



"The Charger at Chub Cay. Would you believe all that stuff fit into my baggage compartment?"

Charger To The Bahamas

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My fascination with airplanes (especially biplanes) began in 1926 in Oakland, CA when I was but 5 years old. One Sunday, my father said there were some airplanes down near the bay. So, together with my mother and brother, my father cranked up the Model T Ford and we drove the two miles to the mud flats of San Francisco Bay (Oakland side). There we watched as the barnstormers were taking people up for rides in old Jenny biplanes. My father told me they had a stick, instead of a steering wheel like a car, to steer them by. I just stood there, completely enthralled, with my mouth open, watching those planes go around the pattern.

I was hooked on biplanes then and I still am.

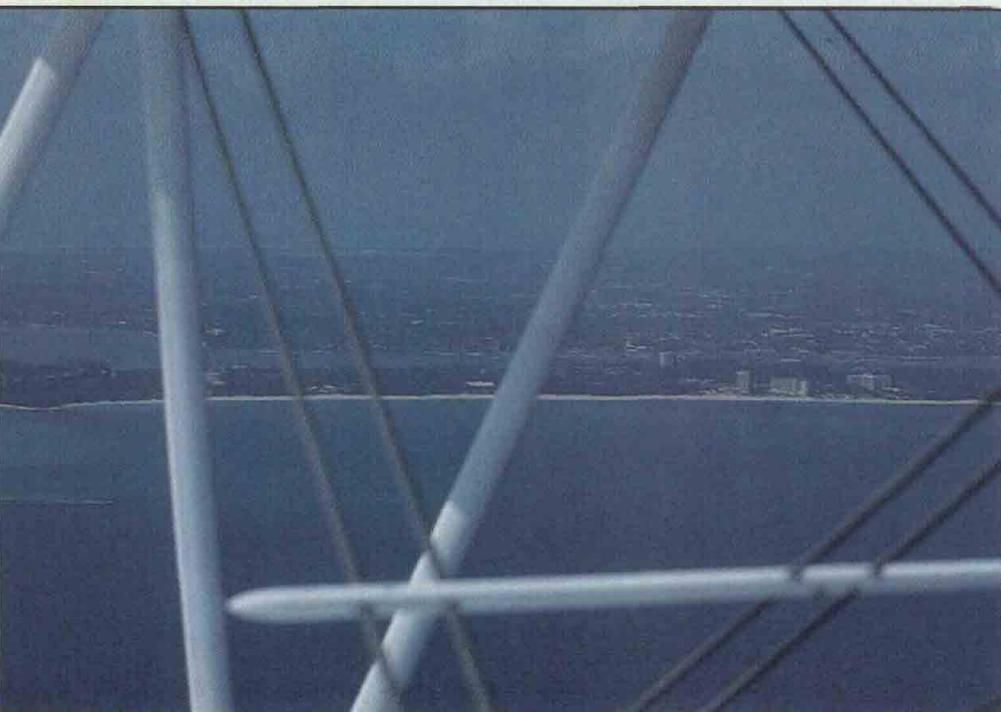
A few years later the Oakland Airport was built on the same mud flats . . . with five large hangars. At the time, it was the fifth largest airport in the U. S. Almost every Sunday I would walk the two miles to the airport just

to look at the airplanes — most of which were biplanes. Once in awhile the people at the hangars would let me sit in the cockpit of an Eagle Rock, Gt. Lakes, Travel Air or Waco, and I would dream of flying. It was during the depression and I was content with that dream and building model airplanes. I never thought I would really fly. Then after high school, Pearl Harbor was bombed and I drove over to San Francisco and enlisted as an Aviation Cadet in the U. S. Army Air Corps. 24 years later I retired from the USAF after a great career of flying all types of airplanes (except a biplane), although I did rent a Stearman once to take my brother for a ride.

About two years before I retired from the Air Force I was stationed in the Philippines and from the island of Biak in Dutch New Guinea, the Aero Club at Clark Air Force Base was able to purchase 3 DH-82A Tiger Moths. I bought one, crated it and shipped it back to San Francisco. At last I had my biplane. My last military assignment was in Madison, WI and that big 5' by 5' by 24' box on a trailer beside my house kept telling me to open it and let the Tiger Moth out. So I gave in and before retiring I rebuilt and flew it to Flabob Airport in Riverside, CA (see May 1966 Sport Aviation, pg. 28). My last years of flying in the Air Force were at 35 to 40 thousand feet and at 300 to 400 knots. I know . . . most pilots would like to do just that but for the sheer pleasure of flying, it was boring. No sensation of speed and you couldn't distinguish any objects on the ground. Believe me, for the greatest of flying pleasures, give me an open cockpit biplane at 1000 feet above the ground at 100 knots or less. You can then really enjoy the scenic terrain, the animals and the people. The feeling of flight itself is entirely different in an open cockpit biplane. I flew my Tiger Moth

for 10 years and 450 hours, to all kinds of places and fly-ins. After my Tiger Moth was sold, I longed for another biplane. I tried to purchase a Travel Air 4000 but the deal fell through. I remembered back in November 1965 when I arrived at Flabob airport with my Tiger Moth and first met Ed Marquart. In his hangar was the most beautiful biplane I had ever seen. It was assembled but not yet covered. I asked Ed what it was and he said, "Oh, something I have been working on." Well, years later when I received my June 1975 issue of Sport Aviation, there on the cover was Ed's MA-5 Charger. So when the Travel Air deal fell through in 1978, I decided I would build my biplane. I called Ed for a set of plans and asked him to weld me up a fuselage, tail feathers, struts, etc., and I started building wing ribs and buying all kinds of other parts. During the 5 years and 8 months of building, I was always flying (mentally, that is). Not just around the airport on Sunday afternoons or up to 5000 feet doing loops and rolls, but flying to all kinds of distant places. Places I had never flown to or if I did I didn't see anything enroute. If I want to get some place fast I will buy a ticket on an airliner. I wanted to enjoy the flight as well as the destination.

I acquired a 160 hp, 320 Lycoming engine and with all that power I wasn't afraid of overloading my Charger. I built in an extra large plywood baggage compartment behind my cockpit and a full IFR instrument panel. The instrument panel alone weighed 35 pounds. I wasn't going to file IFR but, as a professional pilot, I have experienced bad weather many times when the forecast was for VFR and I had to call in for a clearance and make an IFR approach. So, I wasn't going to get caught without instruments or radios. I also installed a Navcom (VOR), ADF, transponder and marker beacon.



"Approaching the harbor and hotel complex at Chub Cay. The airstrip is ahead of my airplane."

While dreaming of flights to wonderful places, I thought of flying to and through the Out Islands of the Bahamas. About once a year I would call the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism and have them send me up to date information on the islands, hotels, a Bahamas Air Navigation Chart (WAC), a Bahamas Flight Planning Chart and the latest Bahamas "Hot Line" (a NOTAMS publication).

Finally, the great day arrived and I was airborne on 11 November 1983. What a wonderful machine. I have never had to change any of the rigging. Hands off, in smooth air, it's as if an autopilot had control. What stability. Ed Marquart really did it. She cruises beautifully at 100 kts. TAS at 2500 rpm and 8.3 gph. As for aerobatics, she will just walk through the sky at your command.

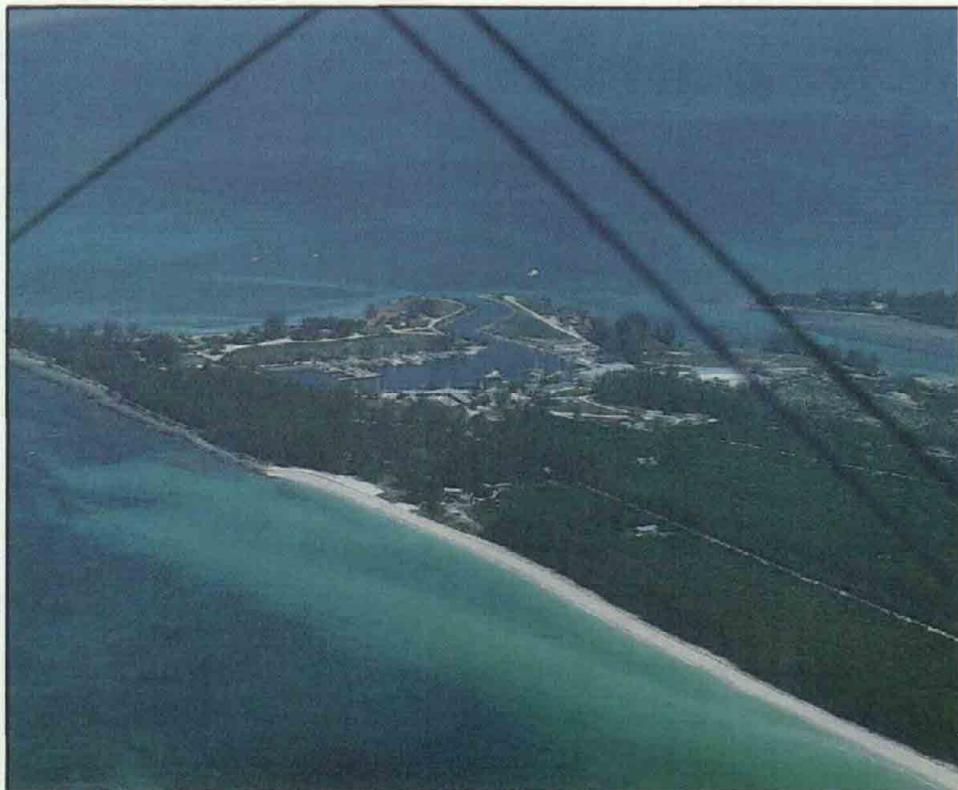
After flying my Charger to Oshkosh '84 and two flights to California, I decided that 1986 was the year I would fly to the Bahamas. The first thing I did was to buy a copy of Dale Cady's "Pilots Bahamas Aviation Guide." This is an excellent guide with everything you need to know about flying into and out of the Bahamas. It is very well written and so informative. Like most professional pilots, I am an amateur meteorologist and I selected 26 through 31 May 1986 for my island hopping. At that time of the year most of the fast moving cold fronts do not get down into Florida and the Bahamas. They slide off from Texas and up through the Carolinas. Also the temperature reaches about an 80 degree high and the month of May is ahead of the hurricane season. Financially it is a little better, too, because in May the hotels have lower summer rates.

Winds in the Bahamas are always about 10 to 15 knots northeast in the winter, east in the summer and southeast in the fall. Knowing that Nav-Aids in the Bahamas are zilch, that pilotage is not possible over water, and that dead reckoning is guess and by gosh without up to date winds aloft, I elected

to purchase a Loran C receiver. I bought a King Marine 8001 unit for three reasons: it is small (6.5" wide, 3.5" high, 6" deep); it came with an airborne antenna coupler to plug into my 18" glass VHF communication antenna; it costs a lot less than a FAA TSO'd Loran C. I bought an extra power plug so that I could program waypoints at home by hooking it up to my car battery. I had no place to mount it in my small cockpit, so I just put a large piece of foam rubber to the

left of my seat and set the unit on it. It works great as I can glance at it any time to see "how goes it", and it wasn't in my way while flying. I can easily disconnect it and take it with me to prevent theft. My planning involved a 5 day trip with one day at each of five islands — Walkers Cay (pronounced "Key"), Marsh Harbour, North Eleuthera (Harbour Island), Nassau and Chub Cay in the Berry Islands . . . then straight back to the U. S. at Miami.

The Miami Sectional Chart was adequate for my island hopping, except for the airport on North Eleuthera. The western edge of the magenta solid airport circle just barely shows at the edge of the chart. I had a CH-25 WAC chart along, just in case. I first drew a line on my Flight Case Planning Chart from Denton Airport, TX (north of Dallas) where I hangar my Charger, to Mobile VOR. Then I figured the best fuel stops along this line on the appropriate charts. (I don't like WAC charts for small, low flying slow airplanes — not enough detail for good pilotage navigation.) From Mobile I was to follow airways to Tallahassee and down to Orlando and Palm Beach. From Palm Beach I planned a landfall to West End on Grand Bahama Island, then turn northeast to my first day stop at Walkers Cay. Then straight southeast to Marsh Harbour on the second day. The third day I would fly south to "Southwest Point" on Great Abaco Island, then southeast to North Eleuthera. The fourth day would be a short southwest flight to Nassau. Another short flight northwest on the fifth day would put me into Chub Cay in the Berry Islands. On day six I planned to fly west over the island of Bimini and on to Miami Beach. Then north up the coast to Palm Beach, my island starting point. I always use small flight planning forms that fit my knee board (more room in the cockpit for flying). On these forms I re-



"Paradise Island, Nassau - out of the left side of the Charger."

cord the VOR's, NDB's, commercial low frequency radio stations, magnetic course, nautical miles, no wind time between points and the latitude and longitude (which I give a waypoint number to for my Loran C). I then fill out another lined sheet for my knee board listing all the airports where I plan to stop for fuel or overnight, with elevation, traffic patterns, runways, ATIS, approach control, tower, ground, clearance delivery, TCA, TRSA and ARSA frequencies. This way I never have any trouble or fumbling in the cockpit. Ever try to refold a Sectional Chart in an open cockpit airplane? I call the appropriate people at the right time, get a squawk for my transponder and they tell me where to go, where other airplanes are, when to land, etc. Works great. Don't get me wrong, I don't rely solely on radar and controllers for other aircraft. From the military, I have a swivel neck and I am constantly on the look out for other airplanes.

I got off early one morning from Denton and my loran worked great, giving me course, ground speed, nautical miles to go, time to go to the next waypoint, nautical miles and/or tenths off course and which way to get back on course. It zeroed out right over Gregg County Airport at Longview, TX in one hour and 30 minutes. In 25 minutes I refueled (always do it myself), made a potty stop, had a cup of coffee at the FBO and I was off for McComb, MS. I was there in 2-1/2 hours. I spent another 25 minutes on the ground for the same routine, except that instead of coffee, I opened a can of non-alcoholic beer (I always carry my "Little Oscar" cooler with ice and non-alcoholic beer in my baggage compartment).

The last leg that first day was 2 hours and 50 minutes to Marianna, FL. I was pooped, so I put the Charger in a patio hangar and, after finding that it was 6-1/2 miles to town,



"Looking west at Harbor Island, North Eleuthra . . . with the Coral Sands Hotel in the middle of the picture and Dumore Town and the pink beach at the top of the picture."

opted for my air mattress and sleeping bag beside my airplane. The next morning I was off early for the 2 hour 40 minute flight to Orlando to visit my daughter. She had never seen the Charger and after we unloaded my stuff (including removal of the front cockpit cover), she had to go for a sightseeing trip around Orlando. As a child she flew with me in the Tiger Moth, so this was fun memories for her. To reciprocate, she took me to Sea World the next day. That was really a treat.

I received super service and attention at Showalter Aviation on the Orlando Airport. On Friday, my friend Tink Joiner (she is a fashion designer) flew in via airliner from Dallas and on Sunday we flew the one hour 20 minute leg to Palm Beach. We put the bird in a big hangar at Jet Aviation. They also treated us royally, as if we had just arrived in a corporate jet like their regular customers. We were provided van service into and out of West Palm Beach and Customs where I registered all my cameras and lenses to avoid being charged duty upon my return to the states. We also rented life vests from them. The only problem was that the vests had to remain in their plastic bags. We couldn't wear them. I can see myself after cartwheeling the Charger into the Atlantic Ocean, trying to keep from drowning while I try to chew open a plastic bag to get out the life preserver, figure out all the straps, put it on and inflate it! Having worn one many times in the military, I figured that was the way to go — be prepared. Anyway, it satisfied a requirement. The next time I will buy my own.

I mentioned how the nice people at Jet Aviation rode us around in their van . . . well, it seems the customs people at the Palm Beach Airport do not register cameras and lenses. So we had to go 10 miles to the Port of Palm Beach to the customs department and wait to register those items. Then 10 miles back again. Just a little piece of paper with all the serial numbers and a signature of the customs person. Ah, bureaucracy in action, or inaction, I should say.

Monday morning, May 26, we were off for Walkers Cay. Now, the ultimate of confidence in oneself is to take off on Runway 9 at Palm Beach and keep heading 090 degrees over the ocean in a single engine airplane that you built yourself . . . because someone told you there was an island out there a mile and a half long and a half mile



"The Charger's IFR panel. The OBS is out of view on the upper right."



"Tropic delight - the patio at the Coral Sands, overlooking the Atlantic."

wide that you would see and be able to land on . . . before you hit Europe or ran out of gas. I once asked Tink if she was afraid of small airplanes . . . single engine airplanes . . . homebuilt airplanes . . . open cockpit biplanes. Her answer to all of these was "that's all your responsibility; I am just going to sit up here and enjoy myself." She is the ideal passenger. After about 20 minutes into the flight, I looked forward, backward and to either side and there was nothing but beautiful blue water, blue sky and puffy scattered fair weather cumulus. So much of the beauty of this world can only be seen from the air. I wasn't scared — to the contrary, I was elated. I was where I always wanted to be, free in my own biplane. This is why I named my Charger "Blue Free." Those who don't fly and/or romanticize aviation are missing something in life.

Well, we made our landfall right on the nose at West End in 50 minutes and changed course from 90 degrees to 40 degrees, heading for Walkers Cay.

I pushed in the waypoint on my loran and it zeroed out right over the center of the island. After circling for pictures, we landed on a nice paved 2500 foot strip with no markings. Everyone talks on 122.8 near the uncontrolled airports throughout the Bahamas, on the ground as well as in the air, so everyone knows what is going on as far as air traffic is concerned. Everyone is courteous. There are no taxiways, so back taxiing is the way to go, but a brief call on 122.8 and people wanting to taxi to take-off will wait until you land and clear the runway, and vice versa.

After parking and securing the plane (there are a few tiedowns), we walked over to the customs shack to check in. Tink and I had passports, so we took them along as the best means of identification, but all you need in the Bahamas is a voter's registration card. Of course, no fire arms, drugs, spearguns or live plants. Don't bring your dog without prior permission (see Cady's "Pilots Bahamas Aviation Guide" for more details and information). We had to wait a bit until the customs man finished a joke with his friends in pigeon English. Then he smiled and pulled out the required forms and checked our passports. I filled out the papers listing Tink as a crew member and the customs man issued me a "Transire" for my next days flight to Marsh Harbour. Everything is in a laid back style in the Bahamas. You come to relax, so relax. This is hard for Americans to learn as we live at such a rapid pace in our big cities. It's always "Rattlesnake Gulch by Sundown."

As required, I had filed a VFR flight plan at Palm Beach with Miami FSS, however, I could not contact Freeport or Nassau Radio to close it prior to landing at Walkers Cay, so on the ground I asked a Walkers Cay Twin Otter pilot to cancel it for me when he was airborne filing his flight plan back to Ft. Lauderdale. He said he would be glad to. You must close your VFR flight plan even by long distance telephone if required.

I had made reservations at the five hotels back in March and then paid for them, as required by the Bahamas Hotel Reservation Service. We located the hotel man with a van and unloaded our things for the short

ride to our lodging. The hotel, dining room, bar, swimming pool and gardens were very nice and, with the cool east wind blowing, we were in paradise. No smog or noise, just quiet, and clear air and sunshine. Walkers Cay is best known for its scuba diving trips and deep sea fishing, but with just one day allotted to each island, we just relaxed in the atmosphere and enjoyed it. The food in the dining room was excellent. In the evening we walked around the yacht harbor and down the airstrip to the beaches.

I had filled up with fuel at Palm Beach, but had decided to buy fuel in the islands whenever it was available, so I was able to top off at Walkers Cay the next morning (Tuesday) and we were off southeast down the Abacos to Marsh Harbour, our second stop. It took us only an hour to get there and we were able to observe many small uninhabited beautiful islands enroute. This is a favorite place for yachtsmen and the large natural harbor was filled with beautiful sailing yachts of all kinds. We circled again to enjoy the sight and take pictures (there's nothing like an open cockpit biplane for sightseeing). The airstrip, 5000 ft. by 100 ft., again was paved and smooth with no markings or lights. There were airplanes of all types on the ramp, including a Learjet. No tiedowns here, however, so I just put coral rocks as chocks on the main wheels and two big ones on either side of the tailwheel. I had a tiedown kit aboard but I decided I didn't want to push the Charger off the ramp onto the coral and try to screw the tiedowns into it.

We saw the first of many wrecked airplanes here. About halfway down the east/

west runway, off the north side in the trees, was a twin engined Piper. I asked about it and was told the dopers try to fly in at night and sometimes don't make it. Flight rules in the Bahamas require IFR flight plans at night and only into and out of Nassau and Freeport. anything for money, I guess — even your life.

After clearing here again and receiving a new Transire, we were off in a taxi to the Conch Inn. We spent the afternoon walking around the town of Marsh Harbour and the docks. The "Conch Out Bar" is a hang out for yachtsmen. While there, a yachtsman asked me if, besides being an airplane mechanic, was I a yacht mechanic? Seems he had transmission trouble. I nicely told him I was not and that I had experienced both of the greatest days of a yachtsman's life — the day I bought mine and the day I sold it! I carry my tools in the Charger but in my two week trip, I never had to open the boxes.

We had drinks and dinner at the Conch Inn Club about 1/2 block from our hotel — great atmosphere and fine food.

Wednesday morning as I was about to back taxi from the east end ramp area, the inbound traffic became quite heavy, so I had to wait about 10-12 minutes. When I got a break I radioed the three airplanes waiting behind me to follow me down the strip and to keep on the north side as I would take off first. They all said "Roger" and we were off on a south heading to North Eleuthera. This was another dog leg flight as I wanted to stay over land as much as possible. I had

two waypoints set into my loran, one on "Southwest Point" of Great Abaco Island, and one southeast of there at North Eleuthera Airport. There was no fuel at Marsh Harbour but I had plenty to make Nassau on Thursday.

After Southwest Point, the strong east wind kept blowing me off course. I guess I wouldn't have noticed it as much except my loran kept telling me I was off course to the right and to steer left if I wanted to find North Eleuthera. I ended up holding 25 degrees left of my plotted magnetic course. Sure enough, one hour out of Marsh Harbour the loran zeroed out and I was right over the airport. The runway was smooth and paved — 4500' x 100'. We were able to tie the Charger down again and after doing our Transire bit with customs, we were in a cab to the bay, where a small outboard motor boat took us a mile eastward across the bay to Harbour Island and Dunmore Town. Another cab took us to the east side of the island to the Coral Sands Hotel. As we registered, we were greeted by the bartender with cool tropical punches. The beach bar and patio halfway down to the beach was really tropical with palm trees rustling in the easterly breeze and the blue Atlantic Ocean as a background. We must have walked a mile along the beautiful pink coral sand beach and also all around Dunmore Town. It is the original capital and the oldest town in the Bahamas. The bougainvillea and hibiscus bloom all over the islands but it was most abundant here. We visited with the owner of

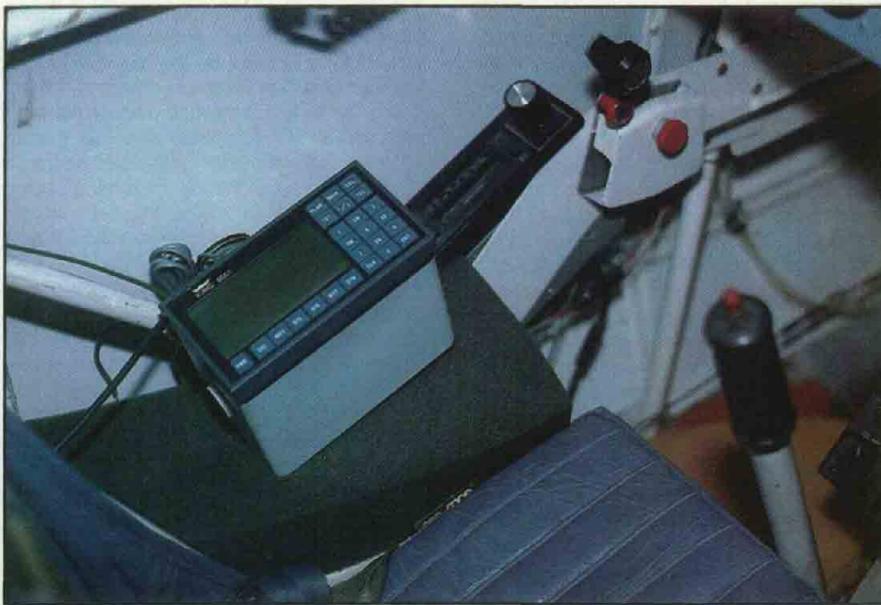
the Valentines Yacht Club and Inn. Their hotel, dining room and pool were very nice. Valentines is located on the bay side of the Harbour Island in Dunmore Town and they have a large fully equipped dive center and their own wharf. The hotel also has a club on the pink sand beach on the east shore of the Atlantic side of the island. If we go back to stay longer and scuba dive, we will go straight to Walkers Cay or Valentines at Harbour Island.

The next morning (Thursday), after take off for the 20 minute flight to Nassau, we first flew east over the bay, Harbour Island and Dunmore Town to take pictures of this beautiful place. Nassau is all right, I guess, but it's really just another big city. After landing, I must have taxied for two miles to get to the general aviation area. Upon checking in, one lady collected a landing fee and another one sitting right next to her collected a parking fee. We didn't care to gamble at Paradise Island (I will do that in Las Vegas) so we just walked around the city. You are supposed to save money buying things there, right? Well, I priced my camera there and they wanted \$50 more than I paid in the U. S.

I chased down a gas truck the next morning (he would only take cash . . . I had used my Visa card for everything up until then) and we were off on our fifth day for Chub Cay in the Berry Islands. This was a short northwest flight of only 20 minutes. Chub Cay is a beautiful and secluded place for deep sea fishing and scuba diving. The runway again was smooth and paved, 5000' x



"Tink and I at Orlando."



"My King Loran C sitting on the sponge rubber pad beside my seat."

80', but, again, no runway lights or markings.

Chub Cay also has a very long deserted beach for strolling and shelling. What solitude, beauty and cool clear air. I spotted a Whitby 42 sailing ketch in the harbor like I owned for a year. We made friends with the couple on board and had a tour of their yacht. It had memories for me and, although it is a beautiful sailing cruise yacht, I am glad I am back in the air for traveling — where I belong.

The longest leg over water lay ahead of us on Saturday (day 6). Chub Cay allowed me to use their radio telephone for a free call to Nassau FSS to file my DVFR flight plan back to the U. S. I wanted to fly over Bimini Island straight toward Miami, then up the coast to Palm Beach to check in with customs, but the lady at the Nassau FSS said I couldn't do that. I could fly direct to Palm Beach or direct to Miami. I didn't want to fly 147 nautical miles over open water to Palm Beach so I filed for Miami International. It's 76 nautical miles to Bimini and another 55 to Miami International, but with the easterly tradewinds at about 10 kts. I figured 42 minutes to Bimini and another 30 into Miami International.

With all the overwater flying so far and my Charger running perfectly, I had no qualms whatsoever of flying this leg back to the U.S. My loran put me right over Bimini and shortly thereafter I spotted the skyscrapers of Miami Beach. I was working Approach Control nicely with the squawk they had given me for my transponder. I knew shortly they would be handing me off to the tower for landing on runway 9 left. All of a sudden my receiver went out. What a time to have that happen. I had to land there because that was what my flight plan called for and I had put ADCUS (please advise customs) on my flight plan. So I put my transponder on 7600 and broadcast in the blind. I was almost on a left downwind when this occurred. I saw a DC-10 taking off and no one on final, so I circled, watching the tower for a green light, but no light. So the next time around I landed. As I cleared the runway a staff car and a pick-up raced up to me from opposite directions. I stopped and a nice young lady came up to the cockpit. I told her of my communications

problem and why I had to land at Miami International. She said, "No problem, just call the tower when you can." I thanked her and asked her where customs was . . . she pointed to a building just to my left.

I checked my switch panel and saw that I had inadvertently turned off my headset audio switch, probably with my camera strap when I was taking pictures of Miami Beach. So I turned it back on, called ground control, taxied over to customs and shut down. I presented our passports and last Transire, filled out a simple declaration form and that was that. They didn't even ask to see the airplane. I asked them if the FAA had advised them of my time of arrival and they said "no." So much for government systems. I guess bureaus don't talk to each other. I telephoned the tower and they said everything was O.K. They didn't have many emergencies with general aviation airplanes at Miami International, especially homebuilt open cockpit biplanes out of the Bahamas. I didn't ask why they didn't give me a green light.

Looking at my Miami VFR Terminal Area Chart (I always carry one when I fly near big cities), I could see nothing but TCAs, ARSAs and Blue (controlled) airports between Miami International and Palm Beach. I thought I would have to fly west of all of them, but when I called clearance delivery prior to taxi, they asked where I was going and I said Palm Beach. They said, "Would you like tower to tower hand offs?" and I said, "That would be great." They gave me a squawk for my transponder and off we went at 1500 feet to Palm Beach, talking to first one tower and then the next. Piece of cake. Radar is great in congested areas to ease you through. Palm Beach tower cleared me to land on runway 9 right and advised me of a Lockheed 1011 on final for 9 left. Tink was surprised to see the big bird pass us on short final, but the 1011 captain and I told the tower we had each other in sight. We checked in again with the nice people at Jet Aviation, turned in our unused life vests, gassed up and were off for Orlando, where I put Tink on the airliner back to Dallas.

The next day I found myself circum-

navigating thunderstorms in northern Florida on my way once again to Marianna. I refueled there and in 25 minutes I was off in thick haze for McComb, MS. I was pooped upon arrival so decided to stay there overnight. What super people at the FBO. They let me put the Charger in their big hangar overnight and gave me a Toyota to drive 5 miles to and from the Ramada Inn. The next day they didn't charge me a cent for the car or the hangar.

McComb Flight Service is right next door and after gassing up, I had a long talk with them about the marginal weather west bound to Dallas. I was on top of some scattered to broken stuff for about an hour of my 2-1/2 hour flight to Longview, TX (my last homeward bound fuel stop). In another 25 minutes I was off for the one hour and twenty-five minute flight to Denton. I had been calling various FSS's enroute the day before and I continued to do so on my last day of this fabulous trip. Dallas had some storms in the morning but all reports on my last leg indicated it was VFR at all airports in the Dallas area.

In all my 43 years of flying, I have relied a great deal on "Hourly Sequence Reports", because they tell you what the current weather really is (no guesstimate forecasts). About 40 minutes out of Denton, I was entering intermittent light rain and I found myself down about 200 feet around the south edge of Lake Tawakoni. If the airports in the Dallas area had not been reporting such good weather I would have turned back east, but I knew the light rain was just a local condition. The remainder of the flight was uneventful and after landing at Denton I taxied to my hangar and put my Charger away to rest, until my next flight of two weeks to and around California the following July 1986.

The total cost of the Bahamas trip was \$1500, and that included everything — hotels, ground transportation, aircraft fuel, food, drinks, etc. It is an easy trip to make once you get to Florida. I had no trouble with Control Areas, TCAs, ARSAs or control towers. My avionics are old, used equipment that I had overhauled before installation and it worked great. I had had nothing but problems in my Tiger Moth, trying to go someplace with no avionics equipment at all. In this day and age of airspace control, you just have to have it to go most anywhere, and it can save your fanny when you need help. You have plenty of time to spend in the islands because of the short distances between them.

If you are like me and like to travel by air in your own plane, you might consider treating yourself to a Loran C. A marine unit is so much cheaper than an aircraft unit and it doesn't know whether it is in a boat or airplane. They are less expensive than a DME and besides working at low altitude, it gives you a heck of a lot more information plus the miles from your selected waypoint.

I consider myself very fortunate, for I have done all my life what I wanted to do — fly. My next great flying adventure will be in July 1987 when I will fly my Charger from Denton, TX to Point Barrow, Alaska. This will be mostly a camping trip and I plan four weeks in order to see everything enroute. Planning is half the fun. Do consider the Bahamas trip for a great adventurous vacation — you will like it.