OUR TRIP TO THE BAHAMAS - OCTOBER 22 to NOVEMBER 11, 1974

THE CREW:

Two couples on the "HONEY B" (a 38 ft. Cris Craft)	Two couples on the "PODNER" (a 38 ft Bertram)
Harry and Gregory Baya	Bill and Eleanor Maurer
Emery and Madge Baya	"BG" and Bess Smith

In August BG started the planning and gave briefings to the participants. As planned the two boats rendezvoused at the Buccaneer Marina in Palm Beach on the week-end of Oct. 26-27 and headed out together early Monday, Oct. 28, for West End, Grand Bahama Island.

The"Honey B" trip Tampa to Palm Beach

First day (Tuesday, Oct. 22) - Tampa to Captiva Island

We left the Tampa Yacht Club at 9:20 AM in rather unpleasant weather, East to Northeast winds at 15 to 20 knots. It was fairly rough in Tampa Bay, but the boat running fine. Harry had put a lot of effort in getting everything on the Honey B in good shape for the trip. With engines running at 2700 RPM we were making 16 knots.

We passed the Skyway Bridge at 10:45 and took a course that would take us to the intracoastal waterway, as the weather was too rough to go in the Gulf. We passed "B Haven" Casey Key at 1:00, Boca Grande Pass at 4:20 (it was really rough crossing the pass), docked at South Seas Plantation on Captiva Island at 5:15 where we spent the night as planned. We slept on the boat but had a scrumptious dinner in the South Seas restaurant.

Good first day trip with exceptions. In the afternoon while Emery was at the helm he got very slightly out of the marked channel of the intracoastal waterway and ran into a soft mud bank where the boat was securely stuck. However, in a little while a rather large boat came along and its very kind crew threw us a line and pulled us off. Fortunately, when we again took up cruising speed there was no tremor or vibration indicating damaged propellers.

About the same time that we ran aground Gregory smelled and saw smoke in the galley coming from below. Fire on a boat is BAD! Harry opened the hatches and looked at the engines and everywhere in the hold, there was no evidence of fire anywhere. Gregory and Madge said it smelled like rubber burning. The smoke and smell had stopped and we decided that it had come from one of the rubber belts which had for some reason gotten very hot. After we docked at South Seas Plantation, Harry got down in the hold and found a burned belt lying on the floor which had come off the alternator on the port engine.

Travelled this day 118 miles. Filled up with 154 gallons of gas.

Second Day (Wednesday Oct. 23) - Captiva Island to Ft. Myers.

Harry had a spare alternator belt on board and decided we should get it put on before we left South Seas Plantation, even though it would be safe to run without a belt as the wiring is arranged so that the batteries will stay charged with only one engine pulling its alternator, and also the batteries can be charged by the Onan auxilliary engine which is used for generating 110 volt electric current for lights, cooking, refrigerator and air conditioner when not plugged into shore current.

The maintenance man at South Seas Marina put on the spare belt for us, but Alas!, as soon as the engine was started he saw that the alternator was frozen and would not turn and the belt could not do otherwise than slip. So that was why the belt had burned yesterday! We had to get the belt off, and it was on so tight that the only way we could get it off was by cutting it. As there are no marine repaid facilities at South Seas Marina, we decided to continue on our trip as far as Ft. Myers and get the alternator trouble fixed there.

We left South Seas Plantation a little after 10:00 o'clock, reached the mouth of the Caloosahatcheee River, which is the beginning of the cross-state Okeechobee Waterway, at 11:20, and started up the river for a very scenic trip to Ft. Myers. We arrived at Ft. Myers city marina at 12:45, filled up with gas and sent for an electrical mechanic.

The mechanic got there about 2:00 and it was apparent that he knew his trade well. As soon as he examined the alternator he could tell that it had a bad bearing and would have to be replaced. He said he would get a new one and have us off in a couple of hours. He took off the old alternator and left.

An hour or so later he returned with bad news. There was not a new alternator anywhere in Ft. Myers. The old one could be rebuilt but we would have to stay over until the next day for that to be done. We decided had better do this, so we tied up at a berth, made ourselves comfortable and got ready to spend the night on the boat. Madge discovered a nice restaurant nearby, the Hearth and Embers, and we want there for dinner.

Travelled this day only 30 miles. Filled up with 44 gallons of gas.

THIRD DAY (Thursday Oct. 24) - Ft. Myers to Clewiston.

We finally got the rebuilt alternator installed but it was 2:15 PM before left Ft. Myers and on our way up the Okeechobee Waterway. We went through the first lock at Olga 3:15 - 3:45. It raised us up about three feet and we were now in fresh water with a canal the rest of the way to Lake Okeechobee. We saw a school of big tarpon cavorting in the river as we came up to the Olga lock.

This was our first trip through the Okeechobee Waterway and we were surprised that you could make such good time through the canals. No bouys or markers, just like riding down a big highway.

We went through the second lock, "Ortona Lock", which raised us up another five feet, and again on our way at 5:25 PM. We went through the last lock at Moore Haven, on the edge of Lake Okeechobee, 6:10 - 6:25. It raised us another 8 feet to the level of Lake Okee chobee. The facilities at Moore Haven didn't look appealing and we decided to go on around the rim of the lake to Clewiston for the night. We tied up at the dock at Clewiston at 7:05 EDT, and it was getting pretty dark at that time.

We called the Clewiston Inn to have someone pick us up at 8:00 to take us there for dinner, dressed ourselves up a bit, had cocktail hour on the boat and the taxi came for us at 8:00. We found that the Inn is owned by U. S. Sugar Co. and U. S. Sugar was having a banquet there that night for 240 people. The waitress explained this to us and that our service would be a little slow. However, the service was not bad at all. The Inn is quite a luxurious one. Harry

had read that the specialty of the house was Okeechobee catfish, and Gregory was anxious to try it. All had the catfish, except Emery, and pronounced it delicious. Emery had strip sirloin and pronounced it delicious. After dinner back to the Honey B and our bunks for the night.

Traveled this day 70 miles. Filled up with 104 gallons of gas.

Fourth day (Friday, Oct. 25) - Clewiston to Palm Beach.

We left Clewiston at 7:50 AM and as the wind was still blowing at about 15 knots decided to go around the rim of Lake Okeechobee, in what is known as the Rim Canal, to Pt. Mayaca on the East side of the lake where the waterway continues with entrance into the St. Lucie canal. It is about 35 miles from Clewiston to Pt. Mayaca by the Rim Canal versus about 25 miles by going across the lake. However, given a little wind Lake Okeechobee can get rough!

We arrived at Pt. Mayaca at 10:15 and proceeded down the St. Lucie canal. Passed Indiantown at 10:55 and went through the St. Lucie Lock 11;50 - 12:05. They are now building another lock at Pt. Mayaca, but up until it is finished the St. Lucie lock is the only one on the East side of Lake Okeechobee holding the lake back. It lowered us 16 feet to the St. Lucie River and sea level.

We arrived at Stuart at the mouth of the St. Lucie River at 1:05 and proceeded South down the East Coast Intracoastal. We enjoyed the scenic beauty of Hobe Sound and the beautiful homes on Jupiter Island overlooking the sound. We made very poor time along this intracoastal waterway because of the numerous boats, from small outboards to huge yachts, and numerous water skiers cutting in and out. We arrived at Palm Beach and tied up at the Buccaneer Marina at 4:30 PM in our reserved slip, and went on to our reserved rooms in the motel there. We had anticipated that after several nights sleeping on the boat we would enjoy full size beds and full sized baths.

When we arrived at the Buccaneer Marina we saw our sister boat, the "Podner", moored there. BG had brought her down from Tampa the previous week in preparation for the two couples coming down by car on the rendezvous week-end.

Traveled this day 107 miles. Filled up with 145 gallons of gas.

Fifth day (Saturday, Oct. 26) - Palm Beach

Gregory was having an important birthday on Sunday, Oct. 27, and we decided to begin celebrating her birthday this day. Harry rented a Hertz automobile and the four of us took off for Palm Beach. We had a delightful lunch, with martinis, at the Petite Marmite on Worth Avenue, then went shopping in the fabulous shops on Worth Avenue. Harry and Emery each bought washable nylon hats at Saks Fifth Avenue store.

We then went to see Harold Nix's brother, Allen, who lives in Palm Beach in a beautiful third floor apartment overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. We studied the ocean while he fixed a round of martinis. There were quite a few white caps on the ocean and it looked pretty foreboding. The wind had kept up at 15 knots or better ever since we left Tampa, and we were not sure the seas were going to be fit for our crossing the Gulf Stream on Monday. We had a delightful visit with Allen Nix, then drove down the road along the ocean sightseeing the fabulous Palm Beach homes. On our way back to the Buccaneer we stopped at a super market for some additional provisions (we already had enough food on board to last a couple of months). He had heard that while whiskey was reasonable in the Bahamas, beer was $20 a case, so we bought two more cases to stow on board.

When we got back to the Buccaneer Marina about 5:00 we found that the "Podner" crew had arrived by car from Tampa. We had an appropriate cocktail hour and reunion with them. BG said all should go to this wonderful seafood restaurant in Palm Beach for dinner. It is named Hudgin's. So the two cars and four copples took off for there about 7:30 PM. It is a long drive from the Buccaneer Marina, which is on Singer Island, in to the city of Palm Beach and all of the Bayas commented that the restaurant had to be something super to be worth the trip. It was! The seafood was delicious and deliciously prepared, and the adjoining seafood market, still open after we finished dinner, had beautiful fresh seafood, some of which we bought. Back to the Buccaneer, and thus ended our fifth day.

Sixth day (Sunday Oct. 27) - Palm Beach.

This was Gregory's birthday. Harry and Greg had champagne with breakfast in their motel room and then took off in the rental car for more celebration in Palm Beach. Madge and Emery declined to go along. Madge did laundry getting everything clean for our departure the next day. Emery enjoyed a restful day reading.

All of us watched the weather and listened to the weather reports. It was borderline.

Marcell Albury checked in with us about 6:00 PM. Carl Brorein had told BG about him. Marcell lives on Man of War Cay, the Abacos, Bahamas, which was our destination, and BG had made arrangements with Marcell to meet us at the Buccaneer and pilot us across the Gulf Stream and on to Man of War Cay. Marcell is a very personable fellow. He is one of the leaders, if not "the leader" on Man of War Cay. He is written up in the Guide to the Bahamas as the most knowledgeable man in the Bahamas about boating in the Abacos. He is a fine man and one you quickly like, respect and become friends with. He also exudes self confidence.

We discussed the weather and the weather reports. The forecast was for a front to move in on Tueday. It was decided that we had better leave early Monday morning. While the weather was not good, crossing the Gulf Stream in winds forecast as Northeasterly 10 to 15 knots would be acceptable. And if we didn't go on Monday, it was going to be several days of unacceptable weather.

Inasmuch as Harry and Emery are not prime physical specimens, it was decided that Marcell would run the Honey B, and the Podner would follow. BG is a very able and capable skipper for the Podner.

Since we planned to leave at 6:00 the next morning, we moved from our motel rooms back onto the Honey B to sleep so as to be ready to cast off at six in the morning.

Seventh day (Monday, Oct. 28) Palm Beach to Little Sales Cay.

All, except Gregory, up early and Madge had breakfast ready at 5:30 when Marcell came on board as planned. Harry had told Gregory to relax and take things easy, no need to get up early, she could get up later while we were on the way to the Bahamas.

It is 56 nautical miles (64 statute miles) from Palm Beach to West End, Grand Bahama Island. The magnetic bearing is 96° but you have to head to the right of that bearing to offset the constant northward flow of the Gulf Stream. We planned to run at 2700-2800 RPM which would give us a speed of 16 knots. 56 nautical miles at 16 knots means three and one-half hours. At this speed our course would be 105° to offset the Northward flow of the Gulf Stream.

We cast off from the dock at the Buccaneer at 6:00 AM . Sunrise was at 6:35 AM. We were now on Eastern Standard Time, we had changed from Daylight time over the week-end. The Buccaneer Marina is only 400 yards frpm the pass into the ocean. The pass is named Lake Worth Inlet.

By 6:15 we were in the Atlantic passing Marker #1 outside the inlet. Our course put us directly into the wind and the waves and the seas were rough. During our run to West End the winds were from 15 to 25 knots, and the seas five to seven feet. That is ROUGH for a 38 foot boat. We continued at 2700 RPM as it would be just as rough at any other speed.

The bow rose way up with each wave crest, then slapped down hard into the trough. It slapped down so hard that everything movable jumped in the air and slammed back down, including the hatches.

Gregory's plan to take things easy in the bow bunk didn't work out at all. She was bounced back and forth between the bunk and the low ceiling above it. She hurt her back and her leg and was in considerable pain. She finally got up and out of the bunk. Most of the time Madge was sitting on the seat to the dining table with her arms folded on the table and her head down on her arms. She had tried to calm herself by reading, but that didn't work. Marcell was on the port seat running the boat. Harry was on the starboard seat adjacent to Marcell watching everything. Emery was in a chair in the center of the aft deck with his feet propped hard to keep in place. It was too rough for anybody to be of much help to anybody else.

About in the middle of the Gulf Stream we hit a big wave and Harry's seat rose up off the two steel supports that fit in sockets on the underneath side. The other end of the seat is hinged to the side of the boat. Down went Harry and the seat crashing to the deck. Quick as a flash Marcell jumped from his seat to help Harry, and Emery reached over from his chair to help. Harry was flat on his back and could have been bad hurt, but he said he was allright, except for a nasty bruise on his arm. It was too rough to put the seat back and Harry rode the rest of the way standing up holding on to cabin.

As mentioned before Harry and Emery had figured that at a speed of 16 knots w e would reach West End in 3½ hours. However 9;30 came and no sight of land anywhere. Some of us thought of the feature story in the Tampa Sunday Tribune a few weeks earlier about the "Devil's Triangle" off the East Coast of Florida where ships and planes had disappeared and had never afterwards been heard from. We were in the area covered by the "Devil's Triangle".

However, Marcell wasn't worried (Harry and Emery were). He said that running into this weather would reduce our speed considerably. We finally sighted the tank off West End about four and one-half hours out from Palm Beach.

We reached the entrance to the harbor at 11:00 and Harry took the helm while Marcell put up the Bahamian courtesy flag and the Yellow quarantine flag. We docked at the Government Dock at 11:15 and THANKFUL to be there and in calm water. It had taken us over five hours to make the crossing instead of three and one-half. We had been making 16 knots, but a whale of a lot of it was up and down, not forward. Our forward speed had been 11 knots.

We filled up with 133 gallons of gas and the Bahamian immigration, health and customs people came on board and gave us various forms to fill out.

Gregory's back and leg were hurting her so bad she could hardly move. After we had been tied up at the dock for about 15 minutes the restful calm and the release from the stress and tension that had been built up in Harry and Emery during the crossing suddenly did funny things to them that any of the crew can tell you about. Gregory went down too. Madge was the only able bodied person left in the Honey B crew. We had planned to gas up, clear customs, and then go on another 58 miles to Little Sales Cay and anchor there for the night. Madge opined as how she thought that due to the condition of the Honey B crew we had better stay at West End.

However, after a while Harry and Emery recovered and Gregory was better. Marcell explained that although the wind was still blowing we would be cruising on the Little Bahama Bank and the seas would not be rough. So it was decided to go on as planned after we had lunch.

We left West End at 1:00 and took course 61° to Mangrove Cay, which is a big unhabited rock island. We passed Mangrove Cay at 2:40 and took course 74° to Little Sales Cay. We arrived at Little Sales at 4:30 PM and Marcell put us in a calm anchorage. The Podner tied up along side the Honey B so we could visit back and forth between the boats. Little Sales Cay is another uninhabited rock island and we were really anchored out miles from nowhere. However both boats had auxilliary generators and we had current for everything.

We had a delightful cocktail party as we reviewed the events of the day and were able to laugh at the happenings now that they were over. BG nearly broke up with laughter as he told his story of how to get through Bahamian customs, using the people on the Honey B and their performance as models.

The girls fixed a good supper and we crawled in our bunks with plans to leave at 7:30 in the morning.

Traveled this day 122 statute miles.

Eighth day (Tuesday Oct. 29) Little Sales Cay to Man of War Cay.

We weighed anchor at Little Sales Cay at 7:30 AM and headed on a Southeasterly course along the Abacos. Marcell explained that we would be in sight of land, one Cay after another, all the way to Man of War. We passed Hawksbill Cays, Center of the World Rock, Crab Cay, Cooperstown. We stopped off Cooperstown to measure what gas we had left. Harry had figured we wouldn't have enough for the run from West End to Man of War. Marcell said we could get gas at Cooperstown if we had to, although it was not a good place to stop, and it would be better to go on to Green Turtle Cay where there was a good gas stop, if we could make it. The measurement showed we had enough to go on to Green Turtle Cay.

We arrived at Green Turtle Cay at 11:15 and took on 100 gallons of gas. This didn't fill the tanks, but we would do that at Man of War Cay which was only about 25 miles farther.

All except Harry and Gregory (she still was quite sore and could hardly walk) walked up to take a look at Green Turtle Cay. The settlement, New Plymouth, is quite quaint and picturesque. We dropped in at a lounge and had bloody marys, and learned that this was the off season in the Abacos and that the Clubs advertised in the Bahama Guide were closed until November 15th.

We left Gren Turtle Cay at 12;10 and on to Man of War Cay, passing along the way, No Name Cay, Whale Cay, and Great Guana Cay. we arrived at Man of War at 1:45 and tied up at Albury Dock (Marcell's) where the facilities were execellent - a fine dock with good slips, 110 volt plug-ins, good drinking water, ice and fuel.

So we had arrived at our destination where we planned to make our headquarters for at least a week.

We travelled this day 80 miles. We filled up at Man of War Cay with 123 gallons of gas. Counting the 100 gallons at Green Turtle Cay we had used 223 gallons on the trip from West End to Man of War Cay, a distance of 138 miles. Each of the two tanks on the Honey B holds 100 gallons.

9th thru 14th days (Wednesday thru Monday, Oct. 30 thru Nov. 4) - six days at Man of War Cay.

The plan had been to take numerous fishing trips out the pass at the South end of Man of War Cay into the Atlantic. As soon as you go through the pass you are out of the Bahama Islands, the bottom drops suddenly into very deep depths, and the fishing is reported to be exellent.

However, the capsule description of our trip to the Bahamas is "The Wind Blew". It continued to blow throughout our stay at Man of War Cay. It had been bad on Monday when we crossed the Gulf Stream, it got worse on Tuesday and stayed that way. Marcell's brother was in Palm Beach to bring Rom and Marie Watson of Wilson N. C. over to Man of War Cay in their boat, the "Rom-Marie". They had planned to leave Palm B each on Tuesday, but the weather was unacceptable. They waited all week for the weather to clear up, which it didn't, so on Friday they came over by plane. The Watsons had built a new home on Man of War Cay and they were anxious to see it.

We were convinced that October-November is not the time for a boat trip to the Bahamas.

However, we were anchored in a snug harbor at Man of War Cay and we weren't bothered there by the wind or seas. It was calm and peaceful.

We enjoyed sightseeing Man of War Cay. The population of the island is about 250, counting men, women and children. All of them are white (the Bahamas generally are 85% black) and nearly all are named Albury. The original Alburys were loyalists during the Revolutionary War and left North Carolina and settled in Man of War Cay rather that give up their loyalty to King George III. All of the people we met on Man of War were very friendly. They all work, not a single lazy person on the island.

On Wednesday we relaxed and did nothing other than sightsee: two groeery stores, the Sail Shop (we made various purchases: jackets, duffel bags, hats are hand made there out of heavy sail cloth), the Shell Shop, where the girls bought various little things made out of tiny shells, the "Bakery" a lady's home where she made bread and conch chowder (both quite good), and the Dress Shop, run by a good seamstress.

We were disappointed there was no fish market on the island. The two grocery stores didn't have any fish either. OnWednesday night Marcell's friendly old daddy came down to vist us. He is Norman Albury, who runs the Sail Shop. We asked him if he knew where we could get some Bahama crawfish tails. We had seen some and couldn't wait to taste them. He said he would see what he could do.

He came back a little later and said he found a man who had 33 pounds, but he wanted $3.00 a pound as that was what they got for them wholesale. Old Mister Albury said he was ashamed at such prices,that he used to sell them for a penny a piece (We were sure that that was many. many years ago).

We ordered them, one-half for the Honey B and one-half for the Podner, and Mr. Albury brought them to us. If you haven't eaten Bahama crawfish tails, you should do so at the first opportunity. These were of course fresh, had never been frozen, and they were solid, white,tender, sweet meat. We had a number of meals from them and they were absolutely delicious.

Gregory's leg still hurt her and she couldn't walk much. Marcell got a friend with a golf cart to take Harry and Gregory all over the island. He was Mal Morse, an American who had retired and moved to Man of War Cay from Washington, D. C.

The island has narrow streets, which are really concrete sidewalks. These run transverse across the island from bayside to ocean, going up quite high to the ridge which runs lengthwise down the island, and then down to the Atlantic. Two long "streets" run lengthwise, one called the Queen's Highway along the ridge, the other near the bayside.

On Thursday it was still too rough to go fishing. However, we all went in the Podner over to Marsh Harbor (only four miles) where we had lunch at the Conch Crawl, sandwiches only available, except that we had Goom Bay Smashes from the bar, a multi-rum drink with cocoanut milk etc. The Conch Inn which we had read about in the Guide was closed, it being the off-season. It is next to the Conch Crawl and did not live up in appearance to its luxurious description in the Guide. While the rest of us had lunch out under the umbrellas, BG attende a Rotary Club luncheon meeting being held at the Conch Crawl, About 25 or so at the Rotary meeting, and they filled the place, the why of our being seated outside under the umbrellas.

The girls went to a nice super-market in Marsh Harbor, the men visited a well stocked liquor store, where they bought some Mount Gay Rum Liquer. It is made in Barbados and is very smooth and delightful. You can get it in the States, but at much higher prices.

Also, one of the main purposes of the trip to Marsh Harbor, was for the girls to visit a launderette and get our dirty clothes washed. This they accomplished.

On Friday we cancelled a planned trip to Hopetown because of the weather. On Friday Harcourt Thompson came down to the boats. BG had heard about him from Carl Brorein as a good fishing guide,and had made arrangements to meet him. Arrangements were made for him to take us deep sea fishing on Monday, subject to weather. We also decided that it would be most desirable to have someone pilot us back to Palm Beach, or at least as far as West End. Marcell was not available as he had to go to Florida on business, so BG asked Harcourt if he could do it and he said he could.

The plans at that time were to go to Walker's Cay on Tuesday, Nov. 5th, stay there a day or two, then on to West End on Thursday of Friday.

On Sunday Ray Avalar, of Stonington, Connecticut, had us over for cocktails on his boat, the "Sunflower". We had met him and had had him in for cocktails. The "Sunflower" is a 42 foot trawler. He left Palm Beach for Man of War Cay the same day we did. However, he makes only 9 or 10 knots and his trip was three days versus our two. Marcell knew him, of course, and had talked with

him on the radio from the Honey B. He has been coming to Man of War Cay for years. His wife is no longer able to travel with him on the boat. He will fly back to Stonington for Thanksgiving and then he and his wife will fly back to Man of War Cay for the winter. We enjoyed the cocktails, the conversation, and seeing the "Sunflower".

On Monday Harcourt showed up early for the fishing trip on the Podner and elaborate fishing gear was made ready. It was still pretty blowy, and Madge, Bess and Emery remained at Man of War on the Honey B. It was tentatively decided to make two trips, one in the morning, and then back for lunch, and if the fishing was good, another trip in the afternoon. The Podner and the fisherman weren't gone more than two or three hours. They had caught a few fish but said it was just too doggone rough out in the ocean. So instead of more fishing we all went on the Podner over to Marsh Harbor and again had lunch at the Conch Crawl.

Monday evening we listened to the radio forecast and the forecast was for a bad front to move in later in the week. So we decided to cut out going to Walker's Cay and to leave the next day for West End before the weather turned bad.

15th day (Tuesday Nov. 5) - Man of War Cay to West End.

Harcourt joined us early in the morning and we left Man of War Cay at 6:55 AM. The dockmaster saw us off. He is a nice fellow, whose name is Cyril Albury. His wife is Marcell's sister. Their son, Jimmy, a nice young man of about 20 years, is a good friend of Carl Brorein in Tampa, and he calls Carl on the telphone about once a month.

Since the Honey B didn't carry enough gas for the trip all the way to West End, we stopped at Green Turtle Cay and filled up with 40 gallons of gas.

We left Green Turtle at 8:35, passed Little Sales Cay at 11:50, and arrived at West End at 3:45.

The weather this day, was the best we had had since leaving Tampa. It was a beautiful day, the water smooth, calm, clear and pure. You could see the bottom at eight feet so clear it looked like it was under only two feet of pure clean water. We made better time and used less gas than going over to Man of War.

Having slept on the Honey B for nine nights running, Harry and Emery decided to try for rooms at the Grand Bahama Hotel, a Jack Tar Resort right at the Marina at West End. This is a huge Florida type resort hotel. Eighteen hole gold course, tennis courts, claimed largest swimming pool in the world, beach swimming, boating and many specialty shops in the hotel.

The hotel was full with two conventions going on, but they were finally able to get two rooms because of last minute cancellations. The full sized beds and full sized baths were enjoyed, as was also the dinner in the dining room with drinks and music. All were too tired to dance, however.

This day we traveled 138 miles. Filled up at West End with 162 gallons of gas. This plus the 40 gallons at Green Turtle made 202 gallons for the trip. (Each of the two tanks on the Hone B hold 100 gallons).

16th day(Wednesday Nov. 6) - a day at West End.

There is good fishing a short distance out from West End and this day was set for Harcourt to take us fishing on the Podner. All went except Emery. He volunteered to to go in to Freeport and buy an alternator belt. The belt put on in Ft. Myers had expanded, was slipping, and getting hot. There was no way to set the pulleys farther apart and tighten the belt, so Harcourt had taken it off. Emery took a taxi into Freeport, about 30 miles from West End, and finally found the right size belt after going to numerous places, returning to West End about noon.

The Podner returned from the fishing trip about 1:00. They caught a few fish, but the fishing had not been up to expectations.

We listened to the weather foredast and decided we had better leave for Palm Beach early in the morning, as the weather was due to start getting worse during that day.

17th dsy (Thursday, Nov. 7 - West End to Indiantown

We left West End in the dark at 5:30 AM, an hour before sunrise. At 5:40 we cleared the entrance markers and picked up speed. We arrived at Palm Beach at 9:10. Three and one-half hours for the crossing versus over five hours it took going over.

The weather wasn't bad at all for most of the trip. It was beautiful watching the sun come up over the seas to the aft of the boat. During the last part of the crossing the wind started to pick up making the seas a little rough.

We could see the stacks and the high rises at Palm Beach from a long way out, about an hour and a half from shore. You can't miss the Florida coast coming back from the Bahamas. But going over to Grand Bahama Island, West End is hardly a quarter of a mile wide and not hard to miss.

We cleared United States customs at Palm Beach by 9:50 and started North on the intracoastal. Harcourt left us at the customs dock, he was going to fly back, but while we were at the customs dock a boat came by and there was Marcell heading back to the Bahamas. He recognized us and pulled along side so Harcourt transferred over to the boat with Marcell and they headed out the pass. We heard later that the weather had turned pretty bad for their trip. But both Marcell and Harcourt don't seem to mind rough weather. They are probably used to it.

Stopped at Jupiter and filled up with 129 gallons of gas. There was a boat at the gas dock named :MADGE B". Left Jupiter at 10:30 and arrived at Stuart at 12;30 just in time to be held up for a long delay because of the railroad bridge. A train was expected and they wouldn't open the bridge until after it had passed. We were delayed about 45 minutes.

Arrived at the St. Lucie lock at 2:10 but there was a huge barge waiting to go thru the lock. It took up the whole lock with no room for other boats, so we had to wait for it to go thru, then other boats come thru from the other side. We finally cleared the lock at 3:25. This lock raised us up 16 feet to the level of Lake Okeechobee.

We arrived at Indiantown at 4:20 and got a slip at the Marina. Nice facilities, neat and clean.

Eleanor and Bill Maurer had us over for a "Ranch Stew" on the Podner, which was delicious.

This day we traveled 126 miles. Filled up at Indiantown with 66 gallons of gas. This plus the 129 gallons we took on at Jupiter made 195 gallons for the day's trip.

18th day (Friday, Nov. 8) Indiantown to Captiva Island.

The crew on the Podner needed to get back to Tampa on Saturday, so they left Indiantown earlier than the Honey B. They reached Boca Grande Friday night and Tampa Saturday afternoon. The Honey B wasn't far behind on Friday and talked back and forth with the Podner on the radio.

The Honey B left Indiantown at 8:15 AM. Arrived at Pt. Mayaca at 8:55 and this time we decided to go across the lake instead of by the Rim Canal as the weather was all right. We took the correct compass course (you get out of sight of land) and hit the markers on the far side of the lake on the nose. Made good time across Lake Okeechobee - arrived at Clewiston at 10:20.

From Clewiston we proceeded around the Rim Canal to Moore Haven, went through the lock there, and on through the canal and through Ortona lock and Olga lock.

We stopped at Ft. Myers at 2:35 and filled up with 149 gallons of gas. Left Ft. Myers at 3:10, passed Marker FL 101 marking the end of the Caloosahatchee River and the Okeechobee Waterway at 4:00 and arrived at the South Seas Plantation Marina at 5:00.

The Marina was full, not a single slip available. The Dockmaster said we could tie up next to the sea wall across from the Marina, which we did, having to get out our large fenders to keep the boat from banging against the concrete seawall. By this time the wind had picked up to 15 or 20 knots.

We started up the Onan auxilliary generator and had a pleasant evening on the Honey B.

Traveled this day 134 miles. Had taken on 149 gallons of gas at Ft. Myers, so had plenty in the tanks to go on to Casey Key.

19th day (Saturday Nov. 9) Captiva Island to Casey Key.

We left South Seas Plantation at 8:30 AM. The wind was pretty stiff and it looked pretty rough. However, after we got out in the bay it wasn't too bad.

We got to Boca Grande pass at 9:30 and decided to go in the Gulf to Venice Inlet. You can go close to shore and even with a stiff Easterly wind it isn't bad as you are in the lee from the shore.

We arrived at Venice Inlet at 11:25 AM. Came to the Admiral's Wardroom restaurant at 11:45 and decided to stop and celebrate our return to home waters with martinis and lunch. Lined up on the pilings were a large group of pelicans. Madge said they were our welcoming committee.

We all commented on how few birds we had seen in the Bahamas, we saw almost none at all. The why, we didn't know. We were told that many of the islands had lots of mosquitos and other insects, but there were none on Man of War Cay. It is a rocky island with no lakes, pools or swampy area where insects can breed.

We left the Admiral'sWardroom at 1:00 and pulled in to Niel Putnam's Marina at Casey Key at 1:30. Neil filled us up with 122 gallons of gas and was interested to hear us tell him about our tip.

We tied up at B Haven dock at 2:00 and Janice Jordan rushed down to the dock to welcome us home.

We all agreed that nothing we had seen in the Bahamas could compare with Casey Key and B Haven.

We decided to relax and enjoy ourselves over the week-end at B Haven and return to Tampa on Monday.

20th day (Sunday, Nov. 10) - a relaxing day at Casey Key.

21st Day (Monday, Nov. 11) - Casey Key to Tampa,

We left Casey Key at 9:30 AM, passed the Skyway Bridge at 11:45 and arrived back at Tampa Yacht Club at 1:00.

All of us GLAD to be back home. We patted the Honey B and thanked her for her fine performance and for taking us safely to the Bahamas and back.