

August 27, 1983 (about 3 AM, Hawaii time; from Tom's log entry)

The last several days have been good ones. Our initial lassitude and marginal "mal de mer" are gone. The challenging night I last wrote about is behind us; tiring, rather disconcerting if not exactly frightening (among other chores I had to climb about 10 feet up the mast three times at night to tie in the reef), and yet very rewarding in what it taught us about what we could do. We really felt as a team -- reefing, dropping sail, retrieving the generator and fixing the vane. Now, two days of near constant easterly trades, 3-6 foot seas, generally clear skies, steady 4-6 knots, and hardly a sail or rudder trim necessary. Our night watches, after brief experimentation with 3.5 hours each, have now settled down to three hours each for four night shifts, and then "whoever" is best able monitors our progress in the day. I take the 8-11 PM and 2-5 AM watches, Liz the 11-2 AM and 5-8 AM watches. We both are able to sleep reasonably well off watch, indeed in some ways for me more soundly than on land. With three weeks and 2300 miles on the port tack, our bunk choice is logical -- the starboard main cabin berth without lee cloth and nestled below the books, radios, and vent. For me the night watches have a special significance -- an opportunity for much reflection, for being an integral part of the world around me, for pondering

the immensity and beauty of the heavens above me (stars and moon sights that one seldom experiences on land), for some reading, and for the experience of feeling very, very small -- 11' by 38' bobbing on a huge ocean, my usual 3-4 mile horizon reduced at times to 20' of useful vision. At night without the moon you can see into eternity if you look overhead and up to the mast if you look ahead. It is a great time for both feeling at peace with nature and for feeling at the mercy of nature. At times one sector of the horizon will lose its stars, black clouds will become apparent, the wind will pick up and shift, and soon the boat will be hurtling along at what seems to be freight train speed, with phosphorescent wake and much noise, with no other apparent destiny than a mark shown on the compass card. I know not what is ahead, what weather awaits me, what objects may be in the water, whether to change sail or not, etc., etc. And then, soon the squall passes and we are again loping along with some (limited) sense of control over our destiny and with renewed confidence in our own capabilities and in the security of our vessel.

Liz's journal, August 29, 1983

Since many people mentioned that they enjoyed the excerpts from my journal, and many also wondered what we did with ourselves all day, every day, I give you an account of a 24-hour period, written when Tom and I were alone on board. I regret that I don't have a similar account when the four of us were together, since that was wonderful in a different way, but I didn't seem to write in the journal as often or as fully when there were four of us.

- “Wednesday, August 29, 7:04 AM. The good intention for this entry is to cover a 24-hour period - what occupies our time for a whole day. Day for us includes dark and daylight. We're on the move at every minute, so when “lights out” comes around, it happens for one or the other of us!
- Last night was a bit more active than most. We are at 8° north, in the middle of the inter-tropical convergence zone, a stretch of the world near the equator between the northeast and southeast trade winds. Quite unsettled weather - as became apparent to us. We had become quite spoiled after four days of not really having to touch sail or monitor (self-steering vane), steady 15-20 knot winds, serene!
- Then the day before yesterday we noticed quite distinct circle of haze around the sun. *Weather for the Mariner* said we should expect snow or rain within 14-24 hours. Well, yesterday, right after lunch, the rains came! At first it was a lark, scurrying for soap, shampoo, containers for fresh drinking water, but then it didn't stop! It would slow to a drizzle, then fine mist, then the track of hard rain could be seen approaching on the surface of the sea, and off we'd be again. Then the wind dropped to 2 knots, and we turned on the engine after the 6 PM radio contact. I went to bed, and Tom took his customary first watch. Since our automatic pilot is broken, we have to steer when the engine is on, and Tom was soaked when I emerged at 11 PM for my watch. Tom departed to “the bunk”; one is always favored, depending on the tack, and I steered for three hours. Thunder rumbled and lightning flashed, mostly in the distance, thank God, although there were three or four flashes that seemed right overhead. The rigging stands out in vivid white - frozen by the flash - then disappears into the blackness again. A lightning strike could be very unpleasant as it would undoubtedly wipe out our electrical systems (radios, satnav, weather fax) and leave us in a much more primitive state than we are in now.
- About 15 minutes before the end of my watch, the wind began to blow, up to 25-30 knots. Tom appeared and suggested we hoist sail after reefing the main. This we did, with staysail and reefed main; it took us about an hour to get this organized, so at 3 AM I went below. No sooner had I slipped off all my soaking wet gear that Tom decided we should put in a second reef, since gusts were now reaching 35 knots. So back into wetness, wet underwear, wet foul weather gear, wet cockpit, and Tom put in the second reef. We actually take turns doing all the deck work. I had done the first reef and set the staysail, with Tom at the helm, and we reversed tasks for the second one. This took about 45 minutes, only about one hour left of Tom's regular second watch. But, gentlemen that he is, he kept watch until 6:30 AM, and now he's napping and I'm writing. A hot cup of cocoa at the last watch change did our spirits a world of good. Although we got more exercise and less sleep last night than usual, both Tom and I commented on our growing confidence in handling the boat, come what may, and our super team work. Trust in each other's ability and common sense eases the burden when the

going gets tough. So far (915 miles from Honolulu), so good!

- 10:09 AM. We just finished breakfast (grapefruit juice, hot oatmeal and coffee). Tasted good. It's not raining, but everything is wet. Wind 17 knots, our speed 5 knots, and still under double reef and staysail from last night. We could shake out the second reef, but we're taking it easy, and were not convinced that the wind has really abated; skies mostly gray, but a few tiny patches of blue are peeking through. The air and sea water are quite warm, thank goodness, for last night would have been a horror show off Neah Bay (on the Washington coast). Tom got up around 9 AM to check in with the radio net - reception barely readable so that didn't take long. We haven't yet decided what we will do today, but I'll keep you posted.
- 12:49 PM. In the interim, I continued to read "*At Dawn We Slept*," a fascinating account of Pearl Harbor bombing told from both the Japanese and American perspectives. Then I napped and listen to *All Things Considered*, which is broadcast on Armed Forces network from 11 AM to noon. It's great to have that little part of home available to us out here in the middle of the ocean.
- Then lunch - Campbell's soups Pepper Pot. I had never heard of it. My curiosity was roused by the name which gave such small clues to the nature of the soup. Ingredients list reveals beef tripe broth and beef tripe along with other goodies. Tom hadn't recalled buying that (although he had picked it out during our blitz provisioning run in the Ala Moana shopping center in Honolulu). Our verdict - interesting but forgettable. We also had V8 (we open one 46-ounce can of juice a day) and cheese and crackers. We bought all Gouda cheese because each is packed in wax which lets us keep it fresh despite lack of refrigeration. Now were regrouping to put up a jib. More later.
- 5:25 PM. After putting up the jib, we picked up speed. Skies were brightening though not sunny, so we lolled in the cockpit chatting about what we think about during watch - and other monumental subjects. Then out came the almond oil, and we gave each other a long and satisfying massage up on deck. Rain clouds surround us but do not rain on us. Back to the cockpit where Tom read aloud the last chapter of *The Pacific Navigators*, the account of Cook's fatal final voyage. Again, nap time for Tom and I'll half-watch, half-read after I finish this entry. I have to consider supper makings, since most food is stored under the bunk Tom is sleeping on. I think we'll have chicken/rice/peas casserole. One pot dinners make preparation and clean-up easier, and they can be eaten out of a bowl, so food doesn't spill off the plate. One thinks of these things! More later.
- 7:48 PM. Tom just completed his regular talk with Mike Rice in Fairbanks, Alaska. It is so reassuring to be able to make such regular contact. We were also able to hear from Ron Hill that they all survived the storm that buffeted them for the last two days, and that Bob and Helen Kitchen aboard *Cuisine* sent their love. Radio is both a lifeline and a toy which gives delight and comfort.
- Dinner tonight was as planned, with some rosé wine to enhance it and us. Strong, vivid sunsets, and the crescent moon sits in the 10% of the sky not covered with clouds. I'm going to the "head" for ablutions and tooth-brushing, to sleep for three hours until my first watch rolls around. Since we didn't get much sleep last night, we both hope that tonight will be SOP

(standard operating procedures) - whatever that means for this trustee little vessel. Till later.....

August 30 0713 Z (9:30 PM)

Our introduction to ocean sailing has so far been excellent. Hands-off tradewinds sailing interspersed with sailing, navigation, mechanical and virtually every other kind of problem in gradually increasing complexity. The last few days have been especially good, in that they have tested our ability to handle night-time sail/deck/mechanical/vane problems. The spreader lights are very useful for blunting the effects of darkness on deck work.

We have both been impressed with how well we do, though this is not to minimize the potential problems and risks. One feels as if one is learning to walk all over again as one tries to get a jib under control in 30 knot gusts & a heaving, plunging foredeck. Since one can't anticipate well the motions, one is obliged to move in a crouch, hanging on to everything, & crossing open areas as if they were "free fire" zones. The versatility of the human body, and especially the hands and arms, continues to amaze me. We bob and weave around the deck and though the AE sails herself most of the time, we are the vital element of change, plan and adaptability.

Liz's journal, summing up trip

This next entry has reflections on the trip as a whole, written during our last passage:

- Life is determined by elemental forces - the height and character of waves, the strength and direction of the wind, when my watch is, what there is to eat and who is up to cooking it, nap time....
- Life can be lived apart from TV, radio, newspapers and the telephone. All those seem very distant, as a part of life in a different era, then I read a current issue of *Time* magazine, and the dislocation continues, the content feels familiar but unimportant.
- Conversation is important, and we've had some great ones.
- The subculture of "the yachties" is very odd - we share adventures but each on separate boats, separate motivations, different fears and turn-ons and offs, the cliques, the "beautiful people", who talks to whom on channel 16 (that is the ship-to-ship VHF radio channel which is our basic party line when in harbors!), the trading and break-up of crews, the competition among some to be the fastest, biggest, most high tech, and then our delight to find ourselves at the same anchorage with *Alaskan Spirit* and John and Marium Clare of whom we are so fond!
- All this solitude doesn't automatically lead to contemplation - my mind still jumps and races, flits from impression to impression, even though I can go through a three-hour night watch just looking at a dark ocean, stars if they are out, searching for other ships - without book or tape for distraction.
- Grace before dinner - a super, centering, solidifying time, just a moment but a precious one. We had so incredibly much to be grateful for.
- Being competent on deck is a neat feeling, strapped on with life harness and tether, on a pitching wet deck, but doing what needs to be done and doing it right, and realizing that I'm not scared when I'm actually doing it. The scary is the unknown, not the current challenge, even when it slightly overwhelms!