

## **Humbling Experience**

Each year, I take my family to the Bahamas for a week long beach walk and conch fritter eating vacation; not to mention the Bahama Mamas. We go to the Abacos, Hopetown Harbor on Elbow Key, rent a cottage and a go fast Albury deep keel center console motor boat for use as transportation and exploration of the out-er islands. Like getting to Guana Key for the Sunday pig roast. For seven years we've had a great time, and I as leader of the household and captain of the ship, just feel great about the week I'm able to share with my mostly non-sailing family. However, having COPD, cronic obstructive pulomary disease, I'm always mindful of what can happen if I get sick and can't get professional help when on a cruise or out of the USA. I carry a med-kit, with antibiotics and steriods, the treatment necessary for my condition. I left for vacation with a slight case of bronchitis, however I was very functional for the first 5 days of our 7 day trip, though taking the meds; I snorkled and swam and did most everything, though was too tired each evening to go out to 'Jacks' for dinner. I also was quite secure that I would be OK because my wife and daughter are nurses, and were watching over me; my son, big and strong and an attorney, can make things happen so what was I to be concerned about? Friday, the next to last day of our week long vacation, I really couldn't get off the couch, and the consensus was that the next day I was to go straight to the closest hospital in the states. The kids left early on Saturday, though I really don't remember, and we got underway an hour later, first to Marsh Harbor, and than to the airport there. At this point I was going bad. I don't remember much else of the day, except that I was having alot of trouble breathing, and my wife was handling most of what I normally do on the way home. Three jet flights later, 11pm, we landed in Philadelphia International and I was unable to walk off the plane! Carol pushed me to the luggage area in a wheelchair, then retrieved our car, drove like she never drives, 80 plus mph, and when we arrived at the hospital I was in acute respitory failure. I really pushed the envelope on this one, and almost paid dearly. I spent 9 days in the hospital, the first 5 I don't recall, and now I have bronchitis, the docs say for perhaps a month or two. So now I have a bigger med-kit, and know that I'm not quite as invulnerable as I though I was. The future looks good, but the cruises may be off my adgenda for a while as I get healthy and stong. I have promised to deliver a 29' Island Packet from Puerto Rico to the Bahamas in March, and my own boat is in North Carolina and has to come back to the Chesapeake in May, so I'm working out and listening to my body!