

Message #1: 6/3/22

Hello, hello family and friends!

If you're receiving this, you either asked me to provide a link for tracking Night Watch or indicated an interest in the transatlantic crossing. If not, delete and let me know so that your in-box is not burdened by subsequent emails I may send from time to time.

I plan to cast off tomorrow morning, Saturday, June 4th, after 2½ weeks here in A Coruña, Spain at a wonderful boatyard where the boat was for the winter. The tracking link is share.garmin.com/NightWatchTransatlantic2022. I'll trigger it to start tracking just before I leave in and will set it to update a few times a day. It should work, but don't be alarmed if it looks sometimes as if I've dropped off the grid. It's likely to be the Garmin unit not having enough charge or my mistake as a first-time user of a tracker hitting the wrong button.

All the boat prep is done. I got in a couple of short sea trials in the last few days, and today I've done the final provisioning and filling of fuel, with some housekeeping details below deck and on deck remaining.

My concern the last ten days about heavy weather slamming into the Iberian Peninsula with 20/30 foot seas impacting my escape route is gone. One low has come through, and the other, which is huge, will pass to the north. Now as I get going this first week and beyond, the prediction is for light wind and calms, especially slow going for a heavy, full keel boat like Night Watch. What wind there is looks as if it could dictate staying close to the coast for the first few days, though the outlook has improved in the last 12 hours. A route near the Spanish and Portuguese Atlantic coast is not ideal due to the many fishing boats on and inside of the continental shelf. They frequently do not transmit the AIS signal required for commercial vessels, which means they do not show up on a GPS screen. It'll just keep me all the more vigilant, especially at night.

At this point it looks as if the closest reliable wind is the trades, which could mean a deep dive to the mid or southern coast of Morocco before reaching the right latitudes. There I can hook a right towards the Caribbean. I had hoped to make it non-stop to Connecticut, but with the current benign forecast for the first week or two, I may motor at times and put into Madeira or the Canaries for fuel, of which I carry three to four days worth.

If weather patterns interest you, download a free app called Windy to your smartphone or iPad. Windy is close to accurate most of the time and has an arrow to click on that enables the viewer to see wind, waves, etc. as the changes occur going ahead a week.

The attachment to this email gives some context and information about the trip, including why I like sailing singlehanded.

All best,

David

S/V Night Watch

A Coruña, Spain

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Message #2: 6/4/22

At 0830 today local time I was ready to cast off, kitted up, everything stowed, pfd on, tether ready to be hooked onto a jackline, sails uncovered, pumped to get going after three years of preparation. All I had to do was pull the dock lines, which I had started taking in, with conditions for a perfect getaway: favorable weather and wind. I took the attached picture to memorialize the moment of departure.

I pushed the button for ignition. The starter motor whirled, but did not engage. Second time, the same - starter motor on, but no cranking of the engine. Then the dreaded discovery: water in the engine. The head of the boatyard where Night Watch was during the off-season came quickly and contacted their lead mechanic. He will be on the boat first thing Monday. I'm hoping that a new engine is not required, which could be a delay of months.

I consider myself lucky that this problem turned up before leaving; so, don't feel sorry for me. It's a boat, and I'm privileged to own it.

Stay tuned, but I'll spare you the details until I know the prognosis.

Best,

David

S/V Night Watch

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Message #3: 6/10/22

Dear All,

Very happy to report that Night Watch is scheduled to leave tomorrow morning, Saturday, June 11th. I'll trigger the Garmin tracker shortly before casting off.

The link as a reminder is share.garmin.com/NightWatchTransatlantic2022. It won't show any movement until the boat leaves the dock and will be intermittent, not constant.

The delay of a week was providential. The weather systems in the N Atlantic shifted, and it looks as if the wind will allow a shot west from this northwest corner of Spain to just south of the Azores, about a thousand miles distant, but saving me about a thousand miles that originally was going to be almost due south to the Canaries off the African coast before turning west.

If the forecast holds beyond a week, the course after passing the Azores will be roughly southwest for the rest of the crossing until between the Caribbean and Bermuda, then north. The attached screen shot shows the forecast for the North Atlantic tomorrow morning. A report later in the day has warned of strong winds and some reasonably big seas for a few days.

In this last week the boat has had certified Yanmar mechanics aboard. Additionally I consulted on the phone with Yanmar in the Netherlands and in the U.S. No one can say for sure how the engine was flooded with seawater, which happened last August in the North Sea and the Bay of Biscay and recurred again last week in sea trials here in A Coruña. There's no mystery in getting water out of an engine and getting it up and running again. The hurdle is figuring out the how and why it happened.

Back pressure in the exhaust system is the most frequent cause, which in Night Watch is below the waterline, like in many boats. The exhaust system is therefore what we focused on. A marine exhaust system with a low engine necessitates risers above the waterline and pots that collect seawater (and exhaust gases). The pot or pots are the muffler(s), and Night Watch has two. It was the muffler pot below the waterline that we suspected could not handle the apparent backwash surge, since its capacity was only 10 liters. We replaced it with a 25 liter pot, and so far in the sea trials over a two day period, no seawater at all has gotten past the new pot. Fingers crossed the problem is now resolved. If not, she's a sailing boat, and so in the end you can always get to where you want to go.

Ready and eager to get underway!

Best,

David
S/V Night Watch

Message #4: 6/13/22

Hello, everyone.

The Garmin tracker was down because the batteries were not getting a charge . I've rectified that and hope it will be up and running again in a few hours.

This is Day Three, and when you do get the tracking position, you'll see I'm well NW of where I intended to be. Here's the background:

It was blowing 28/35 out of the NE for the first two days with big following seas (10/15 feet?) well above deck level. There was also a sizeable cross swell out of the NW. I happily headed SW on a course to just clear S of the Azores making 9 to 10 knots (very fast for Night Watch) under no. 2 Genoa and mizzen, no main necessary. The sun came out that first afternoon, and all was great.

Before nightfall, I furled the Genoa and hoisted the heavy forestaysail on the intermediate stay. At night (isn't it always at night?) the autopilot could no longer handle the seas and wind. I steered for a couple of hours, and then intermittently set the autopilot to rest below until the motion and noise of flapping sails would awaken me to go above to hand steer until switching back to the autopilot.

In one of these awakenings, the boat was off course towards the NW, not SW, but would not turn to port. She did hold course to the NW nicely. With input from Locus Weather, the service I engaged for routing advice, I found that the NW direction would be the fastest way out of what increasingly felt like a bit of an uncomfortable maelstrom. If you have been at sea, you know the consequent noise from above and below that results from being thrown around - and the slamming waves that sweep the deck and sometimes make their way below. But Night Watch was built for stuff like this and is very impressive in such conditions. Other than perhaps the QM 2 and a few other, larger boats, I can't think of another vessel I'd rather be on in a rough blow.

Now the wind is down to 23/25, and by comparison it feels relatively calm, though still getting tossed now and then. My mission today is to deal with:

1. The steering system. I'll be diving deep into the bilges at the stern to inspect the steering quadrant and cables. Will also check the binnacle chain and autopilot drive arm to see if it's damaged. Hope to repair and head SW in the next day or two.
2. Balky bilge pumps. All of course tested before leaving the dock and out on trial sails over a three day period.

David
S/V Night Watch

Message #5: 6/22/22

When I last reported, the steering was stuck, the bilge pumps not working, and the generator was down. While underway, the steering, without my doing anything differently, seemed to have taken care of itself; I fixed one bilge pump; and the boat was no longer taking much water. The ride south and west on starboard tack was comfortable and mostly dry. The autopilot and engine worked perfectly.

For three days wind velocity ranged from 10-20 first out of the NW, then NE. When it slowed, I motor sailed at low revs, otherwise sailing under the no. 2 Genoa and the boat's big mizzen, one of the joys of a split yawl rig that makes handling the boat so much simpler for one person - no need to wrestle a huge main much of the time.

A wind shift allowed more direct westing, making it possible to put into the Azores on Day 7, Saturday, June 18, at approximately 1700 local time (which is the same as Greenwich Mean Time, now called UTC). I've always wanted to visit Horta on the island of Faial, a favorite mid-Atlantic stop for vessels crossing the ocean, and that's where I headed.

On the final approach to the harbor in Horta, the man who runs the only chandlery and yacht services company on Faial, Duncan Sweet, was tendered out and jumped aboard to assist with local knowledge as to where to anchor, since the marina was packed with no dock space. I had been introduced to him a few days before via email by sailing pals. Originally from NH, he and his Swiss wife have been in Horta for 32 years.

Duncan was no sooner aboard than the steering seized up, again – not an enviable situation entering a crowded harbor with a strong following breeze in the mid-20's. Because of the wind and sea state, no one had left Horta for days. As we wove our way among the anchored boats deeper and deeper into the harbor, I had maximum steerage of about 5 degrees to port and same to starboard. It looked as if we might pile into boats rafted at the marina docks or into the shoreside concrete wall. Using fast, short bursts of forward and reverse, I was able to turn just short of running out of room and depth.

We made our way back to the harbor entrance and anchored in 15 meters depth but fully exposed to the incoming wind and breaking waves. Conditions intensified over night, with the boat bucking like a wild horse, the heavy anchor chain snapping bar-taut with each slam of a wave causing the whole boat to tremble. Mid-morning the chain snubber and rope tore apart with a sharp bang, and the situation immediately became critical. (A snubber provides some elasticity. Mine had worked fine for 38 years.) It was only a matter of time before something else would tear apart or break – the bow roller, the windlass, the chain itself. Disabled without steering, I couldn't power away or sail away.

I explained the situation on VHF radio to the Harbor Authority, who earlier had been indifferent; this time they were responsive. An hour later they came in two powerful tenders to shepherd the boat into the relatively calm ferry terminal dock. Two wonderful young Americans off another boat enroute from Boston to Ireland, who had heard my

exchange on the radio with the port authorities, had volunteered to come out on the tenders to help. They boarded Night Watch and hauled the anchor onto the heaving bow while I drove slowly forward. After that, getting in was straightforward with the tenders making small adjustments to direction on each side of Night Watch. My new Azorean-American yacht services friend waited on the immense ship dock to take our lines. The new berth was an immense relief. Though the wind continued, the surge was still present, but diminished. We doubled up every dock line, one of which tore apart in two days, but no real harm done. I quickly replaced it.

About 1000 miles west of the Portuguese coast, Horta is a true crossroads with cruising sailboats and sailors from many different countries. All of them seem to go to Peter's Café Sport, one of those watering holes that looks as if it's out of a movie, completely festooned with yacht club flags and personal burgees and maps and charts and shelves of scrimshaw, in the background an incessant din of loud chattering in multiple languages. I've had dinner there every night since arriving in Horta.

I love the exotic offshore look and feel of Horta: the colorful, classic colonial island architecture, the palm trees and gardens, the relaxed ambiance, the hills and mountains, and the perfect view of Mount Pico on the island of Pico, just to the east of Faial. The local people I've met have all been warm, pleasant, and welcoming.

The stop has allowed me to give full attention to some essential repairs. Most important, Duncan and I found the cause of the steering problem, which was in the emergency tiller apparatus. A stainless steel ball joint made up of a Chinese puzzle of parts had seized, and we corrected it. Now, the wheel and rudder are fully freed up with no resistance whatsoever. Happy day!

Next, the bilge pumps. There are four aboard, and all had failed. I've replaced the 24-volt pump with a new submersible Rule. The 12-volt is working intermittently, but there are apparently no new ones available on Faial, so, I've taken on a spare new 24-volt. In addition, I have a high capacity 110-volt portable crash pump, the kind used to empty swimming pools. In my case it's for emergency use in case flooding occurs. Bottom line: now in excellent shape in terms of bilge pumps.

The generator works fine at the dock. We'll see how it performs offshore.

A couple of other jobs still remain before shoving off again, but they are minor, including going up both masts to correct a couple of things. I'll re-fuel on my way out.

In another day I'll be monitoring the weather carefully again for a window to continue west. The boats that have come in during the last few days have reported winds offshore in the high 20's to mid-30's and big seas, so, I don't mind waiting for the wind to diminish into the low 20's before the next leg, which I'm hoping will be all the way to Connecticut. I look forward to getting underway.

I'll end with this: On two glorious nights on the crossing to the Azores from Spain I watched the full moon rise in the east at the same time as the sun set in the west. Here's a quote a friend sent that captures some of how I feel when I'm out there. It's by Dumas from The Count of Monte Cristo:

"What solitude is more complete, or more poetical, than that of a ship floating in isolation on the sea during the obscurity of the night, in the silence of immensity, and under the eye of heaven?"

Meanwhile, Horta is not exactly hardship duty! A few photos are attached.

Best to all,

David
S/V Night Watch

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Message #6: 7/1/22

I'm now five days out of Horta and about 550 nautical miles to the WSW of the Azores. All is well with boat and skipper except for being largely becalmed a good part of the last few days. It's not quite a painted ship upon a painted ocean, but not far from. Hard to move except at the slowest rate in the often less than 2 or 3 knots of breeze. The famous Azores High has us in its clutches. I'd try to motor sail to more wind, but the engine is out of commission. It is a sailboat, so, when the wind revisits, we'll get going again at a decent pace.

The trouble with the engine is the starter motor, now the fourth in the last year - must be some kind of record. I "flashed" the starter motor this morning (i.e., touched the shaft of a screwdriver to two terminals at once). That got the starter motor to turn with an appropriate whir, but it did not engage and crank the 110 hp Yanmar engine. Last time that happened was only three weeks ago in Spain. Bench testing showed then that the bendix (pinion) in the starter motor was broken. So, we replaced the motor, and that's the one now in the boat to which the same thing must have happened, either the result of poor construction or because it's not

substantial enough for the Yanmar. I have a spare aboard, but it's always taken two people to install a starter motor. That's because the location of the is tough to access, requiring one person on each side of the engine fore and aft, both contorted in the bilges, to reach from each side, remove, and replace. I may give it a go tomorrow with extension socket wrenches, but I'm more likely to leave it as is and resort to pure sail for getting from here to there.

Where will "there" be? I'm thinking possibly Bermuda, about two weeks and 1600 nautical miles to the west. Or, if favorable winds come up and the forecast looks promising, the next destination could be Newport or even Stamford totally dependent on wind. If you know Aeolus, give him a shout.

The other emerging challenge is the state of the batteries. All seven are robust and new in the past year. The voltage in them is running down too fast, though. The usual NWatch routine is to charge with the generator twice a day for an hour each time, but today I had the generator charging for 5½ hours in an attempt to get the batteries restored to the voltages they should maintain for a reasonable time. I'll be monitoring those voltages closely. It would be less than ideal if the ship loses electrical power and goes dark, which would mean no autopilot, lights, GPS, AIS, cooking, communications, etc. As to comms, I do have two handheld VHF radios, both good probably for three to five miles. If we do go dark, I would be on the outlook for passing ships to relay home the boat's position, course, speed, etc. Since leaving the Azores, I've seen five ships, one of which was close enough to talk to on VHF. I also can conserve the power in the Garmin tracker and use it for conveying position for many days if and when the boat loses electrical power. Glad to say that the chances are that the batteries will be restored.

Since leaving Horta, boat speed has generally been in the 2 to 6 knot range, occasionally more, sometimes less – nothing like those first few days of gale soon after leaving Spain or on the approach and arrival in Horta. Each night since leaving Horta, the wind has tended to diminish and even quit. That has led to a lot of drifting without much advancement of position. Night Watch is a full keel vessel, heavy displacement – 22,000 tons – and it takes a decent breeze to keep her moving. Before a day or two ago the wind was up to 6 to 8 intermittently for short periods and even 10 knots. That's enough to make 5 to 6 knots under sail. Need more of that.

Do not think that this is a hardship (so to speak!). I've had idyllic conditions for hours at a time at least once or twice that enabled a fairly consistent 6 to 7 knots of speed while the sea barely rippled, the swell was practically non-existent, and the sun was out. Temps were in the high 60's/low 70's during the day, cooler at night until yesterday, now in the mid-80's. Bottom line: I love being out here and on this great boat, but eager to make some distance.

Logistics: The outlet I had been using to charge the Garmin tracking device had a drenching saltwater shower three weeks ago and finally has packed it in. I'll fix or replace it at some point, but for now, the tracker has to be moved when charging and then back to where it can "see" the open sky full of communication satellites, so, there will be lapses between tracking points.

For those who are not familiar with nautical terms, a knot of speed is 1.1 mph. A nautical mile = 1.1 statute miles.

Congratulations to all Bermuda racers in both directions. I saw that each way took special skills and seamanship.

I hope everyone has a great holiday weekend. I have sparklers aboard and will light one on the 4th!

Message #7: 7/12/22



Tue, Jul 12, 7:26 AM

David Tunick

to David, bcc: me

This was meant to go two days ago, but connectivity issues prevented it.

An update to the update is that I'm now about 700 nm from Bermuda and headed due West. I have the helm tied off with a 13/15 knot wind on my beam, so that balancing the boat without autopilot is not hard. Both autopilots are problematic.

Here's the report from two days ago. Hoping this transmits:

With gale force winds predicted on the westward course I had been on since leaving the Azores, I took a sharp left to the SSE a few days ago. My CCA friend Steve James had kindly sent me 24, 48, and 72-hour projections, and those showed intense reds (high winds and seas) in our direct path, easily enough persuasion to duck south.

Since my last update, the newly rebuilt engine has remained out of operation, and the generator had remained balky. For one 24 hour+ period when the latter would not start, I was forced to go dark since the battery voltages were going down, down, down: that meant no navigation lights, no GPS, no AIS, no wind instruments, no cooking, no running water, no radio, no satellite phone or internet, etc. - all turned off. The only thing consuming battery power was the autopilot, and that would end soon without the generator. If that occurred, my plan was to steer during the day and drift at night, not a pleasant prospect for the weeks ahead.

In the end, I found the fault: a metal connector on the genset solenoid had broken. Hidden by a crimp, it was discoverable by tugging at every wire in a check of all the genset electrics. For those that don't know Night Watch, the generator is under the cockpit sole (yacht-speak for floor). The disconnected wire stubs had tolerances of about two or three inches workspace, just enough for a finger or two. My first "fix" lasted for one run of the generator, and then it came apart – no way to get a crimping tool into the space to do a proper join. I repaired it again, this time reinforced, and it's held. The generator has cranked up every time since with the push of a button. If and when it doesn't start, I now know where the likely problem is and how to remedy it.

Yesterday afternoon I tried to alter course slightly from SSE to S. Getting too close to the oncoming direction of the wind turned out to be a colossal error: in a small wind shift the sails were suddenly backwinded (blown to the opposite side of the boat). I ran above afraid that the Genoa was going to get ripped to shreds because it was sure to be hung up on the intermediate forestay, preventing a clean tack. It was hung up, but I managed to get it furled unharmed. In those couple of minutes, however, the autopilot was fighting the sails and the reversed wind in trying to keep to its programmed course. I next heard a loud slam and bang, unmistakably metallic. The powerful drive arm for the autopilot that makes adjustments to the quadrant, wheel, and rudder had been driven past its mechanical limits, and the wheel was once again stuck, this time locked all the way to starboard. I could neither sail away nor power away.

I left the mizzen sail up to provide some stability. We were rolling and getting somewhat pummeled by wind and waves which sometimes were washing across the deck. I thought we were probably south enough by then to be out of the line of fire of the approaching gales in a long stretch spanning some hundreds of miles of the Atlantic from SW to NE, but I expected we might get something of a peripheral lashing for being too close if we drifted for too long. So, the race was on to cure the steering.

I reported the locked steering to Steve James, who had been closely tracking and staying in touch from his home in Florida, though yesterday he was flying to his boat in Cartagena, Colombia. To work we went via WhatsApp and photos back and forth for 22 hours while Night Watch was taken due East by wind and current at about 1 knot of speed. We thought the prognosis was good for repair, but also knew that we had to proceed carefully not to make things worse by causing more damage. Steve, a retired airlines pilot who sails his boat globally, was certainly the engineering brains. I am his grateful apprentice who happens to have an extensive array of tools aboard.

Last night I kept a more vigilant watch than usual since I had no way to get Night Watch out of the path of an oncoming or crossing vessel. I issued securité calls over the VHF radio several times giving the boat's location and briefly explaining that we were a disabled, drifting yacht in the process of repair but not in danger; please don't collide with us. I communicated with one large commercial vessel whose nav lights I could see, but the watch officer on the bridge never saw us despite my switching on our very bright spreader lights. Our conversations exchanging

our positions and compass bearings relative to one another and his speed and course were sufficient to know that we were not going to meet in the night.

This morning after a few hours of rest Steve and I returned to our favorite subject, the immovable helm. In the end it was the first solution among several that we had considered yesterday that worked: I disconnected the robust drive arm from the actuator motor and hung it in a sling to keep it from damaging anything since it is still bolted to the steering quadrant and had to be left to move freely but not make contact with any of the many other moving parts in the steering system.

Happy, right? Yes, very happy since the jam freed up. And then I made another bad mistake: I had tied off the wheel loosely so that when the anticipated freeing of the quadrant took place, the rudder wouldn't swing wildly in the fairly roiled sea, and it didn't. All was good until I activated the backup autopilot, which has a rotary motor that connects to the binnacle's steering chain sprocket. In a flash the called-upon autopilot had taken over, helm still tied, but the binnacle chain loudly tore at the sprocket spindles just below deck. I envisioned things being ripped apart, perhaps a final no-solution calamity. I turned the autopilot off and untied the lines holding the wheel. A physical inspection below the cockpit revealed no damage. For once I was grateful that the binnacle chain is looser than most mariners like a steering chain to be. That meant that the rotary sprocket was turning despite the noisy resistance of the chain scraping and grating over the sprocket spindles.

It's still early to say that it was a perfect fix, but for the past six hours the sailing has been picture-book trouble-free under autopilot making 7.5 knots to the SSE, the closest the boat can get to W'ly right now. In another day or two, though, we should be able to make a right turn to the W. The forecast is for a favorable wind angle for days, perhaps right into Bermuda, where I can get assistance in installing a new starter motor for the Yanmar engine. Les Crane, a CCA, NAS, and NYYC friend who lives in Bermuda, has very nicely arranged docking and a yacht services company to tow Night Watch (or shepherd Night Watch if we can sail through the entrance cut) into St. George's.

Final remark: in my first solo transatlantic from CT to Falmouth, UK, it took me 22 days. Today is day 22 sailing on this trip, and I'm just over halfway across. I knew that returning would be a longer passage because it is a longer route. I had predicted five to seven weeks, but that was when the plan had been to go SSE about 1000 nautical miles at the start from the northwest of Spain and then catch the W'ly trade winds across the Atlantic towards the Caribbean before arcing north to New England. When I finally got underway, a weather window had opened to sail via the Azores, and I had visions of a three or four week passage total. What I didn't anticipate after leaving Horta was getting caught in what turned out to be a huge Azores High of little to no wind. Then of course there has been the cascade of challenges, primarily the steering system stuck at the beginning and going into Horta, the engine, the generator, and the autopilots. Did I mention the main boom nearly jumping out of the gooseneck? But hey, that's yachtin'. It's still mostly one beautiful day after another on the high seas, and as far as I'm concerned, what could be better?

In addition to Steve James, a number of other friends have offered excellent advice and suggestions since I left Spain. I'm bound to forget someone, so, please forgive me, but they include foremost Charlie Lalanne, and also Peter Becker, Rich du Moulin, Rich Wilson, Mark Scott, Jay Gowell, Allan Heyward, David Crampton-Barden, and Kevin McEnery. I have had the greatest shore team without intending to form one!

For those who have asked in the last few days to be included in these periodic mailings, here is a tracking link that works most of the time:

<https://share.garmin.com/NightWatchTransatlantic2022>

Message #8: 7/27/22

Night Watch and I approached Bermuda from the SE on our 27th night at sea since leaving the Azores. Close to midnight and pitch dark, the waning half moon had yet to rise. The first indication of land in nearly a month was a bright flashing white beacon, St. David's Lighthouse. I let out an audible, happy hooray. After 1800 nautical miles since the last landfall in the Azores, after intense, windless heat, after drifting engineless in the opposite direction of where I wanted to go and sometimes in nearly complete circles for days at a time, the wind and waves and swell were ideal on this last night at sea. We were on a perfect course for the entrance marks and the narrow, high-sided cut into St. George's Harbor.

As Bermuda drew closer, there were too many lights to distinguish which was a buoy and which was a light ashore, but St. David's Light remained distinct in its intensity, a true guiding light. That was comforting since Bermuda is surrounded by reefs and rocks. A multitude of shipwrecks litter the bottom in the shallows around the 24-mile-long, 1-mile-wide archipelago of islands that comprise Bermuda.

I never expected to be near Bermuda and had neither the appropriate paper nor digital charts, except under my bed at home. I had charts, digital and paper, for every island in the Caribbean and the entire east coast of the United States, but all I had on the boat for Bermuda was a 1988 tourist road map that nonetheless helped to re-orient me to a place I hadn't been to by boat in some 25 years. Fellow NYYC and CCA member Peter Becker generously texted a few phone photos of Bermuda charts that I studied on my small iPhone screen, and I was confident that I could place the boat between "SB", the outermost buoy in deep water on the eastern side of Bermuda and the "Spit Buoy" in shallower water, the principal mark at the beginning of the entrance channel. It was there that I doused my main, furlled the Genoa, and wrestled down the boat's big mizzen from the 35' aft mast.

Bermuda Radio had had advance warning that Night Watch was expected and partially disabled in not having use of the engine nor autopilot. Their powerful radar had picked us up roughly 40 miles out, where we made initial voice contact. They asked for updates on the VHF radio every two hours and then every hour while they kept the tow boat captain informed I had enlisted to get us into the harbor to a dock. Not long after midnight the towboat approached. I went to the

bow of Night Watch and had just knelt on deck when I felt something smack into my chest. Good throw: it was the towboat's monkey's fist with thin line attached. I reeled it in until the heavy tow line was aboard and its loop secured on the port bow cleat.

The towboat slowly made for "Town Cut" the entrance into St. George's Harbor. By 2:00 AM we were tied up inside Ordnance Island, where customs awaited. By 2:30 AM we were cleared in and warned of a \$10,000 fine if I left the boat or if anyone boarded prior to Covid antigen testing at the local pharmacy and online approval by the Bermuda government – all accomplished by 11:00 AM.

To give you some flavor of the last couple of weeks, here are some excerpts from the ship's log since my last report on July 12th, when there was still some 700 nm to go to Bermuda:

Thursday, July 14, 2022, 1330: Squall, wet below, water getting in through mast, dorades, [closed] ports, companionway. Not able to keep due west.

Friday, July 15, 2022, 1115: Squalls, [headed in] wrong direction. Tacked. Everything wet from waves, rain, or humidity.

Saturday, July 16, 2022, 0200: Speed over ground 0. Sea state calm, main down, jib furled. Drifting in the moonlight.

Monday, July 18, 2022: Drifted all night. Wind speed 3 to 4 [knots].

Wednesday, July 20, 2022: Blew hard overnight at times over 20+ overwhelming autopilot. 120 nm to Bermuda. Tied off helm.

Thursday, July 21, 2022, 1200: 51 nm to Bermuda, but will be double at least tacking.

Fast forward to today, Wednesday, 7-27-22. The primary objective in Bermuda was to get the engine running again. The problem was twofold - a faulty starter motor and a relay (a kind of electric switch) that had failed in the ignition system. We installed a new starter motor, this one OEM (i.e., approved by the manufacturer of the engine), and this morning we replaced the relay. The engine is now humming.

Still down: Generator, this time I think for good; and autopilots, but there's not much that I can do any further to improve their performance. Expertise in Bermuda (pop. 60,000) is stretched so thin that it's impossible to get anyone to the boat to assist, especially since the entire island closes down tonight to celebrate its annual mid-summer four-day holiday-party centered around a cricket match that features one side of the island against the other.

I plan to leave Bermuda by noon tomorrow, July 28th. The major hurdle in this last transatlantic leg bound for Connecticut is a safe and fast crossing of the Gulf Stream. I look forward to the challenge.

Some pix attached taken in the last couple of weeks.

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Message #9: 8/6/22

All good things must come to an end, as they say, but in this case I'm tempted to borrow from Charles Dickens in titling my transoceanic experience:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,..."

And from another author whose name you might recognize: **"All's well that ends well."** (William Shakespeare, 1623)

In short, or maybe not so short, I'm very happily home with Night Watch on her assigned mooring at the Stamford Yacht Club. I arrived on Wednesday, Aug. 3rd, in the mid-afternoon, and to my total surprise I was greeted by a group of about 15 club members' boats with crews yelling out shouts, blowing horns, one firing a very loud cannon. We were then joined by another roughly 20 boats with the junior sailing fleet coming out in Optis, Lasers, & Ideal 18's. One of the smaller power boats came close, sprayed lots of champagne, and handed me a big glass of bubbly, my first alcohol since February. The club launch followed and came alongside with a crowd asking if they could jump aboard on the final approach. I didn't know half of them, but invited the whole gang to come on board, including the cutest little four-year-old, whom I promptly asked to help me steer. It was all joyous, fun, laughs, and smiles, but also very emotional for me. I truly, truly never expected a veritable flotilla!

The passage up from Bermuda allowed for terrific sailing and was relatively quick for a boat of Night Watch's old, full keel, heavy displacement, S&S design. Stamford, the last port of entry of the three on this transatlantic, promised to be drama-free. You may remember that I almost

shipwrecked going into Horta in the Azores and that with the engine having been down for weeks, the boat had to be towed at 2:00 AM into Bermuda. I looked forward, finally, to a comfortable, relaxed, routine, straightforward arrival at a port that I knew better than any other. The stars had finally aligned - not.

Neptune had other intentions and delivered two more strong punches. The first one occurred while still a few days out at sea and came in the form of an asynchronous wave that threw me from the chart table on the port side of the boat to starboard, where my ribcage on my left side slammed into a stainless-steel guardrail in front of the galley stove while my right hand shot out to break my fall. I fell to the cabin floor all but certain that I might have fractured or broken bones in my hand and ribs. My hand healed in two or three days, but I lost partial use of my left arm for rest of the passage. I thought about the many disabled sailors and felt even greater admiration for those who have completed circumnavigations with the loss of amputated limbs. I was far from that, but if they could do it, I could do it, and in the end I was able to compensate to get everything done that was requisite.

Neptune's next and last punch was almost a knockout. Though the autopilots were still mostly down during the sprint up from Bermuda, the boat was tracking extremely well with the helm tied off. The wind quit, however, as I was making my way westward in Long Island Sound, the home stretch to the finish line. I fired up the engine, which had been flawless since the fix in Bermuda, and I set the course for my final waypoint, the Cows Buoy, Red Bell No. 32, close to the Stamford Harbor breakwater entrance. I was luxuriating in the flat, calmness of the water, and I didn't mind powering at a leisurely pace the last 50 or so nautical miles. I planned to use the time to clean up the boat, get everything in order, and pack things to go ashore.

I have always frequently checked the voltages in the single 12-volt battery and in the two banks of 24 volt. Suddenly, nearly home, I was seeing read-outs that were alarming and which got as high as 32 volts on the 24 volt side and 16+ on the 12 volt side. Both are dangerous and can result in battery meltdown or fire. Electrical systems were shutting down from voltage overload, like the inverter that supplies 110 volt power for charging devices such as computer, iPhone, and portable VHF radio. For the first time after 3000+ miles I quickly got a few essentials into the cockpit in case I was going to have to abandon ship. I shut down the engine, drifted (again), and tried to analyze what had gone wrong. The Balmar smart regulator showed a green light; I had to assume it was not the problem. I uncovered the batteries and felt them. Two were warm to the touch, one was hot and so was a negative, thick battery cable. I flipped on everything that might draw some power out of the batteries – the nav and spreader lights, the refrigeration compressor (that I hadn't used once during the months on the boat), etc. That helped, and the inverter eventually snapped back, no longer showing its red danger light indicating serious overload. I fired up the Yanmar, kept it at a low RPM, and continued slowly the rest of the way, still never figuring out what had caused the spike. I'll get to it next week.

And so, dear readers, thus endeth the story full of lessons. It was all (well, almost all) enriching and fabulous for me, a great life experience and very much a team experience with the formidable advice I had from friends ashore like Charlie Lalanne and Steve James. Steve

monitored Night Watch nearly full time, always on call with his deep knowledge of all things maritime, start to finish. I could not have done it without his patient, thorough, expert advice.

I'm very grateful as well to many other wonderful and longtime CCA sailing friends like Mark Scott and Les Crane and Peter Becker for paving the way for immediate assistance in getting into the Azores and Bermuda, both under fraught circumstances at the time. Ken McKinley of Locus Weather was uncannily accurate in his daily meteorological analysis and forecast.

There are many others who also provided assistance and advice during the years of preparation and during the trip. My old friend and close NYYC and CCA pal, Dick York, who is in charge of safety for sailing for the whole country, flew to Holland with me the year before departure and worked far harder and longer than should have been asked of anyone in getting the boat ready for the 1000 nautical mile staging delivery to Spain. This past year I took cooking lessons from Yuko Nakajima (e.g., pasta start to finish with sauce in three minutes), and I learned how to bake bread from my loving son-in-law, Andrew Cedar. My friend of nearly 40 years Claudia Little sent me off her own homemade best chocolate chip cookies in the world, same as she had when I sailed alone to England for the America's Cup Jubilee in 2001. NYYC friend Ladd Thorne prior to the trip taught me once again how to shoot sun sights with my sextant. My wonderful Godson, Christopher Summersgill, frequently updated me with weather advisories; and his brother, my Godson Michael Summersgill, one of the leading litigators in America, sent me a touching court transcript from a Federal trial in which he led off his summary argument to the jury citing his Godfather's quest – mine - at sea as a model in support of his client.

Led by my oldest friend since third grade, Arty Selkowitz, the "Pizza Family", a distinctly un-maritime group of Stamford childhood friends, were faithful in their frequent, supportive emails. My Williams classmates, David Batten and Tom Anathan, sent updates to my entire Williams class via our daily class blog, and many classmates responded with wonderful encouragement, led by Class Secretaries Joe Bessey and John Gould, Class President Budge Upton, and my very close friends, classmates Billy & Betsy Roe and Wink Willett. Other Williams buddies going back 60+ years, like Bob Summersgill, now a poet and Shakespearean scholar, and my wonderful and frequent shipmate, Jim Gage, who introduced me to big boat sailing when we were in our early 20's. My St. Luke's classmate Bruce Howze, a brilliant boatsman, was attentive and helpful, as was another St. Luke's classmate, Juggy Fuller.

From those same pre-college years Steve and Gale Sherman, also from Stamford (and Greenwich) and very frequent shipmates on Night Watch, were watchful and in touch with frequency from long before the voyage began. My dear, sailing-in-company friend, "Mrs. Capt'n" Claudia Thompson, stayed in concerned touch through it all, as did so many others too numerous to list, but including neighbors like Susan Cullman.

I looked forward daily to all the communications I received. It was a link that truly encouraged and sustained me, especially during the challenges when there were still thousands of miles to go from close sailing pals like my fellow NAS members Ove Haxthausen, Nick and Phyllis Orem,

Ernie Godshalk, Juan Corradi and Christina, and Doug Adkins. Charles Starke as always offered advice and help.

Closest friend, Prof. Paul Tucker, (Williams '72), a great art historian and former All American football player, who is distinctly not a mariner, loyally sent me a weekly word puzzle that we both enjoy along with voyage-encouraging words, as did art dealer colleagues Marc Triebold, Alexandra Henze-Triebold, Matteo Salamon, Valerie Wade, Ann Marshall, and Los Angeles art impresario Jean Tardy-Vallernaud. Also, Caroline Haverkorn van Rijsewijk, who has helped us in TEFAF Maastricht over the years and who has sailed on Night Watch.

From the Stamford Yacht Club Hiro Nakajima has been a source of wisdom for many years; ditto Richard West, SYC Vice Commodore, always more than helpful whenever called upon, and Kevin McEnery who took a particular interest in the voyage. Ditto NYYC friend, H.L. deVore, most importantly the night the batteries spiked. My NYYC/CCA/ STC friend Rich Moulin sent very helpful emails all along the way, especially about self-steering with line and shock cord. At one point he said he wished he was aboard to help, and in another he asked if it wasn't time to take up golf. Ian Ray, with whom I hadn't sailed in some 30 years, sent me a detailed plan for self-steering without autopilot based upon his sharp memory of the years we did sail together on Night Watch in New England and the Caribbean.

Most important to me, Noreen, whom I haven't mentioned before in my update reports, was by my side continually from many, many years before the trip to the conclusion of the voyage. During the trip itself she was there for me every time I called – and it was a lot. She flew to Spain with me on May 17th and oversaw the prodigious job of provisioning. She was in touch with me every day of the trip in loving support with specific suggestions, especially important given her nursing background in the advice she provided during the long period of intense, draining heat when I was caught in the Azores High. She flew to Bermuda for two days when I was there for repair and put us into the newest luxury hotel replete with splendid setting, and glorious air conditioning, gourmet meals, and professional massages. It was truly restorative after the month that should have been two weeks in the inferno of what by then in the press was called the Bermuda-Azores High, since it stretched over two thousand miles of ocean in the mid-Atlantic. And she came out on the first boat in Long Island Sound to greet me on my return. What a great and lovely and loving sight she was!

My daughter Liz and my son James were all over me, as you might imagine, in the most terrific, loving way. I took greatest pleasure in receiving photos of their four kids who were the primary reason I was intent on returning the boat from Europe. I can't wait for Lulu, Forrest, Will, and Abby to be part of the crew.

Friends have already asked me what's next: For now I'll be happy with a rubber ducky in the bathtub for a few days before venturing out again on my beloved Night Watch. I'm seriously considering a singlehanded return to Spain in a few years. I'd like to explore more of the rias and Spain itself. But I also love Stamford and Long Island Sound and all of New England and Nova Scotia, so those places are likely to occupy my sailing activities certainly over the next few years

when it is my goal to get my aforementioned grandchildren, aged 2 to 6, involved in the great, great sport of sailing which has so enriched my life.

Thank you all for your interest and caring concern.

Now go sailing!