

THE HELM



Ventura Power Squadron

A Unit of the United States Power Squadrons®

Sail and Power Boating – District 13

*Dedicated to **SAFE BOATING THROUGH EDUCATION***

September 2011

Boating is Fun...Let Us Show You How!

Volume 54 No.8



Commander's Comments

Cdr Don Roy, AP

As your Commander, I believe it is time for me to re-view the goals I set out nine months ago and assess the progress in their implementation.

My first goal was to encourage 100 % participation from our membership. A lofty goal for sure, so let's consider the sum total of members who have participated so far this year; members who took classes and proctored or assisted, held a position on the bridge, attended Executive Meetings and general meetings, enjoyed the Holiday Party, Commander's Ball, our vessel check examiners or had a vessel check, manned the VPS booths at the Safe Boating Expo and Channel Islands Boat Show, attended the 50th Anniversary Fleet Review and Celebration and the Ventura County Proclamation of 50 years service to Ventura County, dropped your hook at the Frenchy's Shakedown Cruise or prepped and helped out with our Torres Straights District 13 host room, I'd say we have had a real great start to achieving 100% participation.

My next goal was to reach out to our local partners in the boating community and look for new ways to foster safe boating. We had many organizations join us with our 50th Anniversary activities, including the Ventura

Yacht Club, the Pierpont Bay Yacht Club, Ventura Harbor District, the Ventura Outrigger Canoe Club and Island Packers. Thanks again for all the squadron volunteers who decorated their boats, and provide pot luck food and cake. We continue to build ties with the Ventura City Sailing program, the USCG Auxiliary, and the Tall Ship Institute and Schooner Bill of Rights.

Another goal was to modernize our communications by setting up a Ventura Power Squadron Gmail account. We use the same account to centralize email lists, invite members to classes and events, and build up a mail list for those who sign up for ABC classes at boat shows. We are finding the Gmail account to be very helpful for storing our important VPS documents. The entire Bridge is thrilled about the new communications update.

The last goal of mine was to provide the best education and worthwhile activities for our members. SEO Gary Hubler and Fred DeLamarter are doing a great job, and we have some great events coming up, so please review the Helm Calendar to save the dates. I look forward to continued success of the Ventura Power Squadron.



COMING EVENTS

September 2011

6	Tues	Executive Committee Meeting @ 1930 <i>Ventura Yacht Club</i>
16-18		Cruise to Channel Islands Harbor <i>Channel Island Harbor</i>

October 2011

4	Tues	Executive Committee Meeting @ 1930 <i>Coast Guard Station Annex- Ch Isl. Harbor</i>
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More information on each event can be found at www.usps.org/ventura and in The HELM 2 months prior to the event.

August Birthdays

1	Eric Long
5	Arvid Rauch
7	Nina Holt
7	Greg Shank
10	Oscar Swinton
11	Eloy Molina
14	Lisa Gosselin
17	Bill York
18	Kerry Leiman
21	David Dolan
23	Paul Blumenfeld
23	David Brown
25	Matthew Johnston
28	Alan Walsh
31	Gary Calote
31	Ken Partney

The best birthday wishes to everyone last month!

September Birthdays

5	Phyllis Stender
6	Jim Baldwin
7	Will Fryman
14	Larry Brown
19	Michael Villarreal
22	Susan Buchanan
24	Christopher Torbet

The best birthday wishes to everyone this month!

Notice of General Meeting:

Notice of General Meeting: September 17, 2011, Channel Islands Harbor Cruise

Per the request of a member, the Executive Committee, at its July 5th 2011 meeting, unanimously approved a motion for the general membership to vote on an amendment to Bylaw Section 1.1 to add "Sail" to the Ventura Power Squadron name. This is an official notice to discuss this amendment at a General Meeting at our Channel Islands Harbor Cruise BBQ at 1700 on September 17th.

The Rules Committee shall generate the amendment language and present it for discussion at the September 17th meeting. The amendment will be voted on by the general membership at the next General Meeting.

The existing Section 1.1 is:

The name of this organization shall be Ventura Power Squadron. Inc. constituting a unit of the United States Power Squadron.

The proposed amended Section 1.1:

The name of this organization shall be Ventura Power and Sail Squadron—or—Ventura Sail and Power Squadron. If motion to Amend Section 1.1 passes, then membership will vote on the desired name change.



Education Station
Lt/C Gary Hubler, AP

Did the summer seem too short to you? It did to me, but as I look back on it there were many great times with friends and family and some excellent new travel adventures. I hope all of you had some excellent boating experiences that will become fond memories. However, summer is over and it's time to go to school!

America's Boating Course Starts September 20th—Send Your Boating Friends

First up this fall is America's Boating Course, which is our introductory course offered to the public. This course is managed by **Fred DeLemarter, P.**

Location: Ventura Yacht Club
1755 Spinnaker Drive
2nd Floor
Ventura, CA 93001

Dates/Time: Tuesdays
September 20th thru November 22nd
7:00 p.m.

Register: September 20th at first class or call 805-876-4VPS (805-876-4877) or email venturapowersquadron@gmail.com

Piloting Course Starts September 21st—Sign Up Now!



The next advanced grade course on our schedule this year is Piloting, and it will be taught by **Ron Dolbier, AP**. After Seamanship, **Piloting** is the next step in the sequence of advanced grade courses. We will generally offer this course only once each year, so now is the time for all Seamanship-grade students to sign up.

Location: Ventura Harbor Patrol
1603 Anchors Way Drive
Second Floor Conference Room
Ventura, CA 93001

Dates/Time: Thursdays
September 22nd
7:00 p.m.

Register: Call 805-876-4VPS (805-876-4877) or email venturapowersquadron@gmail.com

Junior Navigation Course Starts October 10th—Sign Up Now!



Junior Navigation is an advanced grade course that is taken after completing both the Piloting and Advanced Piloting Courses. Please note that **Junior Navigation** is being offered for the first time in many years. If you have completed Advanced Piloting and want to learn more about **offshore cruise planning** and have some fun with a **sextant**, why not give it go? The Junior Navigation course has been recently updated and significantly modified from earlier versions of the course. The older version had a reputation for being very difficult—and it was. The newer version focuses on using sun sights, and does not introduce sights of the stars, planets and the moon. Those come in a later course. I think this, and other changes, make this course much easier to get your arms around. Like Piloting and Advanced Piloting, you have to work at it, but it's very manageable.

This course is a self-study course, with members meeting weekly to discuss course lessons and review and

check all homework. We will have assistance and support from a SN-grade member for the sextant portion of the class.

Location: Ashworth Leininger Group Offices
601 East Daily Drive, Suite 302
Camarillo, CA 93010

Dates/Time: Mondays
September 21st thru January (with a break in December)
7:00 p.m.

Register: Call 805-876-4VPS (805-876-4877) or email venturapowersquadron@gmail.com

Early 2012 Courses



We are planning on offering **Advance Piloting** in early 2012. This advanced grade course will be taught by **Rick Metheny**. Ask anyone who has taken Advanced Piloting, and they will tell you that you could not have a better instructor than Rick and that the added navigation skills are definitely worth the effort. If you have completed Piloting, now is the time to think about taking your training to the next level. If you have completed Seamanship, you could take Piloting this September and move right into Advanced Piloting in January, which would be an outstanding accomplishment.



P/C Jan Lawson proudly announces that the following students passed their Seamanship class!

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| • Erica Alegar | Deborah Torbet |
| • Jim Cary | Bonnie Duncan |
| • Hector Garcia | Steven Nagelberg |
| • Janine Nesbit | Gary Ohst |
| • Anthony Porter | Greg Shank |
| • Christopher Torbet | Scott Nordeng |



Executive Suite

P/C Ev Ashworth, AP

September Fun

I hope that this finds all of the VPS denizens tanned, rested and ready for our fall VPS semester. As you'll gather elsewhere in the HELM, September has the Squadron busy with the Fall Boating Class (hats off to **Gary Hubler and Fred DeLamater** for their coordinating of same) and our annual trip to the Channel Islands. The Channel Island's cruise will include wet sandwiches from the *Goodspeed's* galley, as well as all manner of grog for evenings around the slips. If you've not made it to one of these trips, I would heartily recommend it. You can show up just for the dinner (which is always a treat), bring your dingy for a day at the races in the harbor, or come down for both Friday and Saturday and get a slip. I'm opting for the last option, and will be able to squeak in late Friday (Henry has a water polo game against Westlake, which will end late afternoon). I'm looking forward to a chance to cheat at whatever Jan and Debbie have planned for the dinghies. I'm pretty adept at sneaking extra cards into my deck, despite having been warned off by the game wardens. We'll see. What I do know is that the weekend is always fun, and provides plenty of time to relax with friends and sample some of the best food you can have at any price. I always bring an extra chair for others, and have always been warmed by a new friendship or two.

In October, District 13 will host a three-day meeting to all our members from October 21-22 in Marina del Rey. The conference proceedings are free to all members, however, you'll need to pay for meals and hotel rooms (at a nice discounted rate of 99 bucks US for the room; prices for meals TBD). There will be leadership courses, on-water boating certification programs, and workshops on our new education program that National has been rolling out over the past several years. Wholly separate of the syllabus, you'll have a chance to make some new friends among our fraternity – something that I've appreciated the most from past District conferences. I plan on attending, so please give me a call if there's an interest that you may have.

I also wanted to relay belated thanks to everyone for helping out with the Channel Islands In-Water Boat Show. National provided a handsome and clever demo for the proper use of a fire extinguisher. With **John Young's** patient tutelage, I finally passed on my 5th at-

tempt. We had over 100 people sign up with an interest in taking the Fall Boating Class, and received complements from USCGA and a number of vendors for our booth. Good work by many, which we hope will continue to pay dividends for a strong boating class this month.

I look forward to seeing many of you during our Cruise to Channel Islands, at a VPS class, and out on the water.



Christie's Corner

Lt/C Christie Yeager, S

The Ventura Power Squadron Channel Islands Harbor Rendezvous weekend starts Friday afternoon, September 16 through Sunday, September 18.

EVERYONE IS INVITED!!!!

First ----- We have secured free slips for all attending boats - we will be together on the same dock. If you don't have a boat, come anyway as all our activities are land based (except the Dingy Poker, so bring a dingy or hitch a ride)

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Friday @ 1700 _ Cocktail Hour on the dock--- Commander Don and P/C Ev will supply the cocktails, you bring soda drinks and munchies to share
Friday Dinner - Dutch Treat at Whales Tail
Saturday Lunch - Ev prepares Wet Sandwiches for all - you bring drinks and chairs to sit around and enjoy the day/weekend.
Saturday 1:30 Dingy Poker - Get a dingy or hitch a ride for a treasure hunt poker game with lots of crazy prizes.
Saturday Dinner - BBQ - we'll take a head count and have a great BBQ delivered to us on the docks. Music, laughs and cocktail hour again supplied by Commander Don and P/C Ev. Poker game results and maybe a quick game of Bingo as well.
Sunday AM - Breakfast in Pajamas. The Kiss gang is planning on making their now famous Breakfast for all who can drag themselves over to *KISS*.

What does this whole event cost? A mere \$25 per person for all the meals, \$15 per person for just Satur-

day BBQ, and \$15 for kids for the weekend \$10 for dinner.

So come by land or sea, but do plan on having fun on the docks of Chanel Island Harbor. It's important that we get a list of boats attending and a head count for dinners/lunch/breakfast, so please reply to this email or call Jennifer Sweet directly (805) 620-2875 with your RSVP.

Our 2010-2011 Bridge

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Tales from the "Tenacious"

...Methenys' Alaskan Journey

Chapter 3:

Our journey continues. Leaving Wrangell June 4 we negotiated the 60 plus navigational aids (buoys, towers with lights, land based markers and 5 sets of range markers) through the Wrangell Narrows north. It's like Follow the Yellow Brick Road", but in this case follow green and red marks, depth gauges and contour lines on charts zigging and zagging across a narrow channel. I was at the wheel most of the trip. Rick had planned the times carefully and we hit the current at slack water. If you don't plan times carefully and use your lists and current tide tables you could hit currents 4-7 knots or either your bow or stern (if the boat is moving at 9 knots and you have a 5 knot current on the bow the boat would be working hard to make good a 4 knot progress. At the end of

the NARROWS is Petersburg a small town founded by fisherman from Norway many years ago.

Then we were headed north again to drop our hook in Gambier Bay. This is a really huge area; really two anchorages hooked together. We dropped our hook behind Good Island and were able to watch the weather (across the reef that stretched across the head of the anchorage) and humpback antics out in main channel. We explored the entire area by dinghy; two plus miles to the end of the one arm alone. When we left we shared the bay with 17 humpbacks very close to our boat. On the passage up to Tracy Glacier we had a unique experience. A mother and her calf put on a "sea World" show—about 50 feet off our bow. Spy hopping on their tails with heads high in the air, huge jumps with their tails following into the water and finally jumps that came down on their sides and flukes that splashed cargo container plumes of foam and water toward us. WOW!

Next, we slowly navigate up to the Tracy Arm of the Sawyer Glacier. In 2008 the 25 mile passage from the entrance to the fiord up to the glacier was almost free of ice until the last turn to the face of the glacier. This trip almost the entire fiord passage was filled with broken off pieces of ice; all colors of blue and turquoise and some burgs completely clear. Often the clear bits seemed to have bubbles inside where the ice has been melting. These burgy "bits" can be huge, stretching deep under the water and are carved into fanciful shapes. Remember to ask Rick how to get out of an icy fiord turn when a starboard shifter breaks off and only allows the boat to stay in forward gear.

Moving ahead-- Juneau will be our next destination. We had some new non-mechanical adventures. We took the Mt Roberts tram up to the top of the mountain and took awesome photos of the city and the Juneau Ice fields. The mud flats that lie in the ice field in low tides suck in the navigation markers in the oozing muck. Returning to the Mendenhall Glacier we were shocked that in just 3 years the face of the glacier has retreated 540 feet. The right flank of the glacier has melted and new waterfalls race to spill into the lake at the base of the glacier It is sad to see something so majestic change so very quickly.

Jumping on the Alaska Marine Highway Ferry we cruised from Juneau to Skagway up the Lynn Canal, the 3rd longest fiord in the world. Skagway is a tiny, quiet town (when the cruise ships are gone). This was not always the case. It was once the staging ground for the miners making the horrendous journey up the mountains and then down to the Yukon River where they built boats of every kind to ride down river to the Dawson gold fields we rode the White Pass railroad from Skagway up to the top of the pass where the miners traveled. The tracks follow original miner trails slowly winding up the mountains through s curves, wooden trestle bridges and dark tunnels. Rick had a blast standing on the linkage area between cars to get good pictures of the rear and front of the train as we curved around. Looking down the canyon forged through the mountains over the ages, the Skagway River roared through the river channel through boulders and white water rapids. A beautiful sight!! Next we took a fast water taxi to the small town of Haines. It sits on the Lynn Canal and has Glacier Bay as its neighbor to the west. Rick

loved it here and didn't want to leave. We had tickets for the fast ferry back to Juneau so after a tour of the Hammer Museum (that's right, only hammers allowed) we were off again. Leaving Juneau we headed west in the Icy Straits (the body of water below Glacier Bay and the northern tips of Baranof, Admiralty and Chjichagof Islands) We passed through the water systems of Fredrick Bay and the Indian town of Hoonah to thread our way into NEKA Bay. Again the area had immense bays with extreme tidal changes. Secluded, solitary and sublimely beautiful describe Neka. Rick fished; I canoed the entire perimeter of the North Bite of the bay.

The shore line was filled with diverse and abundant shells crabs, moss, kelp etc. Just a beachcomber by canoe paddle paradise. The bay actually had small harbor porpoises that jumped and swam around my canoe and jumped over my bow—just great fun.

Bears are the agenda as we head south again. Salmon are starting to run and usually bears follow. One night we had dinner watching a grizzly munching on kedge grass and one morning we awoke to a brown bear on the shore unfazed by our generator. It was very interested in watching the deer that had wandered down to the sandy grassy area by shore. The deer sprinted away after taking careful sniffs at the air.

Small craft warnings were predicted for Chatham Straits and we chose to get through the Peril Straits and Sturgis Narrows and up the Pacific side of Baranof Island sooner than later. This is the channel that runs west to east across Baranof Island. Another section where tides and currents really dictate the time of day (and your SOG) depending where the current cycle is in relation to slack tide. We pulled into Sitka expecting to find really crowded docks. Not this year, no problem getting a dock with 30 amp power for as long as we needed. Again we found Sitka to be the crown jewel of SE Alaska. So much natural beauty: foggy, misted low green grey islands, snow covered Mt Edgecombe volcano standing as a sentinel over the city. This is a walking town; we put miles on our tennis shoes. Visited a Raptor rehabilitation center and got up close and personal with golden and bald eagles, owls, hawks and falcons. Now we had to reverse our trip and leave Sitka up the straits again. With my captain by my side, I took the helm through the straits out into Chatham Strait. I steered us through the navigation aids, the currents, eddies and whirlpools as well as sudden drops in the depths down to a few feet.

Then it hit! We tucked into a secure anchorage we had enjoyed last trip and were stuck there for 4 days as 30 knot winds high tides and pouring rain made the straits a nasty place to be. Other than "itching" to get going, we were fine as the anchor held and we swung 45 degrees as the wind howled in our canvas. Then quiet filled the anchorage. We were on our way very early the next day. Destination: Baranof Warm Springs the "to go to place" for cruisers. A roaring waterfall spills into the bay its sound like wild music. We managed to get along the dock and had other boats rafted to us. This spot is famous for its bathtubs filled with natural waters from the hot springs. Rick was in soaking heaven.

Since we had reservations back at Wrangell in mid July to go back out to the Anan Bear Observatory we headed east. On the way, however, we stopped at some of the best and

most beautiful anchorages in the area. Pybus Bay is a sprawling series of anchorages with rock strewn shores and grassy flats that the grizzly bears love. Again we had a few days of bright, warm sunshine and time to canoe and explore the nooks and coves and beaches by dinghy. We watched a mother bring her 3 offspring down to the shore in the evenings. One tiny cub stumbled and landed on his bottom trying to follow close to mom. It was special to be able to watch them pull up the grass and chew away (with my binoculars).

Traveled back to Petersburg and then through the Wrangell Narrows going south. This time it was a spectacular blue sunny day. I left the boat to captain Rick and sat in the fly - bridge and watched the world go by. We have some really great pictures of this part of our journey.

Next Chapter of this saga will probably be sent at the end of August from Victoria. We are now going to be slowly heading down the coast of British Columbia (weather permitting). Everyone take care and we'll see you in October.

Pat and Rick

The Adventurous Wang's

Friends, Family, and Loyal Readers:

It is now the hurricane season (June to November) in the Northern Hemisphere. *Laelia* is on land in the boatyard at Prickly Bay, Grenada. Grenada is just outside of the southern limit (latitude 12N) of the hurricane belt in the Caribbean. Hopefully there won't be any errant whirlwinds in that vicinity.

We are back in California for our usual medical checkups. After that we plan to spend some time in Peru traveling by air. We won't return to Grenada until November to get *Laelia* ready for launching in late November or early December.

Next season we will continue our journey by way of the Panama Canal, returning to the Pacific and northward. From Panama to Mexico, as it is all along the west coast of North America, we will be going against the prevailing wind. So our adventures will continue.

Passage from Cape Verde to the Caribbean, Pt. 1 Wednesday, 17 November 2010.

We are underway! We departed Mindelo Marina, Cape Verde Islands in the morning with a stiff wind in the channel between the two islands of Sao Vicente and Ilha Santo Antao. White caps are everywhere in the sea around us and *Laelia* is responding well to the fresh breeze at a course over ground (COG) of about 6 knots. We are flying! Or so it seems.

The departure of our crew went well early this morning. They left *Laelia* at 0700 for the airport. We are feeling such a lifting of our spirits. It is as if a threatening black cloud overhead has suddenly turned into a clear blue sky.

I am still planning to make landfall at St. Anne Harbour, Martinique (14-26N, 060-54W) in the Caribbean. Unless adverse conditions advise otherwise, we will stay between latitudes 16N and 15N until approaching Martinique although Judy is already lobbying for making landfall in Antigua.

We are still receiving weather forecasts from Bruce by email via the SSB radio. It seems that the wind will be generally 10 to 15 knots except for occasional calms. It will be E 5-10

knots on Saturday, 20 November---three days from now.

By the way, dinner was eggplant and onions cooked with minced steak accompanied by 10-minute brown rice.

All is well on board *Laelia* for the day beginning at midnight. The moon high overhead was not full, but so bright it was casting a strong shadow under foot. Venus still appeared bright, but Orion was only faintly recognizable in the sky. A few isolated cumulus clouds made the sky look almost a pale blue by contrast. The wind was 12 knots true ENE.

I scanned the horizon earlier, but found no lights of any sort. It is always reassuring not to find another vessel nearby, be it boat or ship.

Presently, our course over ground is 295 magnetic at 4.2 knots speed over ground (SOG) with the headsail alone. The main sail on a catamaran is often not very effective for dead down wind. It does not open up fully because the shrouds are in the way. If the wind is gusty, there is the risk of breaking a batten or two then poking holes in the sail. *Laelia's* 150% jib works well and is easily managed if there is a squall with nasty winds during the night.

Early in the morning, we spotted a sail boat a few hundred meters on the port bow. It looked like a boat we had met in the Marina La Palma. We knew he had sailed ahead of us to Cape Verde Islands. It has a blue UV cover on one of its double fore-sails. Judy hailed the boat on the VHF radio, but received no answer. Single handers often turn their radios off when sleeping, but forget to turn it back on. Also, it is safer for them to sleep in the daytime when other boats and ships are likely to see them more easily. Anyway, we tried every way we knew how not only to pass him, but to steer a different course so we won't meet up with him again later in the night. Mmmmm, I better go out and have a look right now. We looked for the boat on the radar screen when it was still visible to the eye, but it was certainly not visible on radar. As much as we love to see another boat, we wanted to stay clear of its path. It is definitely a serious hazard at night. Not all sail boats present a good radar signal. After nightfall all we can do is look for their navigation lights and hope that other boats and ships keep a good watch also.

Notes written the first morning at dawn after departure from Cabo Verde, a former Portuguese Colony on the West African Coast:

Bon Dia:

The sea looks dark by the dim light at early dawn with dense clouds overhead. It has been an uneventful night. Wind has been light with swells from the north on the beam, it was not fast nor the most comfortable. Yet we have already put almost 100 nm behind us in approximately 20 hours. As I write, a glorious sun just popped up on the horizon off the port stern. The whole world has now acquired a rosy tinge. It is time to put up the spinnaker.

Judy was able to check in with the "Rum-Runners" Radio Net this morning at 0900. Despite our again-bent whip antenna, the radio transmission was reasonably clear on 6516 MHz USB (upper side band). Later she talked over the radio on 8131 MHz to an Australian boat just starting out on the passage at the Canary Islands. It seems we are one of the ear-

lier boats to cross the Atlantic this season; the boats following us are eager to find out our sailing conditions.



We had the spinnaker flying by 0930 this morning after the radio net. The wind was light at around 10 knots NE. The boat rolled with every NNE swell if we persisted on heading west. Under such light wind conditions, the spinnaker would spill air and refill with a loud snap, crackle, and pop. I could just feel in my mind every stitch in the seams of the sail stretching to the breaking point. To keep the spinnaker from ripping apart, we turned the boat more south so as to put the swell more to the stern. It was not until late afternoon that we came under some dark clouds with stronger winds of 15 to 18 knots. Then we were able to sail due west for a couple of hours at 7 plus knots. With stronger wind, the air does not spill from the sail despite the rolling motion.

Before sunset, the sock was pulled down on the spinnaker and the whole mess dropped on the foredeck. We then unfurled the jib to sail WNW on the opposite tack. In this way, we hope to zigzag along between 16th and 17th parallel.

Earlier, in bright sunshine, we finished lunch with an over-ripe papaya as dessert. I devoured my half with the assistance of a spoon. Judy turned hers into a gourmet experience. She sectioned the papaya evenly before drenching it with fresh squeezed lime juice. She actually ate the papaya on a plate! Dinner was green beans and carrots from SC de la Palma and Spanish onions from Gibraltar cooked with minced steak in hoisin sauce to accompany Uncle Ben's 10-minute brown rice.

Email reply from *Laelia* to Forecaster, our wx guru: Muchas gracias for the "Route Forecast Nov. 19 to Dec 03". Sounds like a few showers are on the way. That will be nice to wash off some of the accumulated salt on the boat. Hopefully convection activities (thunder and lightning) will not accompany the moisture. So far all the squalls have been well behaved with winds no more than 17 to 18 knots and no rain.

We set the spinnaker after lunch when the swells calmed. *Laelia* sailed along at 5 knots in light wind of 10 knots true. It was a quiet afternoon in lazy sunshine. There has been no more excitement other than a few collisions with some flying fish. These little buggers are hard headed and can create quite a bruise on the face if one gets hit.

Judy had a conversation in the afternoon on 8 MHz with a boat still back a few hundred nm south of the Canaries. She got the story from them directly. They were the envy of all of us with their whale and dolphin sightings. Yesterday, they had their fishing lure taken by a sea bird. They let out lots of line at first trying not to injure the feathered creature. The bird

did not let go of its prize. Finally, as they reeled in the line, the bird eventually dropped the lure. Just think of the story the bird had to tell upon returning to the rookery---the big one (with sails billowing) that was caught but got away.

They then entertained themselves the rest of the afternoon with even more excitement. All of a sudden their spinnaker halyard parted. Next thing they saw was their spinnaker floating alongside the boat like a "brightly decorated whale". The two of them worked hard retrieving the soggy sailcloth and finding it with all its stitches intact. As if that was not humiliating enough for one afternoon, they next discovered that, during all this excitement, their fishing line had wrapped around the propeller under the boat. So it was a diving trip for the captain. It took some time to unravel the line and lure. To dry off he was then hoisted high up the mast to retrieve the remaining end of the parted halyard.

The rest of the conversation was about how to thread the replacement line into the mast without further complications. I have done this many times by sewing the two lines butting end to end with sail thread. I usually put in enough stitches to make the joint strong enough to withstand pulling and tugging with considerable force. Then I wrap the joint with electrical tape to make it smooth and thin enough to slip through all the blocks and guides. The final job requires the joined line to be pulled through the mast while holding one's breath until the joint reappears again.

It is time again for me to take a look outside for any hazardous traffic. The late afternoon breeze was light enough with little swell that we decided to leave the spinnaker flying all through the night. The glorious red, white and blue colors of the spinnaker were visible under the bright light of the full moon. It was ethereal like the scenes in Maxwell Parrish paintings. There was not a soul or ship in sight. There was only the sky, the water, and ourselves. The only sound was the susurrant of water against the hull punctuated occasionally by the sound of stampeding horses as Laelia surfed down a big wave.

Dinner was Asian noodles with some unknown greens that tasted vaguely like broccoli leaves. We supplemented the flavor category with peanut butter and salsa (kind of a satey sauce). All and all it ain't half bad.

End Friday, 19 November 2010.

Notes from 21 November

A little after midnight, I was taking a look of the horizon for signs of shipping traffic. Of course there wasn't any. There was nothing at all. There was only water, wind, and our little sail boat. I then looked up at the rigging. There was no sail as we were motoring. What are those white growths on top of the solar panels just under the boom? They looked like the large fuzzy hats worn by guards at the Buckingham Palace, but in white color. Could they be mushrooms? Well, kind of big, maybe giant mushrooms. I have seen large mushrooms in rain forests, but the marine environment is not the same as that of the rain forest. Why would mushrooms grow on solar panels? Despite the bright moon light, it was too dim to see clearly. I went and got a flashlight. In good light I noted that they were birds. Three feather-covered stumps with their heads tucked under their wings asleep. I left those hitchhikers alone except for a few photos. They were still there in

the morning. Judy noted that they have long legs for wading and no web. We guessed that they could be egrets. They flew away when there was too much activity on deck. We wished them well, but the nearest land was 500 nm away.



The wind was 8 to 10 knots. Neither the spinnaker nor the jib do very well in such light air. I hauled out the screecher, a light-wind sail just for conditions like this. It took some amount of time to get it all set properly since we have not used it for years. The bright red, light-weight sail cloth filled easily and is not so affected by the boat rolling side to side. It will have to be brought in before there are white caps all around, but by then there will be other sail options.



Lunch menu consisted of the Cajun bean soup again and the last avocado on board. It was also our last loaf of store-bought German bread. Those of you who have cooked bean soups before will understand. A 500-gram bag of dry beans do not look like much. But, after soaking and boiling, these beans swell beyond reasonable bounds to produce a breathtaking large pot of soup. It is a miracle. A few bags of dry beans could well nourish the entire ship for the rest of the passage. Too bad there is no way to harness the hot air or we could jet-propel our little water craft.

In the afternoon, we cut open the little pumpkin and cooked it. The mashed pumpkin was to serve as ingredients for making Judy's famous pumpkin-pecan pie. It seemed that Thanksgiving was only a few days away.

On the dinner menu there was potato salad, canned Norwegian salmon, and very ripe fresh pears.

End Sunday, 21 Nov 2011

Ventura Power Squadron

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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