

THE BEATINGS WILL CONTINUE UNTIL MORALE IMPROVES....

Let me start at the beginning, it was Tuesday the twenty-four day of February in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Four. The band of seafarers was small, consisting of Buddy and Carol Mazingo and Cheryl (aka Tink) and Dick Page, the scribe. We arrived on the island of St. Thomas, USVI about 4:00 o'clock p.m. We were met by Ivan, a taxi driver at the airship port and taken over the ridge of mountains making up the backbone of the island to the harbor of Red Hook. There we met a woman that pointed the way to our new home, a 38-foot Island Packet named "Subka" which in Egyptian is defined as "bliss" or "happiness." After stowing our gear, we went to the Marina Market for provisions which included vegetables, juices, beers, rum, vodka, wines and champagne and other staples totally over \$400.00 in your (U.S.) currency. Oh, yes, there was meat, a 70 lbs. of it, but it was frozen, put in a bag cooler in the land we had come and carried by me. It was back breaking but only the first of my misfortunes! Back on Subka we unloaded and stowed the provisions, then went out to the cockpit for a bottle of Chardonnay. Around 8 p.m. we went across the street to the Love Shack for supper. I had a few "upside-down Margaritas." Cheryl got happy and both of the girls got laid (or was that a lei?). We returned to the boat for our first night.

Wednesday, 2/25/04.

Up at 8:30 a.m. Cheryl still asleep. What a beautiful morning. At 9 a.m. Buddy and I went to Island Yachts office to start checkout.

Cheryl was up when we get back and Carol prepared eggs, bacon, toast & jam with coffee (note: when made by Buddy it has the consistency of brown mud and the kick of a mule) and cranberry juice. Yum, yum!

With Jimmy Buffett CD playing and partly cloudy skies, we're starting to get our sea legs; however, we are still tied to the dock!

Skip of Island Yachts did a bow to stern review of Subka. Buddy had already done a review with the checkout sheet he had been given and gave it to Skip. Okay, everyone ready to go? No, back to Marina Market and I thought we bought the store out last night. Back to Subka the groceries are put away. Buddy is at the helm, the lines are cast off...we are under power and on our way! After slipping out of the harbor into open waters, the mainsail is unfurled; later the jib comes out...we are under sail! Buddy hands over the helm to Carol and later she to Cheryl. Look, did you see the 4-mast schooner? Yes, it's beautiful. Our first meal on the open sea is chicken salad sandwiches prepared by Carol and consumed by all in the cockpit as we head to St. Johns, USVI. We enter and go through "the Narrows." At this point we are heading directly into the wind, so switch to power and furl in the sails. We arrive in Watermelon Cove in Leinster Bay between 3:30 to 4 pm. Cheryl does her thing—sleeps, and Carol and Buddy check out the rays (sun) on the bow. Later we all take the dinghy to shore; it's a beautiful beach, a national park. Cheryl buys a stone turtle from a French girl peddling (or should I say paddling) novelties. She's a cruiser, living on a 20 something foot sailboat with her husband and two children. On the beach we meet Jerry Bean and Ginger, his dog; he told us where the pay box was located. We get back in the dinghy, go down the bay to the pay box (honor system) and pay \$15.00 to moor. On the way back to Subka we see Mr. Bean; he has a cat (catamaran). On Subka we decide that Mr. Bean is lonely, so Cheryl and I take the dinghy over to his cat and invite him for drinks. It's that time again. Back on Subka as the Brut cork pops, Mr. Bean arrives with Ginger.

Fellowship, Brut, cheese and crackers, a partly cloudy sunset and the gentle rock of the boat.....What a life!!!! We have a very late supper for 4, consisting of chicken breast (what thaws first gets eaten first), snow peas, rice, bread and the every present wine. Music is by Jimmy Buffett and Carolina beach music. Off to bed. It rained during the night.

Thursday, 2/26/04.

Guys are up around 8 a.m. The sky is partly cloudy with a gentle breeze. Buddy is making coffee—it smells so-o-o good. No-see-em's have found me for their breakfast, but soon the wind increases enough to blow them away. The girls have rallied and are up making breakfast of OJ, French toast with choice of syrup or powdered sugar (gourmet magazine here we come) and bacon. Music was by Santana. Guys do the dishes. After breakfast Cheryl and I take the tender over to shore and walk to the snorkel area. Cruise lesson #1 – always wear shoes. The white sand as we walked turned into pebbles bruising our tender feet. We had to resort to taking off our clothes before reaching the swim area and swimming over to it. The snorkeling was fun. We actually swam over to a small island then back to the dinghy. Rode the dinghy back to where we left our hats, sunglasses and shoes. Shoes who said shoes, ain't got no shoes, remember. Meanwhile back on Suhka in our absence the Mo's were making whoopi.

Back on boat about 1p.m. we immediately raised the hook and set our sails for Great Harbor, Jost (pronounced Host) Van Dyke. The voyage was uneventful (i.e. no MOB's) as we practiced our sailing technique. We dropped the hook and Captain Buddy and I went to the Customs House. I had to go back to the boat for the registration info and when I

got back Buddy was finished except Cheryl's passport still showed Parker (some people just can't let go!) [Actually Customs did not read the back page that changed her name - who reads around here?] I signed my passport and paid the outrageous amount of 40c.

This is the home of Foxy's (renowned cruisers' bar with assorted underwear hanging from rafters) and Corsairs (new restaurant; both mentioned in *Latitudes & Attitudes*). The village consisted of a dirt path with a large dock (for the size of the village) in the center at the Customs House and Corsairs at one end (port side from the water) and Foxy's to the starboard (right) with some small buildings on either side of the Customs House. Beside the Customs House was a small road going up a slight incline with buildings including a public bath and a store. We walked to the store for ice and return to the boat. At 5 p.m. (a.k.a. bull bat hour) cheese and crackers with rum and tonics are served, then all to shore. Shopping frenzy!! Cheryl buys a goat's ass hide with glass necklace for \$20 from "Joe Nature, citizen of the World." Foxy's t-shirt store is closed. So sad. We walked down main street to Corsairs for scallops, Caesars salad and shrimp. Buddy was into the rum punch. While there we saw both vehicles on the island go by; one was the policia and the other one runs over a cripple dog. The car keeps going but the dog rolls out from under the car and somehow survives. Can you believe that #@!%. It's as bad as the mainland!. We walked back to Foxy's. Buddy continues down the road of a drunken sailor. We all dance to live music with a Caribbean flavor. Girls start jumping on tables, a little skin started to show. We left very late (may be 10 pm); we're such wild things! Did someone bring a flashlight? No! In the dark of night without a light I pilot the dinghy

back to the boat. All is well; well almost, Buddy is up and down all night. We called it being drunk; he called it "anchor watch."

Editorial comment: After 3 days on the high seas, the voyage received its official name - the "Oh Damn It" cruise. Subha has a green canvas dodger supported with aluminum or stainless steel tubing that is forward the companionway and aft over the cockpit. When entering or exiting the cabin it jumps out and hits you across the forehead with the resulting nautical term "oh damn it!"

Friday, 2/27/04.

I know it is the 4th day at sea by the knife cuts into the boat, otherwise everyday is the same - more fun on Treasure Island! Up at 8 a.m. and Buddy and I go back to the island for "johnny cakes" and Buddy buys a hat. Lift the hook about 10:30 a.m. for our longest sail yet by Guana Island over to Marina Cay off the southeast shore of Great Camanche. On our way Bloody Mary's were served and later a sandwich for lunch. By indecision we dropped our mooring at Marina Cay (a small island with a red roofed Pusser's Store and free showers) without going to shore and headed by the Dogs for Leverick Bay in the North Sound of Virgin Gorda Island. Captain Buddy still sees that the crew is not quite ready for the American Cup trials but we are working better on our tacks (we did it twice what more does he want....the beatings begin!) We are great at picking up the mooring line and rum is the drink of choice (for old salts that goes together, for everyone else this is just mindless garble). Leverick Bay is a quaint little harbor. It reminds me of the Med - sandy beach then small green hills rise from the sea with red tile roof buildings nestled around and above the marina. The marina has a fueling dock and on the other side of the complex near the

bar a small dinghy dock. You can see Bitter End Yacht Club port side down the bay with a large cruise liner. At night the bay twinkles like a fairy tale. This is civilization -- hotel, Prusser's (bought a sport shirt), a restaurant/bar, free showers, spa and telephones. The girls call home. The weather here is 70's and 80's with clear to partly sunny skies and a nice breeze. They reported that home is 6 inches deep in snow. Even when it rains its beautiful so the only thing we could say was a Jimmy Buffett lyric "the weather is here, wish you were beautiful" (did I say that right?).

We all shower. Oh so good. Cheryl showers in the boat, so I look down the hatch over the head, what I got to see was her handing out wet clothes and towels for me to hang of the safety line. How did I go from trying to see some skin to doing laundry?

All clean and feeling wonderful, wine and cheese was served with a beautiful sunset as a backdrop. [At this time it should be noted because it is Lent and Fr. Roger is worried about our souls, Tink read the Day-by-Day meditation every wine and cheese cocktail hour.] Afterwards, we go over to the bar and grill on the beach for a \$15 per head BBQ buffet and more rum. Eat and dance barefooted in the sand to DJ music under a spotlight (Buddy brought his flashlight and held it over Tink). Back to the boat for a good night sleep.

Saturday, 2/28/04.

I woke up around daybreak and sat in the cockpit for a while -- what a lovely site. All start to stir around 8 a.m. Buddy is the coffee man. Carol is christened by the "oh damn it bar" first time out of the cabin.

Breakfast was eggs, sausage and fresh pineapple. We all go back to the complex. Buddy and I get water and ice for the boat. We meet a man from NYC. He was chatty. His nephew a Doctor of 53 years has retired to sail at Oriental, NC. I overhear Buddy muttering to himself about "I'm that old how come I'm not retired." At the telephones Cheryl's credit card was declined (Panic...how can I shop without credit?) After phone calls to the States it was okayed for use. BBT (big brother) was protecting us from identity fraud (They know they don't pay us enough to afford this trip). Cheryl talked with Lindsey. It snowed in Greenville but the rain washed it away. Spring break is soon, so she will be coming home.

With a late start leaving around 12:30 p.m. we drop our mooring and sail down Virgin Gorda pass Spanish Town to the Baths. A quick lunch of hot dogs and then we boat over to the swim area. I get off and snorkel to shore. Cheryl gets off without her fins. She and Buddy stay together. On shore is a British National Park with a 20-minute trail through the caves formed by huge rock boulders. I go partially in. It's an amazing footpath through, under and over gigantic granite rocks, partly in sand and partly in greenish-blue water grottos. Next time I will see it all. I go back to get the others to join me but the captain says it's time to go. Carol swims back to the boat, the rest of us take the dinghy. All on board, the mooring is dropped and we head back to Marina Cay. When we arrive all the moorings are taken (including one with the man and woman bathing au naturel) so over to Trellis Bay on Beef Island and moor about 5:30 p.m. very close to the Last Resort. We stay aboard, watch the donkeys on the island and eat lasagna, salad and drink Chianti.

Sunday, 2/29/04.

Awake around 7 a.m. and go up into the cockpit. A partly cloudy morning, very still with a heavy dew, slide back into bed. Everyone stirs around 8 a.m. (notice a pattern here?) Buddy and I go over to the Last Resort to pay for the mooring. I am met by a topless French woman with two children who pointed me to the bar area where I paid a man wearing a towel. Obvious we missed a good party there last night. Back to the boat we ate cereal and drop the mooring. We planned to sail across Sir Francis Drake Channel and down the eastern islands (Fallen Jerusalem, Ginger Island, Cooper Island, Salt Island and Dead Chest) to Peter Island. We saw Cooper Island Beach Club so sail closer for a better view. It looks nice from sea and we then turned back to our planned course. All day as we have sailed the clouds to the North kept building and getting darker. We can see the storm is heading towards us. Cheryl is in the cabin doing Hail Mary's; Carol is just saying "hell yes, full steam ahead" (but it's a sailboat). Actually the unanimous decision was made to get the hell out of there by doing a 180 back to Cooper Island Beach Club in Manchioneel Bay. We arrived ahead of the storm, so Tink and I went ashore so she could shop at the one room store. This is a small resort with white sandy beach and palm trees, a few colorful houses for apartments, a café, grass hut bar, dive shack and the store. Cheryl buys a few items (shop, shop, shop!!) and the bottom falls out (cold and wet). An hour and half later, Buddy and Carol boated over, picked us up at the dock and returned us to Subka. We have a late lunch of pan fried hamburgers. It's too windy to grill. In other words it's raining and when it stops the wind is still howling. Some things can't be rained out...cocktails and reading of the Day by Day at their usual hour. Weather radio reports the storm

(which is part of the same system that caused snow in the States) has stalled - expect stormy, small craft warnings for the next 2 days - rains, high seas and winds of 15-20 gusting to 30 knots. This doesn't sound good, this is paradise remember. All we have done this afternoon is sleep while it storms with no relief in sight. Supper is a pork loin, baked potatoes and asparagus. We all go to bed with the wind howling and Subka rocking and rolling. Buddy is back to anchor watch all night making sure we don't come off our mooring. All but one, later complained of a restless, up and down night. I, the one, was rocked to sleep. During the night the stars showed between the clouds but the wind blew steadily.

Monday, 3/1/04.

All up about 7 a.m. The rain had stopped. Bagels and bacon served for breakfast. Buddy and I go to the Club to pay the mooring fee. Buddy asks the guy about the weather and he says "I don't know, I don't sail" (just a thought- that maybe he listened to a weather report since everything in his open-air café was being blown away!) We leave our mooring under power heading into white caps and a fresh breeze (12-20 knots); later added a reefed mainsail and jib. Heeling action! I'm at the helm. Hey this is fun; this is sailing! Cheryl (the contrarian) confesses she is a fair weather sailor, so we seat her to weather in the stern pulpit. I can't hear for the wind, but she said something about never doing blank-blank ever again. We sail down to Peter Island (maybe she was talking about the island?) and partly around it looking at different bays. I then veer off to Norman Island, partially around and into The Bight. It has about 50+/- moorings. It's still

windy even in here, but who cares at this point, oops Cheryl does! It's a cozy almost uninhabited little bay with 2 bars - 1 an old 60-foot twin mast merchant ship called the William Thornton a.k.a Willie T and the other, a building (the only building bigger than a K-mart tent) with PIRATES written on the roof. We had a pasta lunch then took the tender over to the inland bar. The Mo's walked around and up a hill overlooking Subka. Tink and I walked the other direction along the waters edge to a twisted tree near a private pier. We saw a yellow billed and yellowed footed bird with white and mostly brown body (similar to a blue footed boobie but yellow) sitting on a rock in the water. A little shelled animal (a hermit crab maybe) crawls near Cheryl's foot. I steal a kiss. We go back to the bar and find the Mo's in a 2-but-ter Nagshead swing (if it wasn't a 2-but-ter it is now). We take the dinghy over to Willie T, circle it and go back to Subka. The Mo's jump ship and swim 50-60 feet over to the shoreline. Cheryl and I get a nice shower. Cocktail hour of rum & tonics until the rum runs out. There are some large power yachts sitting further out. One even has a helicopter on the aft deck. Maybe we are intoxicated and just seeing things! Buddy then argues that we didn't read the Day by Day yesterday (it must be the alcohol is killing his brain cell). Cheryl reads today's meditation. During cocktails the sound of Jimmy B came across the water but not from our CD system. 4 or 5 couples on a cat moored near us were dancing and having a grand time. We figured they were from Louisiana or Texas since they were later dancing to western music. Deliverance (a boat not the movie) came by selling food and things. We bought some cinnamon cakes for breakfast.

Supper was steak, but how to cook... grill or fry? Did I mention the wind, Buddy and I can't light the grill (where is propane when you need it). Now comes the scariest part of the trip, even worst than the beatings. Carol invents a tinfoil oven and lights the fire inside the cabin. The trick was in moving it outside through the wind into the grill without setting the boat on fire. The Day by Day readings must have helped for the transfer was made without incident. Later we ate a supper of steak and avocado/tomato salad. We see a sailboat under power come in with large colorful flags up and down its rigging. That night, I was rocked to sleep by the wind and boat.

Tuesday, 3/2/04.

We awake to another day in paradise. In spite of the wind still blowing and big swells, everything is okay for today we head back to USVI on a long run. Eggs, sausage and the cinnamon cakes for breakfast. We sail around to The Caves at Treasure Point. This is supposed to be Treasure Island. We moor and take the dinghy to a dinghy line at The Caves. Overboard we go, snorkeling in and around a cave's entrance. The bottom is white sand with rock formations of various heights. The rock formations are covered with sponges and other growth. All around are fish - striped, white and yellow, blue and silver and green. Some swim around us and others dart in and out of the formations. It was fun but the captain said we had to go. We struggle to get back into the dinghy for a cold ride back to Sukka.

On this leg of the trip the wind is from the stern, we are going 6+ knots surfing the swells. Cheryl has that look again, not the happy one but

not as bad as yesterday. The island of St. John keeps getting bigger and houses (mansions) are now easy to see. We round Maria Point, the swells subside, by Coral Bay and Hurricane Hole, on by Great Cruz Bay, to the harbor buoy light, by an anchored 4-mast schooner, around a small point to a mooring in Caneel Bay. It's early afternoon, so we take the dinghy around the point into Cruz Bay harbor. A tender is taking people to and fro from schooner and harbor. We follow the tender into the harbor and tie up with other dinghies.

The smell of shopping is in the air, Tink's spirits are instantly lifted (my personal net worth spirals downward). The town is bustling with people, cars, etc. We walk around to Customs. After what appeared to be a useless exercise in futility we are cleared through and back on the street. Cheryl shopped for 1½ hours. It was a good start but just not enough time (her comment). Back to Subka, we drop the mooring and sail up and down Caneel Bay for a calmer spot. We end up in front of a beautiful white sandy beach with palm trees called Honeymoon Beach not far from a little dock and store.

We are running low on cocktail hour supplies. That means the bottles are empty. The vodka bottle is pulled from behind the fold-up table rack. I make vodka-tonics and all is well with the crew again. Supper is composed of leftovers. Music is my Rod Stewart. Clean-up done by the guys. The guys try a romantic surprise. You guessed it, it doesn't quite work as planned. We take the dinghy over to the sandy beach. We all get off and almost to shore when a small swell pushes the dinghy sideways knocking Carol face first into the water. Cheryl then sees an animal running into the "jungle" and is sure we are going to be eaten

alive. Isn't this FUN! At this point I prefer the beatings. Carol is a trooper, shakes it off (I think dog style) and goes on. For a short time we couple off in separate directions, then Carol followed by Cheryl walk down the beach toward a house. They stop at waters edge and start giving Buddy and me some crazy light signals. We walk over to them. On the rocks and tidal pools are snails and various other creatures. I later saw a sign that the snails are an endangered species. We stayed a while then went back to Subha and to bed.

Wednesday, 3/3/04.

When I woke up I could tell today was different - the mindset is business -- we go back home. You can feel it without a word being said. Beds are stripped, luggage is pulled from the hole, bags packed and the ship is being straightened up. Breakfast is cheese eggs and hamburger meat. Buddy throws away the last of the grapes. I take a shower. Buddy and Carol motor Subha across the channel to Red Hook Bay and we tie up at the fuel dock. A staff member moves her to Dock B. Cooking, packing, showering and removal of luggage are done. Cheryl and I go to Island Yachts office and arrange for a taxi. Cheryl slips off for about 30 minutes to...shop. We leave at noon by taxi via the Ritz-Carlton (This is a first class trip. Oh yeah, had to stay in the taxi until the couple got in), by some huge cruise liners and on to downtown Charlotte Amalie. We shopped for about a 1/2 hour. Cheryl and I went to Cardow Jewelers then back to the taxi stop to the airship port where we boarded an airship.

As the islands disappeared behind us, the memories appeared stronger, morale improved and the beatings stopped.....