

2006 Bahama Mama Air Safari

April 7-22



by: Steve & Teri Walker

We would like to thank the following people who truly helped to make this trip enjoyable and memorable.

Wil Brown and daughter Valerie M. Said
Kim and Ginger Caldwell
Cynthia Garrity, Michael Quinn and Lynn Newcomb
Harold and Michele Kaufman
Chuck and Peggy Marsh
Douglas and Olivia Marshall
Mark and Wendy Norton
Ray and Zana Redden
David and Jodina Widhalm

April 7, Friday (Flagstaff, AZ) - The group gathered for dinner at a Japanese restaurant in the hotel. We had a treat with our chefs as they set our plates on fire; the food didn't taste too bad, either! After dinner the group met for the trip briefing.



April 8, Saturday. (Bandera, TX) - The next morning, we arrived at the airport greeted with frost on the planes. Thank goodness the sun was out and beginning to melt the frost as we all began the work of wiping the frost off the planes. With only a short delay, we were up in the air and on our way to Bandera, Texas. We landed in Kerrville, loaded up the vans and headed for the Dixie Dude Ranch which was 45 minutes away. We arrived a little

late so we missed the afternoon horseback riding but there was a lot of exploring to do. Clay, the owner checked everyone in, gave us a brief orientation and mentioned that we didn't need keys to our room. Now that is a FIRST! It sure gave one a feeling of an honest place and no worries. After everyone settled in, each person went on their own exploration of the ranch before the dinner bell rang. That evening we had a barbecue in the back yard and were serenaded by three singing cowboys. After dinner, each just meandered around the property to get a feel for what to do the next day. This was also an opportunity to get to better acquainted with other folks on the trip. Some of us found a peaceful place to sit and chat with another couple while others sat around the fire pit and enjoyed the glowing bonfire as the sun disappeared. There were a few who played horseshoes and need to book a return trip to the Dixie Dude Ranch for playoffs! As darkness covered the evening, the glow of the campfire drew the group to gather around and warm up those





buns... The kids—yep we're all kids, were having a marshmallow roast! You needed to be careful which log you sat on because it could have something sticky.

Date: 4/9, Sunday, (Dixie Dude Ranch): The next morning the breakfast bell rang notifying everyone to either show up for breakfast or skip it... Well, the Walkers were still sewing some ZZZ's and skipped or really it was missed that call for breakfast. Those who did get up



Read the sign — what a hoot!

were able to get in the morning horseback ride. We came out of our room around 11am and it was very nice that the owner arranged a short horseback ride because lunch was around the corner. For some of us this was our first time riding a horse which was lots of fun. Being out on the range sure made ya' feel like John Wayne would be riding up and wonder what these tenderfoots were doing here! It was a beautiful warm day to go for rides, walking and whatever one wanted to do. For dinner that evening we went in town and celebrated Jodina's birthday and had a great dinner.

Date: 4/10, Sunday, (Mobile, AL): Before leaving to continue the trip we had an early morning chuck wagon breakfast. It was a cold and foggy morning to start off with, boy what a contrast from the day before.

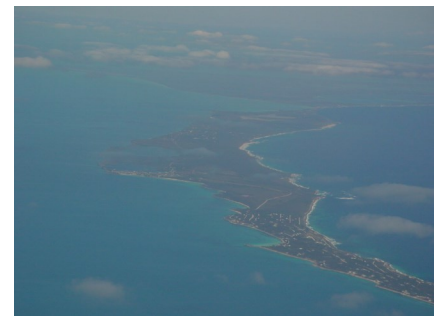


In order to do the chuck wagon breakfast and get back in time we took a hayride up to the site, chowed down and hurried back to the airport for our flight to Mobile and our tour of the Continental engine factory. It was a long flight but we made it. The people were very friendly and our tour was very interesting for the pilots - seeing the engines, all the parts and stuff like that. The "non" pilots were doing our best to look interested in what was going on. After a fun time we headed to the hotel and then off to dinner at Felix's Fish Camp.



Date: 4/11, Tuesday, (Opa Locka, FL): We intended to arrive in Opa Locka, FL early enough to ride airboats through the Everglades but due to a late start we were not able to make the planned tour. The beautiful Don Schula Resort provided a nice respite and everyone enjoyed a group dinner as we shared our anticipation for the Bahamas. The excitement was in the air!

Date: 4/12, Wednesday, (Great Exuma, and Cape Santa Maria, Bahamas): Next morning, there were a few members that stayed an extra day due to airplane problems. The flight across the water was uneventful although we did have to negotiate our way around some rain clouds right over Great Exuma where we were to land to clear customs. As we found a route around the clouds, we finally landed at Great Exuma just as it began to rain. After clearing customs, we decided to fuel up ourselves and have some lunch while waiting out the rainstorm. The weather began clearing up and we had a window to make Cape Santa Maria's flight of 12 minutes. Within moments the group (most of us) finally arrived at the long awaited destination— Cape Santa Maria, Bahamas! We can't believe we are in the Bahamas! Whahoo!! **TO THE BEACH!** In celebration of our first evening on the island, the hotel management welcomed our group with a free cocktails and hors d'ouevres. Yummy! After dinner, everyone went their own way and enjoyed the island's magic of relaxation! For this writer, it was the most beautiful place to feel all tension melting away after busting our ba-tooties getting here! The turquoise wa-





ter and WHITE sand lured you to dip your feet and everything else in the warm water—Aaaah... PARADISE! This could be heaven on earth; the beauty and tranquility was mesmerizing. From your bungalow you walked right out to the ocean. Or sit on your own private lanai to read while enjoying the tropical breeze. Our last day there, we did the bike ride to Christopher Columbus's monument—happened to be the hottest day we had and it was a long way UP HILL... We made it though and as Ginger melts into Kim's arms I'm trying to cool off having the wind blow up my shirt. The whole group truly enjoyed our 3 night's stay here at Cape Santa Maria and the management made it a very pleasant place to relax and enjoy. I'm ready to go back! Who wants to go with us?



April 15 – 16 Treasure Cay, Bahamas. It was hard to leave Cape Santa Maria but what the heck, we're in the Bahamas so off to Treasure Cay. After a quick jaunt of less than an hour, we arrived for 2 nights at Treasure Cay—our last stop in the Bahamas. This was completely different than the Cape but it, too had its beauty. Treasure Cay was more hustle bustle with much to do for those who had things to do and places to go. For some this was a great place to enjoy but my heart was still at Cape Santa Maria. There was much to do but I decided not to do that much—I was on vacation. The group split up and did things that were fun and of interest so next time you bump into them ask them what they enjoyed the most.



overnight in Charleston, SC. Wow, I just want to go back to Cape Santa Maria and be a beach bum ... or is that a bum-ette? Charleston is a beautiful city - a charming place we plan to visit again, stay a little longer and soak up more of its history. The next morning, we toured Fort Sumter to learn about its history. It was a very cold morning that made it seem all the more difficult to get into jeans when you lived in your bathing suit for the previous week. After lunch, we headed off to Memphis, TN. As the group set their GPS for the next leg, one member executed a flawless precautionary landing and our 'angels in the sky', Ray and Zana landed in Georgia to pick up Dave and Jodina.





April 18 Memphis, TN - The next morning we had a tour of Elvis Presley's Graceland mansion . We were in such a hurry that guess who forgot the camera... So in this section of the story we do not have any photos to place in the newsletter. Fortunately, Zana, my heroine with the coolest camera was taking some wonderful and excellent pictures. Check out Pacific Bonanza Society web-



site (www.pacificbonanza.org) for more photos.

April 19 New Orleans, LA - A short afternoon flight brought us to New Orleans. You could see the damage Hurricane Katrina caused in this city. Lakefront airport was damaged but the FBO staff soldiered on, operating out of a trailer. We stayed down in Bourbon Street and boy oh boy, it is not a family place to visit - to say the least.



April 20 El Paso, TX - Wow, only one night left on our Air Safari. It is hard to believe that we are almost done. Today, we had the only real weather of the trip and had to deviate south of our planned course to avoid the storms. We flew around the weather but had to contend with strong headwinds all across Texas. After a full day of flying, many understandably chose to relax and have dinner in the

hotel but three couples decided to avail ourselves of one of the top 5-rated steakhouses in Texas. The steaks at Cattleman's were indeed worth the drive and the company was awesome. Thank you Ray, Zana, Cynthia, Michael and Lynn for joining us for another a great time. Oh yes, the 'airplane flue' that had been going around the Safari finally hit the Walkers and now our plane was submitting to the ministrations of an El Paso mechanic.

April 21 - Big Bear Lake, CA The flight was uneventful but upon arriving it was COLD! What a nice treat it was to see Cynthia and Michael there waiting for us. What a great welcome! The lodge was very nice and everyone just kicked back and relaxed. We met for dinner to share fond memories of the trip and enjoy the great camaraderie that we had experienced during this Air Safari. What a great group of people whom we are pleased to call our friends. Let's do that again!

