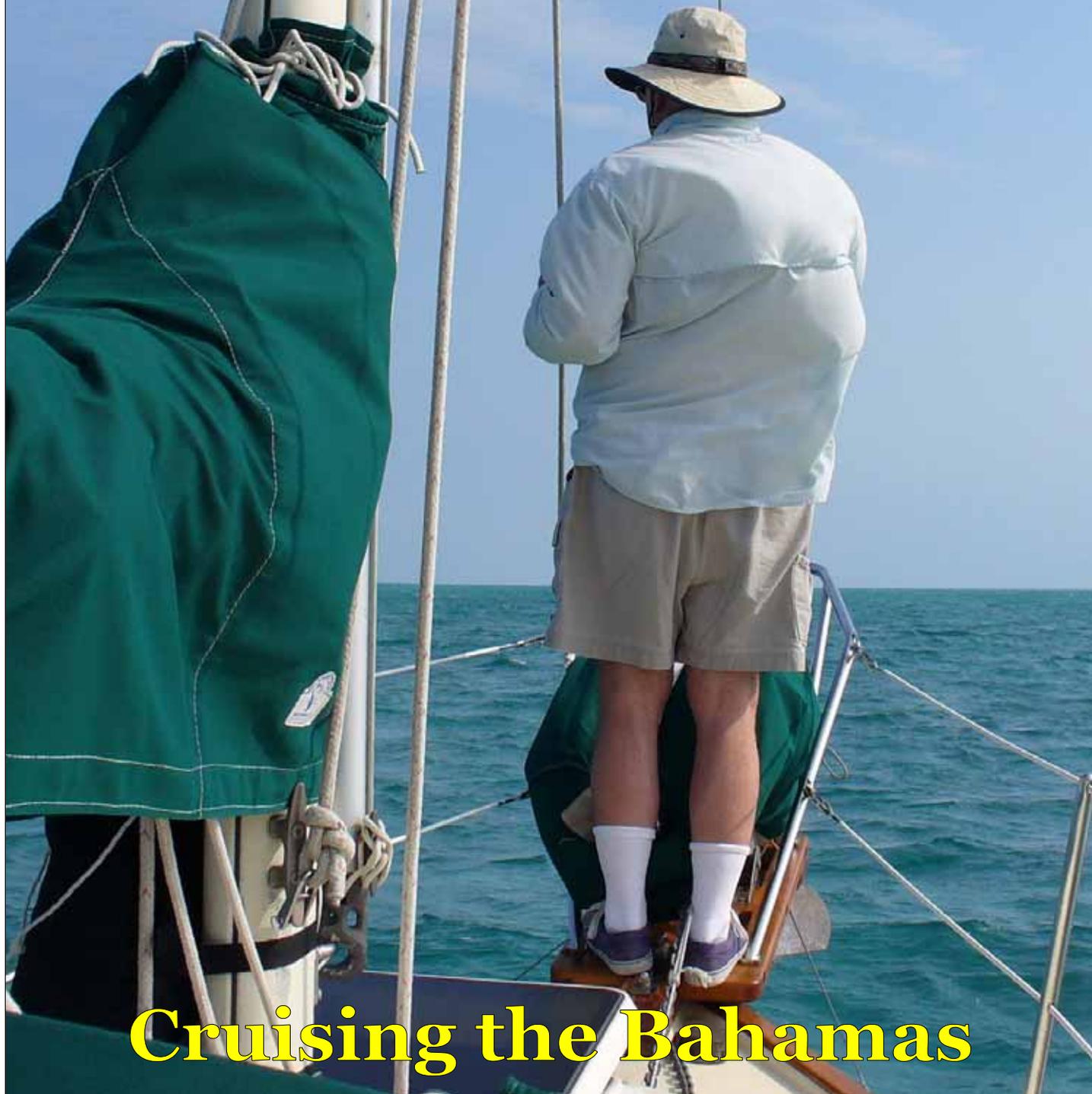


Flicka Friends

Spring 2007



Vol. 12, No 1



Cruising the Bahamas



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Beaver Island Rendezvous



BEN MAIN, Jr. docked at the Beaver Island Marina.

Photo: Tom Davison © 2007

Front Cover

Doug looking for land while crossing the Bahama Bank.
Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

Back Cover

Sailing down to Little Harbor.
Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

By Tom Davison

So far, only two Flickas are planning on attending the Flicka gathering at Beaver Island over the weekend of June 22-24, 2007. Tom Grimes will be sailing **BEN MAIN, Jr.** up from Suttons Bay, Michigan and Bill Overman will sail s/y **MOJO** across Lake Michigan from Oconto, Wisconsin.

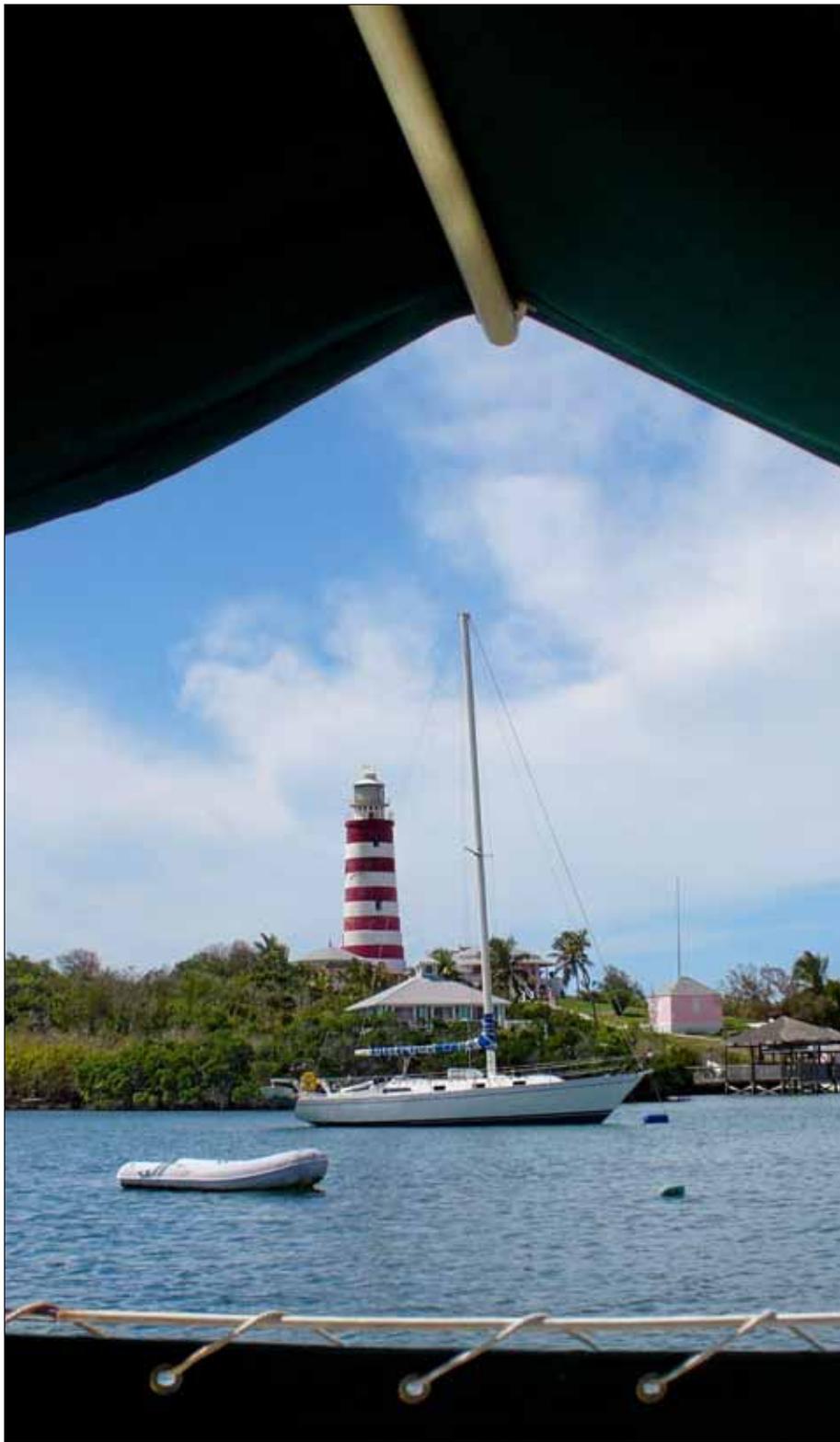
With just two sailboats attending the gathering will be a simple event. Even if you can't sail your Flicka and you live in the area, you might consider driving to the gathering. The Emerald Isle travels to Beaver Island several times a day. If you would like to join this small group of Flicka captains and friends, please let me know:

tom@flicka20.com





Anchor Time



The view of Hope Town from s/v JUBILEE.
Photo: Bert Felton © 2007

About Flicka Friends

Flicka Friends is a newsletter that is written specifically for the people who own, crew aboard, or are interested in the Flicka, a twenty foot sailing vessel designed by Bruce P. Bingham.

Based on the Newport Boats of Block Island Sound, this little ship has been built from various materials from the 1970's until 2002. This includes Flickas constructed from plans obtained directly from Bruce's California office. About 400 sets of plans were sold. According to Bruce Bingham, many Flickas can be found in New Zealand, Australia, and Sweden.

A number of hulls were built by Nor*Star and some were completed by Westerly Marine. The manufacturer of the bulk of the class is Pacific Seacraft who built 434 hulls in California.

Flicka Friends is published on a quarterly, with issues being posted to the internet in March, June, September and December. Articles and photographs are welcome and encouraged.

You can download the current issue as well as back issues of Flicka Friends from the Flicka Home Page:

www.flicka20.com

Publisher: Dennis Pratt
685 Spring Street, # 191
Friday Harbor, WA 98250
(360) 370-5133
dennis@flicka20.com

Editor: Tom Davison
P.O. Box 462
Empire, MI 49630
(231) 228-7044
tom@flicka20.com

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Finding A Flicka



My new Flicka, s/y JUBILEE is ready to be towed home for the first time.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

By Frank Durant

The **JUBILEE** story really began about twenty-five years ago. I have always been a “minimalist” and attracted to small, well designed things, be it cars, homes or boats. After starting to sail in 1977, I became hooked and naturally my attention went to well-designed small craft.

Being attracted to both small and traditional looking vessels, I was instantly drawn to the Flicka. After ordering a brochure, it became clear that I loved the design but simply could not afford one.

Now, fast forward many years and many boats. With enough funds to purchase and time to sail, you can appreciate my excitement when I read that Pacific Seacraft Corporation was reintro-

ducing the Flicka. They needed a minimum of five orders and mine was number three or four. I was disappointed to find out that it was not to be.

With that in mind you can imagine my delight in finding **JUBILEE**, hull # 418. A gentleman purchased her from the original owner but never launched her in the year or so he owned her.

When I went to look at **JUBILEE**, a pristine Flicka was found with every option I would have ordered and more. She had lightning ground, rub strakes, teak rail caps and eyebrows, oil lamps, a full suit of sails and a trailer, even the green stripe I wanted.

I also contacted the original owner. Her husband had passed on in 1988. She found their Irwin 30 too much and ordered **JUBILEE** in 1993.

Her husband had said “If I ever order the boat I want, the boat name will be **JUBILEE**.” I assured her the name would stay. She told me that it was freshwater sailed on a lake in Iowa and stored inside in the off season.

After the deal was done, it took over a year to clean house boat wise and figure out whether **JUBILEE** would become a “West Coast” boat or a “Bahamas” boat. In the end, the Bahamas won.

Towing JUBILEE South

I prepared for trailering her down to Florida by having the trailer brakes and bearings serviced. While the trip down went better than planned, the trailer weight could really be felt in the mountains of Pennsylvania and on through to South Carolina. After the mountains, the flat country was welcome.



Starting From Florida



A new dodger, weather cloths, and sail cover were installed.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



A table converts the cockpit into a dining room.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

Indiantown, Florida

Upon arriving at the marina at Indian-town, Florida, I went about installing the dodger and storm curtains, waxing and generally setting things up. Launch day came with the usual anxiety. Things went well and the little diesel fired up instantly! A concern as it had now sat for over three years.

My first day on the St. Lucie Canal took me to Stuart. I anchored out in a familiar spot. The next day, I opted to motor the Intracoastal Waterway to West Palm as the inlet at Stuart is badly silted and local knowledge is recommended. Once at West Palm, I pulled **JUBILEE** up to the fuel docks. It took only two and one-half gallons to fill the tank, fuel consumption that I was very pleased with.

The weather forecast for the morning called for four to five foot waves and a south breeze of fifteen to twenty knots. For a Gulf Stream crossing, this wasn't too bad. The weather as forecasted for the next week, would deteriorate, so my departure would be first thing in the morning.

Departure was very early, at first light. Once outside of the inlet, things got bumpy, very bumpy. The south wind turned to southeast and was on the bow. Because you must head southeast to make east in the gulf stream, I opted to motorsail.

After a couple hours of motorsailing into six to eight foot waves, the engine stumbled, and then quit. I decided check the filter and hove-to. **JUBILEE** hove-to extremely well under just the main sail. She sailed forward too much with the backwinded jib. Her motion was great hove-to and felt very safe. After removing the cockpit floor, I found that both the Racor and fuel filter were full of water, not good. I drained both, primed with clean fuel and it started but ran poorly. Fearing damage, I aborted the crossing attempt.



Fuel Injector Blues

The trip out in the morning was a beat. I found **JUBILEE** quite tender in the twenty knot winds even with the main and jib reefed while beating. Cracking her off just a few degrees changed everything; it was a different boat. On the return trip to Stuart, **JULIBEE** made five and eight-tenths to six and two-tenths knots on very comfortable close reach.

Fuel Injector Blues

Once back and anchored, I set about accessing things. After the fuel tank was pumped out, a cup of water was found in the bottom. New fuel filters were installed, and all of the fuel lines and the injector were bled.

While the Yanmar IGM10 engine fired up and ran, the operation was just not the same. I found people extremely helpful in Stuart. The closest marina offered considerable advice and encouragement. They were not diesel mechanics, so they made a number of calls for me. Ultimately, they arranged for me to see the “Yanmar guys.”

I pulled in to find they build mega sportfishing boats and sell generators as big as **JUBILEE**. As a Canadian, well away from home and broke down, walking in there made me feel vulnerable. What would this cost? How long would the repair take?

The “Yanmar guys” had their head mechanic come out to explain how to remove the injector and injector pump, sold me a shop manual at one-half price, told me where to take them to get rebuilt so as not to go thru a marina or dealer. Then they drove me back to my dinghy! Talk about southern hospitality.

The injector rebuild guys were great as well and got both pieces done in less than twenty-four hours at a fair price. Back at the boat, I put humpty-dumpty back together again and surprise.....IT RAN! Felt great doing it myself.



JUBILEE anchored in Stuart, Florida.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Fuel Tank access aboard s/y JUBILEE

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



That Friday Thing



This ugly system kept water out of the diesel fuel tank.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Atlantic sunrise over the port side on the way to the Bahamas.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

As the weather forecasts were terrible, I stayed anchored in Manatee Pocket near Stuart. Some other nice people were also anchored out waiting for the right conditions. Since it was dinghy distance to four eateries and a West Marine, life was good.

That Friday Thing

Friday's forecast called for fifteen to twenty knot winds and four foot seas. While there was that darn Friday departure thing, it was the only window for another week. Despite the weather, I planned to leave Lake Worth Inlet in the morning with four other sailboats for a Gulf Stream Crossing.

When the alarm went off, the winds seemed stronger than I thought they would be. I checked VHF weather. It was unchanged. Still not feeling right, I called home to Judy in Canada at 4:45 a.m. and asked her to pull up the weather site on the computer. This was my only option since I was out of wireless range. She did so without complaint (bless her!), and also found the prediction unchanged. The crossing would continue with a reefed main and jib, just in case.

About five nautical miles out, I shook out the reefs in the jib and then the main. **JUBILEE** happily sailed along. The course is 99° magnetic but I steered 138° to compensate for the Gulf Stream and leeward drift with the south wind. I figured it would be too easy to come up a bit near the end but no fun trying to sail south against the wind and stream if I overshot it.

I have done the Gulf Stream several times now and know that:

1. It is not always the same, and
2. NEVER underestimate it.

By late morning I had a reef back in the main as the winds built. By 11:15 a.m., I had the jib reefed again. The VHF



Gulf Stream Crossing

came on with a marine warning at 11:30 a.m., tornados had touched down in Florida. The front is moving to eastern Florida, offshore by 12:30 a.m. and the forecast included a warning about waterspouts. They called for all small craft to head for shelter. This was not what a guy wants to hear out there. Feeling very vulnerable, I figured it was best to keep sailing east rather than try to return and possibly sail back into it.

Another sailing vessel approached heading east. I radioed him, he was unaware of the warning. He too agreed to keep going. Seas were now in the six to eight foot range and it was getting bumpy and wet. **JUBILEE** was about thirty-five nautical miles from the Florida coast with about twenty-two nautical miles remaining to reach West End on Grand Bahama. Conditions continued to build.

The last boat to pass was a forty footer; it only made the West End about forty-minutes ahead of me. I could see his sails right up to him taking them down. With hundreds of miles of fetch and twenty-eight knot winds with gusts over thirty, the seas were in the ten foot range. So much for forecasts.

Grand Bahama Island

We made it! **JUBILEE** handled the big stuff very well. At no time did I have concerns about the boat or my safety. Flicka's ARE a fine little ship.

The feeling you get making landfall after a crossing like that is hard to explain. You feel kind of beat up, but after the boat is re-organized and cleaned up, followed by a shower and a calming rum at the bar, all seems well again.

Being at the marina at West End gives you full resort use including the nice beach and a swimming pool. Old Bahama Bay resort is an easy place to hang out in with both a formal and casual restaurant, bar, pools, exercise



The conditions on the Gulf Stream crossing before it got bad.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



JUBILEE at the West End, Grand Bahama Island.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Grand Bahama Island



The use of the hotel swimming pool was included as well.
 Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Doug examining Allen/Pensacola's famous "signing trees."
 Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

room and beautiful beach with a snorkeling trail. They have a greatly reduced weekly rate, so if you're planning on being at the marina for more than three days ask for it.

I hung out waiting for my trailer sailing buddy Doug to fly in to join me for a week of cruising. It was nice to have company after single handing for a month. After Doug arrived, we made a trip into Freeport to pick up supplies and we were off.

The wind was nearly on the nose to get to Great Sale Cay, so we motor-sailed. It was a destination-bound type of day so, other than good conversation, the crossing of the Bahama bank was uneventful. We arrived at Great Sale long after dark, anchoring in the southwest bay.

The morning showed everything to be just like the chart, always a neat feeling after pulling in late. Great Sale had a United States radar tracking station way back and some remains are still there. Better yet, there is a beautiful long beach on the west side. We left early the next morning with plans to make Allan/Pensacola before dark. Again the prevailing East-North-East winds were on the nose and motorsailing was called for.

Upon arriving to Allen/Pensacola Cay, we anchored in the west end of the protected waters. With her shallow draft, **JUBILEE** was able to tuck in farther than the two larger boats already there. We were early enough to walk across the island to the north beach where there are several trees with flotsam signed and attached by other cruisers. There are poison wood trees here and elsewhere on the islands, so you must be careful which foliage you touch. Allens/Pensacola was originally two islands until a hurricane moved enough material around to join them. There are the U.S. Tracking Site ruins here as well.



Allens/Pensacola Cay

The next day we took **JUBILEE** down to the east end to an extremely protected hurricane hole. There is one area in the narrow entrance that is quite shallow and you have to hug the port side going in. Once in, you are in about a two-acre pond surrounded by Mangrove-covered hills and about ten feet of water. The bottom had good holding.

Once we arrived at Allens/Pensacola, it always feels like "I've made it." This is where the relaxed cruising begins. We took the dinghy out and went around the back of the island to explore Big and Little Murray Cays. I definitely felt like a kid again walking on around these little islands and swimming off their beaches.

We set the alarm early to get a good start for the day with the high tide. We were bound for Manjack Cay. Once clearing and falling off to our course, we had a wonderful beam reach. The sun was rising and there were nice winds with great views. This was the kind of mornings you dream of.

When the wind started to die, we considered pulling out the cruising chute. Then the little puffs kept growing until we were greatly overpowered on a broad reach with a ton of weather helm. Our peak speed was seven and one-tenths on the knot meter. This was easily cured after we dropped the main and settled into a nice five and two-tenths to five and eight-tenths knot reach for the remainder of the trip.

Later, we found out that winds were twenty-five to thirty knots with gusts way higher. It was nice to see ManJack come into view as it has always been a favorite island. There are three nice bays on the Sea of Abaco side, a pretty lagoon on the northwest end, and a mile long beach on the ocean reef side. Great diving is had all around with two wrecks on one bay and many reefs, some very close and shallow enough to be easily snorkeled.



Sunset from Manjack Cay.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



An early morning departure from Allen/Pensacola Cay.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Visiting Bill & Leslie



JUBILEE moored in Black Sound, Green Turtle Cay
Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

A Florida couple, Bill and Leslie, settled here in 1992 and built a home. Since then, they have continued to improve their piece of paradise with gardens and fruit trees that has resulted in a park like setting. The view from their veranda is the big bay where most cruisers anchor. The atmosphere is wonderful as you compare notes and finds with others on the beaches. Knowing I would be back, it was off to show Doug Green Turtle Cay.

Our time was somewhat limited at Manjack Cay as a storm was forecasted from the West-South-West with gale winds and would leave our normally protected anchorage exposed.

After exploring the back of the island and Doug getting a grand tour of Bill and Leslie's estate, we were off to the protection of Black Sound at Green Turtle Cay. Green Turtle is a beautiful island that has may ocean beaches, an outer exposed anchorage as well as two inner protected anchorages: White Sound and Black Sound.

White Sound has decent holding if you anchor and a limited number of mooring balls as well as two marinas. Both marinas have a deal whereby your dockage fee is credited towards purchases at their restaurants or fuel docks. Both are very nice resort type set-ups with excellent docks and facilities.

I chose Black Sound simply because it is within walking distance to the little community of New Plymouth. There is a ferryboat, based out of New Plymouth, that goes to various islands and that makes regular runs over to the mainland for airport service at Treasure Cay which has a population of about three hundred and fifty people. New Plymouth has several small grocery stores, two hardware stores and a handful of funky island type bars. After settling in and bar hopping, Doug had to take a ferry to the airport as his week aboard JUBILEE was up.



View from Bill & Leslie's estate.
Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Rage Sea and the Whale

The next day the wind came as expected at thirty knots, with gusts over forty! The ill protected sound was solid whitecaps. It sure felt good being on a concrete mooring rather than at anchor.

With the strong winds that day, all were afraid to leave their boats alone in Black Sound in case of lines parting do to chaff or other boats dragging down on them. The only entertainment was listening to marine channel 16. It was very busy with many frantic radio calls as boats anchored broke loose. This sure helped pass the time, but I was glad to not be among them.

The next morning, I headed out from Green Turtle. Having never been east of there, this was new water for me. To travel east means going outside around "The Whale." This passage can be deadly if the wind is Northeast as breaking waves build up quickly. The locals call this a "rage sea" and it appears to be properly named. There is also a shallow draft inside passage called "Don't Rock Passage" that has only one meter of water at low tide. The danger is that, if the outside is rough, even the inside is rolling with the bottom of the swells being less than the one meter.

As I approached "The Whale," I realized how it got its name. Breaking waves hitting the island would shoot straight skyward giving the appearance of a whale blowing from a distance. The inside passage was also rolling and, although it was near high tide, I figured that there was no need to take the risk. So I turned back and had a wonderful beam reach all the way back to ManJack Cay. Feeling pleased with my decision, I sailed right up to where I anchored for the night.

A great evening was spent with two other couples in the cockpit of a beautifully finished Morgan 38. Sometimes age and wisdom pay off. Not only did I



The view from Nippers Bar.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



This is what the locals call a "Rage Sea."

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Hope Town



JUBILEE off the Crooked Dock in Little Harbor
Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

enjoy the company but was granted a calm passage all the way to Guanna Cay the following day.

Guanna Cay has both a harbour and anchorage offering protection from the North and East. After anchoring, Dan, another singlehander, and I were off exploring. We ended up at Nipper's Bar and, after only two of their rum drinks, felt it best to stagger back to our boats rather than risk a third.

The wind was perfect the next day for a reach down to Hope Town. Sailing in the vibrant green/blue water, with the bottom visible at all times, takes a little getting used to at first, especially for Chesapeake Bay sailors that have near zero visibility.

The Hope Town lighthouse can be seen for miles with its red and white stripes towering over one hundred feet. The entrance to this well protected harbour is properly marked. Once inside, you are treated to one of the most magical places I have had the pleasure of exploring. It is small with no real anchoring available. An abundance of mooring balls are to be had at \$15 per night.

The little community is very well-kept with clean, narrow streets, cute one and one-half story homes brightly painted in pastel colors, and all with grand flower beds. It is literally a sensual place with the sound of waves breaking on the reef just over the hill, beautiful flowers, colorful homes, fragrances of the many bushes, the small harbour full of sailboats swinging on moorings with the brightly striped lighthouse as a backdrop. Hope Town is cruisers' heaven and I spent eight days! In my opinion, this is a required stop for any cruise in the Abacos.

After nearly two months alone, Judy was flying in to join me at Marsh Harbour. I hated to leave this little paradise but was excited to see Judy. I slipped my mooring and was again treated to a five



The lighthouse at Hope Town can be seen for miles.
Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Marsh Harbor

knot plus reach to Marsh Harbour. This is the third largest community in the Bahamas. The harbour is large and full of every size and type of sailing craft you can imagine. The bottom offers extremely good holding, which is a blessing because of the number of boats that are so close together. As usual, **JUBILEE** was the smallest anchored there.

After anchoring, I was greeted by A.O. Halsey sailing a Lyle Hess designed 26 foot (yes, 26 foot) channel cutter **POLARUS JACK**. He and his wife have sailed all through the Caribbean and are wonderful people. The boat has twice made it to the pages of cruising world magazine. A.O. was quite impressed with **JUBILEE** and hopped aboard for a look.

Being a main business center, Marsh Harbor has a lot of commercial vessels as well with their own clearly-marked entrance/exit channel. This is the place to provision if you are low on supplies. There are chandleries, hardware stores, and supermarkets. I found the bustle too much after the calm of the other islands. Once Judy arrived, we spent a day getting stocked up and had a nice meal out.

We left the next morning bound for Little Harbour. The wind gods were shining on **JUBILEE** as we were treated to a fast run all the way down.

I'd never used a preventer before but brought an extra main sheet system off another boat for just a time like this. With the main flattened and secure to port and jib poled out to starboard, we had the nicest, most stress free run of my sailing life.

While there is a dogleg enroute, if you have shallow draft you can take a short-cut across a sandy bank to save time. Again, the Flicka proved to be a great Bahamas cruiser as we crossed the four foot bank without incident.



POLARUS JACK and JUBILEE in Marsh Harbor.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Judy playing cards; remember this is a vacation.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Little Harbor



Judy with Dan at Pete's Pub in Little Harbor.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

Once we arrived at the entrance to Little Harbour, **JUBILEE** was praised again as it was near low tide and the channel in is barely over 1 meter at low water. A Morgan O.I.41 was anchored just inside the entrance and, after meeting the Captain, I asked why he didn't anchor farther in. He replied "This is the best seat in the house to watch all the boats go aground." I guess we disappointed him.

Little Harbour is a small anchorage that is pretty well at the bottom of the Abaco chain. It is used as a jumping off point to cross south to Eluethra or the Exumas. The harbour itself is small and houses a art gallery owned by Pete of "Pete's Pub" fame. The little open-air bar/restaurant is famous but Pete's Dad was a world class sculptor working with bronze. Pete himself is also a very gifted artist. A gallery holding sculptures by Pete, his late father, as well as art created by other locals, is offered for sale.



Next to Pete's bar is his late father's art gallery.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

This is a quaint, off the beaten path kind of place and it is easy to spend a few days here. Just to the east of the harbour entrance is a magical reef to snorkel. Only sixty feet from the beach and beginning in only three feet of water, it offers vibrantly colored fan coral, countless types of multi-colored reef fish, rays, and barracuda. The reef will give you the Jacques Cousteau feeling in only three to eight feet of water! A must see if you make it there. We took upper body wetsuits and got out only when tired; we were never cold.

Judy had not yet seen Hope Town and I couldn't wait to show her. After three great days at Little Harbour, we were off again. The Morgan O.I.41 was waiting to follow us out. We were greeted by twenty-five knots of winds and a close reach. This area is fairly exposed to the Atlantic with only a few small low islands offering any protection, so the wave action was exciting for the beginning of this passage.



Back to Hope Town

We had fun with a reefed main and jib as the larger Morgan unfurled their genoa, but they furled it back in and motored. It took them seven or eight miles to finally crawl past us as **JUBILEE** scooted along at hull speed. Once we got to the dogleg, the Morgan fell off to go around but we kept sailing across the bar.

When we reached deeper water on the other side, **JUBILEE** was now again way ahead and the Morgan never did manage to pass us again. I was grinning ear to ear. You have to love shallow draft. Soon the Hope Town light house became visible. We dropped sails at the entrance to motor in.

I had fun showing Judy around Hope Town. She quickly caught on to the magic of this little place. We spent five days exploring by dinghy and walking. One day we rented bikes (\$10) and toured the whole island. The north end is beautiful and has many small anchorages that don't show well on a chart.

Sailing is alive and well here with a sailing club that has a large dinghy dock right in town for us cruisers. They have a fleet of optimist dinghies that they host races with for the youth. We watched one race and it was fun to see the little boats darting back and forth. This is a clean, friendly, safe, and just simply a beautiful place to spend time.

It was a very difficult place to leave, but after six days we were off again, this time to ManJack Cay. Hard to believe, but once again we were blessed with a fast beam reach all the way there. Don't Rock Passage was fairly calm and we had just a great sail covering the twenty-eight nautical miles in under six hours. Anchoring at ManJack is always a great feeling for Judy and me. We fell in love with the island on our first cruise here five years ago.

At Bill and Leslie's "estate" the plants are multi-colored and peep through the



View from the Hope Town Lighthouse.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



The junior sailors racing their optimists at Hope Town.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Manjack Cay



Judy on the dock at Manjack Cay, Abacos Island.
 Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Exploring Manjack with the new dinghy and engine.
 Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

palms from the veranda, looking out at the boats anchored, gives one a “I’m in paradise” feeling.

I was there after two hurricanes went through in 2004. The place sure looked funny since all the leaves were literally blown off the trees. The surroundings gave you the feeling of being in a hardwood bush during winter but without snow.

The vegetation took a bad hit that year as the last hurricane blew salt water across the island but had very little rain with it to wash off the salt. It was nice to see things so vibrant again. We snorkeled the two wrecks in the bay and I put two rays up without realizing I had swam over them. After the crocodile hunter’s death, it felt a bit uneasy to say the least. There were two more in a short distance, but we gave them a wide berth as we swam around.

For those who have never dove in the Bahamas it is hard to imagine the visibility. Up home on the river with our tea-colored water, visibility is around fifteen feet with the sun out and the light fades quickly with depth. Down here, colors rush at you from below and on a good day you can see over eighty feet. We are both certified divers but opted not to take tanks on this cruise and really didn’t miss much as there is so much to see in shallow water.

With our new bigger dinghy and a three and one-half horsepower engine replacing our twenty-three year old two horsepower, we explored more. Manjack has three bays on the southwest side and a lagoon setting at its west end; all have beautiful beaches. The north side, facing the protecting reef and the Atlantic, has a beach over two miles long. Add in the protected inside shallows, many nature trails, and you can see why we enjoy our time there.

A few years back I noticed a huge increase in boats anchored here. Upon



My Fiftieth Birthday

asking Leslie why, she replied, “We have wifi now.” I’ll turn it off tonight and see.” Sure enough the next night saw the usual four to six boats anchored out front. Yep, the power of the internet is even felt at a remote Abaco out island!

After a few days exploring and visiting, we were again off on a beam reach to Green Turtle. My fiftieth birthday was only a couple of days away and sadly our time here in the Abacos was quickly winding down. Judy was treated well by the wind gods as every sail since her arrival was a fast reach or run.

Our exciting reach to Green Turtle Cay was over far too quickly as we fired up the Yanmar to take us through the dog-legged shallow entrance to Black Sound. Where else but the Bahamas will you find that the main man at a very small marina is also a “Bahamian Rock Star.” Kevin, or “Super K” as he’s known, greeted us with his usual charming smile.

We were off to visit the shopkeepers in New Plymouth that we have come to know over the years. This is a great little settlement where smiles and greetings are the norm as you walk around.

On my birthday we rented a golf cart to tour around and ended up in White Sound for dinner. I simply can’t get used to the “drive on the left thing” and at times wondered if I’d see fifty-one. Our last day before Judy flew home was spent walking and exploring.

At 11:00 a.m. the next morning Judy was off on the island ferry for the short hop across to Treasure Cay Airport on her way home. This was the end of ten weeks of cruising Florida and the Bahamas and I simply did not want this to end. This was our best cruise to date.

There was work to do: **JUBILEE** had to be hauled and stored. Abaco Yacht



Judy enjoying the lagoon on the west end of Manjack Cay.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Enjoying my fiftieth birthday at the Green Turtle Club.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Marsh Harbor



Preparing s/y JUBILEE for storage.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

Services is an old family-run yard and is very professional. I kept a boat here that survived unmarked through both 2004 hurricanes. The yard is fenced and paved. They power washed **JUBILEE**, put her on blocks with four stands, and placed a wooden cradle around her. I felt good about her safety. Another day was spend doing touch up work. The wood received Cetol, the deck and hull were washed, the tanks were cleaned, the engines “winterized,” sails were stowed, and after de-rigging, I was off.

Flicka Sailing

Is twenty feet enough?.....YES! I was totally comfortable singlehanded **JUBILEE**, anchoring, docking and sail handling while alone. The boat is very comfortable, always felt secure, and was a hoot to sail on anything except pinching on a beat. I have never had a boat that SO many people photographed. It routinely drew the most attention at every harbour even though it was always the smallest.

The shallow draft is great! I've always had shallow draft boats and, if a Florida Keys or Bahama cruise is in the works, our little Flickas are perfect. It opens up so much more area and is way less stress sailing in “skinny water.”

I used the icebox for dry storage although I found it held ice extremely well. I had purchased a small Engel refrigerator and we used it for beer, pop and a few other items. These are truly low draw units and I was quite pleased with it. While alone I used nothing. Ice tea mix with out ice, coffee and red wine were fine.

Funny, it was only the last few weeks of my ten week plus cruise that I truly mastered the head and could both enter and exit with my shorts up. Anyone with an enclosed head Flicka knows what I mean. Maybe it was the twenty pounds that I lost walking and swimming.



JUBILEE is stored with stands and wooden supports.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Cleaning For Storage

The v-berth really is ample. Judy also came away very impressed with the Flicka. The layout simply works. The ventilation is great, its bright below and the lockers under the V-berth consume more than you'd expect.

Judy found that sweet spot on the fore deck with her back resting on the forward end of the cabin. This is the best seat in the house while cruising!

Equipment

Some thoughts on the equipment needed for this trip: on our first cruise, we purchased too much stuff, possibly a common mistake. I should make it clear that I have come to embrace simplicity and a minimalist mentality. I would assume most reading this have too or you'd be on a Beneteau site.

I have the same old tiny CP150 chart plotter I've now had on three boats. I mounted it because I own it but didn't use it. I have large charts and simply used my \$99 Garmin and my tattered explorer chart booklet "Near Bahamas." On the next tour, I'll need a new one. Since they are now waterproof, it could be my last purchase.

The all important weather forecasts can be had on SSB receiver with Chris Parker, local 1350 FM at 8:30 a.m., Cruisers Net VHF Channel 68 at 8:15 a.m. or on Barometer-Bob.com at any of the many places you can pick up the internet via a wifi connection.

There's always N.O.A.A. for crossing information. A good VHF, a handheld GPS, and a laptop is all that's really needed. Take spare connectors for your VHF antenna as they seem to corrode and short out with the salt wind.

My anchoring equipment was a twenty-two pound Delta fast set anchor with a twenty-five feet chain. It was quite adequate. I'd feel better with a thirty-five pound and it might be overkill, but the wind seems to blow harder at night



Judy enjoying the best seat in the house.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



The bowsprit with a new coat of Cetol.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Equipment Suggestions



My dodger for the new dinghy.
Photo: Frank Durant © 2007



Each sail was cleaned to remove salt and dried in the sun.
Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

here. My second anchor was a thirteen pound Danforth type mounted on the stern rail; it was never taken off. They really bite in the hard sand if needed.

Your boat is your home with your dinghy becoming your car. De decided to get a ten footer this year. Our new three and one-half horsepower outboard engine had that extra push to go into waves better and more range to explore more while still being easy to put on the rail mount when sailing at twenty-nine pounds.

The weather was perfect for sleeping and most nights were spent with the hatch open, companionway open, no screens, and just one blanket. The storm curtains were worth it as showering in the cockpit was private, not to mention the wind and spray protection.

Final Thoughts

My cruise is over. **JUBILEE**, my home for over ten weeks, has been hauled out and is on the hard at Green Turtle Cay. While I did not make it to all destinations planned, I have no regrets. I learned more about the Bahamas cruising, and myself this year than any cruise ever before. I snorkeled more, waited on the right wind more, talked to both locals and other cruisers more, and developed a island time mentality much better than on previous cruises.

I find that the most difficult thing about cruising is returning home. Back in the real world, my biggest struggle right now is implementing many of the conclusions that I came to. Life does not need not be as complicated and hectic as we make it. Simplicity truly is king. Our choices are ultimately ours! I've learned to say "No" more often this year. I will work less. I will not get as stressed. I will sail more. I will love more. I am truly thankful for my time away. I highly advise everyone to get out there, to disconnect, and sail single-handed for a few months. It will be the



Final Thoughts



Sailing down to Little Harbor aboard s/y JUBILEE.

Photo: Frank Durant © 2007

cheapest and best “psychological therapy” you’ll ever get! This story wouldn’t be complete without mentioning how grateful I am to **JUBILEE**’s original owner. Pat is a very knowledgeable

sailor and specified “the right stuff” when she placed her order. She maintained her in perfect condition and made improvement with thoughtful upgrades. I am thankful to her for the

obvious love she gave this little vessel.

I purchased **JUBILEE** thinking I was buying “the best twenty footer” in the world and after this trip, I know I did.

