



**Postcards from the Caribbean #2**  
**S/V Polyphonic**  
**Jeff Grossman / Jean Levine**  
**and the cats Sarge & Shadow**

**Dateline: Luperon, Dominican Republic**

After a week in Ft. Lauderdale, we finally have all systems full and charged (diesel tanks, jerry cans, outboard gas, batteries banks, propane, water, food lockers, and freezers) and have Fax from Nassau with import licenses for Cats (and that's a whole other story in itself). Though the wind is strong at 20-25knots, it is from the South, and thus fair for the 130 mile sail to Great Stirrup Cay, Berry Islands, Bahamas.

Overall, uneventful sail, though we ended up having to tack a few times to fetch Great Stirrup. We had the usual frequent ship traffic in the Gulf Stream and a lot of cruise ships running around. We talked with the Disney Wonder to confirm our passing. If you've ever heard the expression "lit up like a cruise ship", you'll surely understand seeing these huge ships go by at night lit up like cities.

25 hours later we drop anchor at Great Stirrup Cay! A roly anchorage, but a lot calmer than the beat we just made! The Cats did not enjoy the ride, Shadow was stoic, but Sarge was seasick (poor thing). They got Tuna Fish dinner as a reward when we anchored. Great Stirrup Cay is a classic beach with Palm trees and crystal clear water of all shades. The cove we're anchored off was so perfect that it looked like it was designed. Turns out it was. Great Stirrup and Little Stirrup Cays are now private Cruise ship islands. Sovereign of the Seas was there when we woke up and her launch kicks us out. We were going to move anyway so we could clear in at Great Harbor Cay.

We couldn't get into the Marina at Great Harbor due to draft, so we anchored on the East side in a beautiful bay. After clearing in by dingy, I went snorkeling to check the anchor and check out the bottom. Jean hailed to say there was a pod of dolphins on the other side of the boat. In all of my many years snorkeling and diving it the first time I have had wild dolphins around me. Boy are they BIG! A mom and 2/3 grown baby came to about 10' away and swam parallel with me, as if Mom was showing Baby "here, see, this is what a human looks like". When they swam off, just as they went out of sight, Baby comes darting back and shows off with barrel rolls and loops. A few minutes later Mom and Baby come back followed by Dad and we swim along together for a little while. One of the more exciting experiences I have ever had!

After spending a few days in the Berry's we head for Eluethera Island about 60 miles to the East. Eluethera is a very long, thin island (~100miles x 2 miles). We spend a week cruising the West side of Eluethra in a deep protected sound called Eluethera bight. One stop, Hatchet Bay, is a



deep pond behind surrounding 100' cliffs. A 90' wide cut (looks about 20') has been blasted into the cliffs to allow entrance into Hatchet Bay. Coming along the coast the cut is invisible, all you can see are boats heading straight for the cliffs, and then suddenly disappearing. This is the first place we get to meet fellow anchor neighbors, and we partied on their boats and ours. It is very surprising how many are cruising with very young children (1 to 5 years).

The southern exit from Eluethera bight is a 5 mile unmarked route between sand bores called Davis channel. The directions on the chart and guides are something like "Go to this Position Fix for entrance, read the water, keep sand bank to left and about 4 miles down leave Obelisk to port about 150yds". We find what looks like the entrance, see a long deep water run in the right direction, and head off. We don our walkie/talkie headsets and Jean goes on the bow to watch for Coral heads. (These headsets have proved their worth time and again in our cruising.) We make a clean 5 mile run out past Powell Point, but realized as we passed the Obelisk about 1 mile away that we weren't in Davis Channel, but in another deep run between the sand bores. Turns out to have worked just as well. Good thing Jeff grew up learning to read the water in the Keys! Jean called the channel we ran "Grossman's channel".

After a great 30 mile reach across Exuma Sound we arrive at Wardrick Wells, Exumas. Wardrick Wells was not in our plans, but was so highly recommended that we give up some Easting to visit it. We are VERY glad we did. Exuma Cay Land Sea Park is the Bahama's version of John Pennekamp park in Key Largo. After squeaking through a linear mooring field (so narrow that at one point we could have jumped onto the beach from the boat as we went by) we picked up our mooring. I don my snorkel gear to inspect the mooring and, just before rolling into the water, glance over board to see a 7' Lemon Shark hanging out under the boat. I decide to use the dingy to check the mooring. It turns out the shark is known as "Harbor Master" and they feed him scraps at the Ranger Station. He and "BuBu" the Barracuda welcome each boat as they come into the moorings, begging for handouts. Wardrick Wells has fantastic snorkeling, wonderful coral and crystal clear water. We saw almost every fish on our "Reef Fish Identify" card, including lobster (which were protected and knew it). Many fluorescing fish, including Queen Angels, Parrotfish, and several large (~6') spotted rays flying by.

During our four days enjoying Wardrick Wells we did: Pot luck Sat night party at Park HQ, walked the extensive trails, Spent ½ day volunteering helping clear beach and installing T-Top on ranger boat, and put our Polyphonic flag on the BooBoo Hill shrine with all the other cruisers mementos.

After cruising several days down the Exuma chain we arrive in Georgetown, Great Exuma Island. Many cruisers from the US Northeast stay in Georgetown for the Winter season. We are arriving after most have left and there are only about 100 boats scattered along the 5 miles of Elizabeth sound (there are over 500 at peak season). We end up staying for 10 days, enjoying the very protected anchorage, well stocked market, empty beaches, and cruising social life. One highlight was a party on a 54' Hatteras motoryacht on April 12th. The party celebrated the anniversary of the Titanic sinking and the yacht was decorated accordingly. "Titanic" was on the stern and signs saying "Ballroom", "Lido Deck", etc were placed in the proper spots about the



boat. We took a sunset cruise around the harbor, and managed to not hit any icebergs! Another highlight was the Family Island Regatta. This is a regatta for Bahamians from all over the Out Islands, in boats modeled after the original sailing work boats. The boats are made of wood, are 28' long, and carry over 1000 sqft of sail! Amazing watching them sail these overpowered boats with ease. Georgetown builds a small village to house the regatta parties and guests and we joined in the revelry.

Our next sail was a perfect reach to Conception Island. This tiny (3 x 2 mile) island is a protected reserve, is uninhabited, and said to be the second island the Columbus landed on. We had thought that we had already seen water as clear as possible, but the water here is completely transparent. Jean said "like a swimming pool" and I note that most pools are not anywhere near this clear. The water is so clear that, though we arrive in the dark, we can see the coral heads and bottom features in the starlight. As we explore on shore the next day, we realize we have the island completely to ourselves! Truly a private tropical paradise! And here we will leave you for now.

Our next "Post Card" will cover our adventures through the rest of the Bahamas, in the Turks and Caicos, crossing in a gale to the Dominican Republic and cruising the D.R. coast.