readings:  
Main – 4390  
Gen-Set – 5472

Sunday, we are underway early hoping to get to the Gulf before the Sunday boat traffic out of Ft. Myers gets too heavy. We use the Intercostal Waterway and exit into the Gulf at Boca Grande. As expected, Boca Grande Pass is wall-to-wall boats fishing for tarpon. The



The Gulf is like a sheet of glass and will remain that way to Tampa Bay. As we head up the bay to our home port, we are greeted by a large thunder storm moving toward us from the south east. It is a race. Will we get to dock before it or not? As we pull into [Imperial Yacht Center](#), and start to back the boat into our slip, the storm hits with heavy winds and a wall of rain. It's

“Crash-Boom” time too. We have spent almost a month in the Bahamas and with the exception of the storm that “almost” hit us at Hoffmans Cay, this is our only serious contact with a active thunder storm. James, who is handling the bow lines as we back into the slip, is the only one to get wet. The rest of us are under cover of the slip’s shed. Arrival time is 1730 and we have one tired crew. After agreeing to meet back at the boat tomorrow morning for a general cleanup, we take off for home... that is everyone but Ralph. He will spend two more nights onboard before heading home to Georgia.

Total Trip Mileage: 1900 Nautical Miles

Trip Duration: 27 Days

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Additional on-line photos can be found [here](#). Interested in other Bahama Trip Logs including that of an earlier trip of the Arcon? [Check out this site](#).

### Trek of the Arcon - May/June, 2004

