

# ***Canard Aviation***

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***Bahama Bash 2022!***  
*Curtis Wray, p. 7*



**CORROSION OF ALUMINUM ALLOYS –  
A REFRESHER**      **JOE PERSON, P. 15**

**Drag Penalty of Baggage Pods  
on a Long-EZ**  
**Tom Staggs, p. 13**

**AVGAS** and our Canards  
**John Caulkins, Page 8**      **Part II**

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Cover photo: Steve and Cinda Beert in “Dino” headed to Treasure Key Bahamas



# Bahama Bash 2022

*Curtis Wray (OH)* - This year was a well-attended Bahama Bash, especially for canard drivers! We had some new canards join in with a great representation of the canard community. Those who made this year's event were:

Curtis & Chris Wray	Long-EZ
David & Cherie Orr	Berkut
David & Ginger Williford	Stagger-EZ
Matt & Caryn Bunch	Cozy-IV
Mike & Bridget Turner	Long-EZ
Roch & Barbara LaRocca	ERacer
Russ & Kristy Meyerriecks	Cozy-IV
Steve & Cinda Beert	Long-EZ
Mike Beasley	Long-EZ
Kevin and Mary Bolender	C310
Bill & Susan Gallo	

Chris and I departed Ohio Thursday, 31 March at 1700 to fly down to our lake house on the KY/TN border as the forecast for Friday was 28F and snow. We flew through light rain with low ceilings of 1,700' to 2,500' most of the way. With the rain, we kept the rpm down to 2000-2100 to reduce prop damage and saw airspeeds of around 120KIAS. We were on the ground by 1825. By this time, David Orr had made Tallahassee, FL, after overnighing in Texas but could make it no further due to low ceilings.

We left Kentucky Friday morning headed South with 4,500' broken but quickly found a path to get up to 10,500' for the flight to Florida. With 50+kts NW winds at altitude we were initially showing ground speeds of almost 200kts with a TAS of 167Kts. We planned to fly down the East Coast of Florida and spend the night

in KTIX, but the weather forecast for Saturday morning did not look good. The front, marching West to East across the US, was going to pivot around the Florida panhandle and stall between KTIX and KFPR. As we flew further South into Georgia, it seemed a better strategy to change course, fly down the West Coast and get South of the front. I headed for the Western edge of the Orlando airspace. I had been broadcasting in the blind on the air-to-air frequency for any other Bashers but had not received any replies. Then suddenly, I

heard a call... "any Bashers out there?" It was Roch LaRocca flying down from Peachtree, Georgia. We chatted on the radio most of the rest of the way as we flew South as planned, turned East, and headed into KFPR. The weather deteriorated but we were able to land safely at 1620. After we found a hotel for the night, we met with other Bashers for dinner at the Manatee and reminisced over the weather challenges.

The Saturday morning forecast was for fog and sure enough, there was a thick pea soup when we arrived at the



David Orr and Mike Beasley  
(Photo by Cinda Beert)

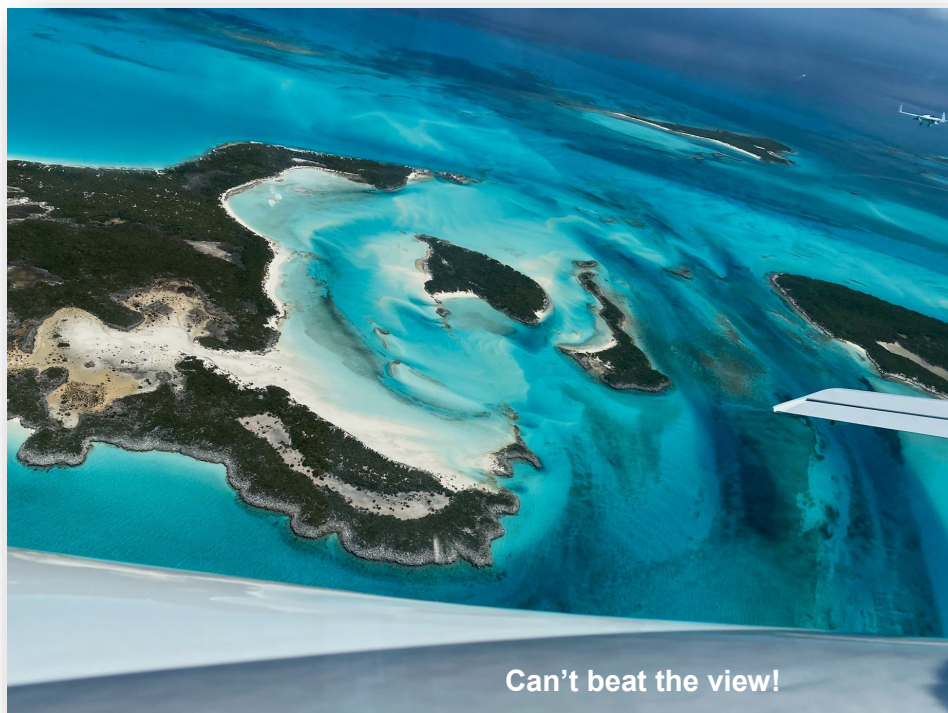


David Orr, Curtis Wray, Mike Beasley, Steve Beert  
(Photo by Matt and Caryn Bunch)



airport. Everyone readied their craft, filed flight plans and we assembled for a preflight brief. We were ready to launch for points East, but the fog persisted. The Turners were IFR at Melbourne and filed to get out for Cat Island. The Willifords landed at Sun-n-Fun in weather the night before and were under IFR. They would make it out later and fly direct to Cat Island. Finally, Ft. Pierce went VFR, and we all boarded our craft and lifted off at 1140, well past our planned 1000 departure. We climbed to our cruise altitude of 9,500' on a course for Staniel Cay. This course would take us almost directly over Nassau where we began a descent, turned about 20 degrees to port and headed for Norman's Cay. Upon reaching Normans we turned right on to the course for Staniel, remaining along the right side of the Exuma Island chain flying at 1,000' MSL.

All in a loose gaggle formation, we soaked in the awesome, indescribable views as we glided along above the sailboats, white sandy beaches and emerald, turquoise waters presenting a canvas to be marveled at. Exposed sand beaches gave way to cuts snaking through the narrow islands from the Atlantic to the South-western side of the many small islands. Sailboats, yachts, and tenders lie calmly on the tranquil surface with strong shadows below revealing the shallow anchorages in the pristine, gin-clear water. The transitions of deep blue Atlantic, through every part of the blue/green visible spectrum and terminating into bright white sandy



Can't beat the view!

shores is spectacular. You really must see this for yourself!!

Upon reaching Staniel Cay, we turn Easterly on course to New Bight, Cat Island. As we approached, our flight lead, David Orr, turned the group to the Southern end of Cat Island to overfly Hawk's Nest, a past destination of the Bash. Then, flying North-west along the shoreline, we made our way to New Bight and landed in sequence on runway 27 uneventfully, at 1420. We had a rental van at the airport, and I shuttled folks to Fernandez Bay which is only a mile from the airport. Everyone gathered up their gear, found their rooms and freshened up a bit before gathering at the Tiki bar. We had arranged an arrival

party, and everyone imbibed in the rum punch and conch fritters, a real Bahamian treat. It was a fabulous time with all the Bashers enjoying the drink, the food, meeting new friends and reacquainting with others.

One of the great attractions of Fernandez Bay for the Bahama Bash group is the compact layout. The main lodge/restaurant, the adjoining Tiki Bar and the rooms are all within just yards of each other. The real treat is that the beautiful white sand beach and calm crystal-clear ocean are also just steps away from accommodations and main facilities. With the large attendance this year we essentially had the entire resort to ourselves, so it really brought the group



Fernandez Bay



closer together and made for a great Bash.

As the afternoon wore on into the early evening, everyone gathered in the lodge for dinner. I said a few words, made a few toasts and Chris passed my hat around for a gift drawing. As the sun set over the beautiful bay, the pink and orange sky yielded to the purple onset of the night. The Bashers enjoyed the lovely setting and lots of conversation accompanied by a great meal.

On Sunday, folks gathered at the lodge for breakfast and made plans for the day's activities. Some were shuttled to the grocery/liquor store to pick up sundry items. A few chose to make the trip to the Hermitage atop the highest point in all of the Bahama Islands (a site you should take in if ever you find yourself on Cat Island). Others simply relaxed by the ocean, strolled along the beach, and soaked in the sunshine. We made a trek back to the airport to pick up two late arrival parties, the Bolenders and the Gallos, as they had obligations on Saturday. Folks chatted around the Tiki bar, had lunch, and relaxed for the rest of the afternoon. Everyone gathered for sunset and dinner later in the day. There was another drawing for gifts of beach bags, wine and koozies provided by Sandra and Richard, the new owners of Fernandez Bay. After a late night or



### **Awesome Three-ship Over the Exumas**

two, and a bit more storytelling, all retired for the night.

Monday morning broke with overcast skies and a few showers/sprinkles. The sun broke out in the early afternoon bringing back the Bahama Island feel. A few tried out the paddle boards, others kayaked, and the Turners went out to one of the little islands in the bay for snorkeling and undersea pictures. Other adventurers made the Hermitage trek to explore this unique, and amazing, historical place. The Meyerriecks flung their trusty canard into the air and made the short flight West to Staniel Cay. They had a fun time exploring Staniel,

the quaint village and the Yacht Club. A visit to this island is well worth your time if the opportunity should arise.

For dinner we shuttled everyone to the Regatta site to take in a Rake-n-Scrape band and traditional Bahamian food. We had ordered fresh lobster for sixteen of the group, but we got our communications crossed and dropped folks at the wrong establishment. After we finally figured out we were at the wrong place, the group made their way to Crystal's and feasted on lobster stacked high on the plate. Unfortunately, we had already



**Bashers touring the Hermitage**



**The Hermitage**



shuttled one group back to the resort. Chris and I greatly apologize to those who missed their lobster dinner due to our error. Once everyone was back at the resort we sat around a bonfire on the beach and told stories late into the night.

On Tuesday morning, five of us went on a fishing excursion that Mike Turner had setup with a local angler at Port Howe. We had a great time trolling up and down the northeastern side of the island but with limited success. David Williford landed a Barracuda as the sole fish of the day. Back at the resort, more of the same for most folks. Snorkeling, paddle boards, kayaks, sunbathing, beach walking, a Kalik or three...you know, the usual stuff but somebody has got to do it! That evening, another beautiful sunset, a great dinner, and wonderful camaraderie around the bonfire with Kaliks in hand. It was an early evening for many as preparations were made for tomorrow's trek north to another island.

Wednesday was the day to leave Fernandez Bay and head North to Treasure Cay on Abaco Island. After breakfast, the pilots performed an initial preflight brief and planning, settling in on departure grouping. We shuttled the entire group in three trips to the airport and everyone prepared their aircraft and loaded baggage. We had a quick preflight brief on the ramp as the twin Cessna and a group of three Long-EZs had promised folks at Fernandez we would do a flyby. The twin Cessna with the Bolenders and Gallo's departed first and set up an orbit over the field. Then it was the Meyerriecks, Beerts, and Willifords. The LaRoccas headed to North Eleuthera for a fuel stop. Three Long-EZs (Turners, Mike Beasley and me) departed and formed up in an echelon formation. Meanwhile, the twin Cessna descended and made a low pass over the bay followed by the three-ship Long-EZ formation. The Meyerriecks, Bunchs and Willifords launched and made their way to Marsh Harbor for a fuel stop. Enroute, the three ship Long-EZ formation



**Over the Top!**

joined up with the group headed to Marsh harbor and we had a real gaggle going until the three-ship broke off and headed direct to MYAT.

Eventually, everyone made it into Treasure Cay separated in time due to fuel stops and a vapor lock problem with the Bunch Cozy. David Williford stayed with Matt and Caryn until the O-360 cooled enough to get a relight. Of course, the three-ship EZ flyers "had" to do a flyby of the Bluff House resort on Green Turtle Cay prior to arrival at MYAT. My first impression when arriving at MYAT at low level on approach was the devastation reaped on the island foliage

from hurricane Dorian two years ago. There were thousands of trees with everything stripped from about five feet above ground on up. It was as though someone had "planted" a forest of telephone poles. After landing and lashing down the aircraft, we



**Mike Beasley and the Swimming Pigs**



cleared customs at an RV trailer set up "temporarily" after the hurricane. We had arranged for taxis and everyone, except the Bunchs and Willifords, were transported to the ferry dock. The ferry brought us to our final destination, Green Turtle Cay, and the Bluff House Resort.

After check-in at the resort office everyone picked up the golf carts we had prearranged and dispersed to get baggage into their rooms. Eventually the group gathered at the Tranquil Beach Bar to grab refreshments and some lunch. The Bunchs and the Willifords finally caught up after missing the first ferry, but the entire Bash group was now safe and sound on Green Turtle Cay. Reminiscing over the day's events accompanied by a few Kaliks made the afternoon pass quickly.

We arranged for another arrival party for the group at 1730 so after folks freshened up and relaxed a bit in their rooms, we reconvened at the Tranquil Turtle Bar. Molly McIntosh, the manager of the Bluff House resort, along with her staff prepared a tasty warm chicken-cheese spread with crackers,

five dozen conch fritters and several gallons of rum punch. The Bash group certainly enjoyed the tasty appetizers and rum punch!

Molly and Marilyn (Seaside Golf Carts) generously donated several prizes for our group. Molly and her staff held several drawings for the giveaway of a Bluff House T-shirt, ball cap, tumbler and a free lunch for two. There were also three cash prizes of \$25, \$50 and \$100 dollars. We are so grateful to Molly and Marilyn for providing these wonderful gifts and for the staff joining in on the fun. After the drawings we had a light dinner for those that were still hungry. Most of the crowd hung around until late into the evening having drinks and sharing stories, photos and video clips.

Thursday morning was the time for most to get out on the golf carts and explore the island and the historical town of New Plymouth. Everyone pretty much did their own thing. Chris and I met up with Roch and Barb LaRocca at the McIntosh Bakery for tasty breakfast tacos and blueberry crumb cake. We drove around to the Green Turtle Club where we made

dinner arrangements for the group that evening and then to nearby Brendal's Dive Shop. The dive shop was very nice and well equipped, but pricey. The hurricane damage to the island is still quite evident, but it is amazing how resilient these island dwellers can be. Rebuilding was in process everywhere. Later in the afternoon, many met up on the beach and had a few Kaliks while sharing stories. That evening we made our way to the Green Turtle Club for cocktails at 1830 followed by dinner at 1900. Great conversation, excellent food and good wine, when shared with friends, new and old, makes for a wonderful evening.

We awoke Friday morning to the sound of thunder and no water supply on the island! Chris and I hopped in the cart and made our way to Molly's house to get a report. Turns out that intermittent water and electrical supply has been the norm since the hurricane. Thankfully, by 0815 water was restored and we had no further issues. Soon thereafter, the thunderstorm rolled through with heavy downpours for about an hour or so. After



**2022 Bahama Bashers**

passage, the weather cleared up nicely for the remainder of the day. The Turners, LaRoccas, Beerts and Mike Beasley all rented a boat and took a short trip to Big "O's" Swimming Pig Bar and Restaurant on a nearby island. They had lunch and enjoyed seeing the swimming pigs, stingrays, and nurse sharks. Back on Green Turtle, others further explored the island and New Plymouth, spent time on the many beaches or just hung out at the Tranquill Turtle and the beach.

At 1600 we had a pilot brief for tomorrow's return flight back to the states, establishing flight groups and ensuring paperwork and departure processes were understood. The group convened at the Tranquil Turtle for an 1830 dinner. Chris was surprised with a birthday cake provided by the group as her birthday was about a week away. It was very thoughtful, and we thank everyone profusely! After cake, we retreated to our rooms to pack and make last

minute preparations for the trip tomorrow.

The Bash group made their way to MYAT on the 0800 and 0900 ferry Saturday morning. The twin Cessna with the Bolenders and Gallos left early for Pompano Beach. The Meyerriecks, Willifords, and Turners also went out early bound for KFPR. The next group out was the Bunchs, Beerts and Mike Beasley. Chris and I flew back with David and Cherie Orr. The LaRoccas were the last to depart MYAT.

The Berkut and I climbed to 6,500' for a cruise altitude as the headwinds any higher were brutal. We were flying 165Kts true, but headwinds were at 30+ kts just off the nose. Skies were broken at 5,000'. The flight was uneventful, and we chatted on occasion with other Bashers as we watched their progress on ADS-B. We had pretty much caught up with the others by the time we turned final at KFPR and landed at 1120. Every-

one cleared customs and made their way to the Tiki to grab a bite to eat.

At this point, the Bahama Bash group of 2022 scattered in various directions and at different times to make their way back home. Some made it home the same day while others out west took two days. Chris and I spent the night at Titusville, FL, with friends and departed for Ohio the next day. As a bucket list treat, after departing KTIK Sunday morning, we called and received clearance to fly the low approach at NASA's Space Shuttle landing facility. We then climbed to 6,500' for a cruise altitude to limit headwind impact. We had 166KTAS, but our groundspeed was down to 140Kts. We landed at Greenwood, SC, for fuel. After a long and turbulent flight from Florida, we landed back in Ohio at 1520. Thanks to all who joined in on this year's Bahama Bash! We look forward to another great Bash in 2023!!

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## Long-EZ For Sale

**1983 Rutan Long-EZ**, C/N 0286, 828.5 TT, O235-C1, 115hp, 885.5 SMOH. Plans built by Dr. RC St. Clair, Palmdale, CA. Rudder mod, vortex generators, manual gear, assist step, nav/strobes. Icom A200 Com, Apollo GPS, Terra Txpr, PM 501 ICS, No ADS-B. Empty weight: 783, gross weight 1425 lbs. Always hangared, paint: 6, needs condition inspection. Located Spinks Airport TX, \$30K. Leave msg: 817-292-1984. Email: wheelerbea@aol.com.

Editor note: The seller is the mother of the deceased owner. The photo below is the only photo of the airplane she could get, so interested buyers will need to go see the aircraft. The aircraft is located at the airport and the Airport Supervisor will be available for any appraisers or buyers to see the airplane.

