

17/2/84

Not exactly exciting stuff but at least we had a chance to slow down and enjoy ourselves which was exactly what we wanted. The reunion was the enjoyable exciting part the rest of the time was spent 'settling in'.

The return trip was a bit of an ordeal. Our plane left early so we were up early to finish packing and seeing two last-minute details. One detail we managed to overlook were our house keys and key to our lock for our bags. Seems in the rush they were left forgotten at the house, a fact not discovered until we were checking in at the airport. It was too late to go back and find them (I wasn't sure where they were) so I told Mom to look for them and told her we would call and make arrangements for them when we were laying over in Denver. Once in Denver however we couldn't reach anyone at home. And a desperate collect call to my father's office produced no information. So we boarded our flight to Miami with questions about how we would get into our house in St Vincent.

When we arrived in Miami we met a friend who happened to be flying out that same day to Barbados. He told us that Eastern might change our reservations so that we might also be able to fly out that evening with him. After loading up at the baggage claim we stumbled our way to the Eastern desk, checked our bags through to Barbados and got a standby boarding pass. Since we then had some time to kill, I decided to call home and find out the status of the great key search. Mom told me that she had found them and had persuaded a kindly Eastern agent to forward them for pickup the next morning in Miami at the passenger service desk. Great! We would be in Barbados.

We immediately sought out the Passenger Service desk and found none. But an agent said that it was probably sent via Sprint their overnight package service (we described to her what mom had told us: The SL agent had put the envelope containing the keys in a blue bag which was then placed in a box. "Yes, that sounds like Sprint" she said. So we hustled off to the Sprint office to have the keys forwarded to Barbados. "That will cost you an additional \$60" said the agent. So our dilemma grew. Should we #1!) forget the keys, have Sprint return them to Salt Lake (no charge) and we would deal with breaking in when we got to St Vincent. #2) Pay the money to forward them and spend an extra night in Barbados (approx cost \$130) or #3 Stay the night in Miami and get the keys in the morning. After much hemming and hawing we decided on #3 and, sans luggage, checked into a cheap hotel which remarkably gave discounts to PCVs. The next afternoon, we returned to the airport in our washed-in-the-sink look clothes and discovered, to our complete horror, that there were no packages there for us. As a last resort we decided to check baggage claim for a box with our name on it. Voila! There was a box as big as a suitcase which had our name on it. Inside the box was a sleeping bag size sack and inside of that was a large envelope containing a small cardboard square with keys taped to it. The errant keys had found their way!

Much relieved, we boarded our plane to Barbados, hoping our luggage hadn't disappeared (along with our new tape player). After consuming as many TABs as my over-stressed kidneys could handle we arrived back in Barbados, failed to find our luggage at overnight claim and found them quietly waiting for us undisturbed in the center of the baggage claim building. But our ordeal was just the beginning. Before leaving St Vincent I had asked around to find out if there was a cheap guest house in Barbados near the airport and was told of one about a ½ mile from Grantley Adams that ran something like \$8 US a night was called the Shalamar or something like that. So Deb and I had counted on staying there when we arrived. After repeated questioning of the Bajan taxi drivers we determined it was the Shan-lon. We so we packed our many bundles into the cab and rode the 1/2 mile to the Shan-lon. The rate was nowhere close to \$8 US. It was \$37.50 US. Much too much so we stuffed ourselves into the cab and returned to the airport for an overnight stay. The cab driver insisted that the fare was \$24 B-dos \$12 to the Shan-lon and \$12 back, outrageous! I paid him \$17 Barbados (still way too much) and we settled into a long night of fitful sleep in a drafty terminal (noisy too). Fortunately we were able to get an early flight out to St Vincent. but not until after LIAT squeezed us for 20 kg of overweight luggage (which I had weighed in Salt Lake - 10 kg over) LIAT has some very company favorable scales! Anyway we managed to get us and our baggage back to St Vincent and were we ever glad to be back home! Some 9,000 miles of travel behind us, we opened the door to our house (thank goodness), dropped our bags, caught a shower and drifted off for our first real sleep in 48 hours.

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