

Below is an excerpt from a recent post we received from Tom and Susan, baby-boomer friends whom we helped acquire a Hallberg-Rassy 46 in early 2016, before they sold everything and cast off for some adventures....

Hi,

It's 5:00 AM and I'm on watch in the dark, sitting under the hard dodger of Nomad, our 2002 46 foot Hallberg Rassy sailboat. We are 3,558 miles from Panama City from which we departed 27 days ago, and 860 miles to Hilo, HI. Course over the ground is 281 degrees, and we're making 6 knots in 21 knots of True Wind, sailing a deep reach under pole and preventer. Seas of 2-3 meters are knocking us around, and we work our way from one handhold to the next when we're below. Sweater weather at night.

We sold our house on Mt. Pleasant in Ithaca at the end of 2015, another success for New York's property taxes, and they will never get another nickel from me. We bought Nomad in satisfaction of our durable intentions to go cruising. We became citizens of Newport, RI, to take delivery of Nomad, where we spent three months living in a condo downtown. We worked on the boat until April and then set sail down east, Maine to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, ending up in the French islands of St. Pierre, Miquelon. The ghostly outposts of Newfoundland are an eerie tribute to man's successful war against the Cod.



Grand Brit, Newfoundland

On passage from the southeast tip of Newfoundland, we encountered an unpredicted and errant remnant of Hurricane Matthew and were forced to heave to in Force 9 winds and 30 foot seas for three days. Reassessment of mortality ...check.

After another spate of boat work at Burr Bros in Marion, MA, we sailed down Buzzards Bay and Long Island Sound and through New York City. Seeing the Statue of Liberty and the UN Building from the river at 9.5 knots was a

different perspective than that of the tenements we saw a lot more of.

Up the Delaware and through the Canal and into the Chesapeake, a week or so in Annapolis, followed by a slow and shallow few days to Portsmouth, VA, where we joined a sailing rally to Tortola, British Virgin Islands -- a passage of 1,500 miles including an Indian Rub passage through the Gulfstream.

We cruised the U.S. and British Virgins getting in our first diving of the trip, happy that our onboard compressor worked as advertised. After a few weeks we fought our way through the Christmas Winds to St. Martin, where among other things we upgraded our dinghy to a new 10 foot AB with a 15 hp Yamaha Enduro.

Over several months we worked our way down the Windward and Leeward Islands to Grenada. We became part of a rolling extended family of cruisers, some of whom we only finally left when we headed

to Hawaii when they aimed for the Milk Run to French Polynesia. Grenada was the southernmost extent of our travel, though we logged more than twenty different islands and countries down the chain.

We headed back north a ways to get a better slant to avoid Venezuela (Maduroland), observing radio and AIS silence as we eased by at night a little less than a hundred miles offshore and gathering around the radar image every time we saw a return from a fishing boat, until we determined that it was not following us.

We took a mooring in Bonaire, Dutch West Indies, with the stern of Nomad hanging over the reef wall and scores of free dive moorings within dinghy range. A civilized island with first rate infrastructure and good beer, and out of the hurricane zone, we stayed for three months. Diving every day, sometimes with friends from other yachts, Bonaire was among the best.

Passage from Bonaire to Santa Marta, Colombia, via Aruba was straightforward. Colombia was a pleasant surprise for the most part with good hiking at nearby villages and a trip to Cartagena for several days. After six weeks or so, we sailed direct to Bocas Del Toro, Panama, where cloudy water filled with jellyfish put an end to any diving. From there we went to the San Blas Islands where the snorkeling was okay and the Kuna Indians permitted no scuba diving.



Mardi Gras in Martinique



Panama City

Dugouts came by daily offering lobsters and fish, and the islands were low and flat with coconut palms.

After a few weeks in Shelter Bay Marina across the harbor from Colon, we transited the Canal. Glad to have read *The Path Between the Seas* beforehand. Panama City was large, chaotic and dirty, and we had a lot of boat problems to solve, most of which we did, but not without a lot of work.

We started cruising with the intention to go from Panama to Hawaii and then to Alaska and down the coast of British Columbia, prior to looking for a place to settle in the Pacific Northwest. So in about 5-6 more days we should be in Hilo. We don't plan to stay in Hawaii long, but rather to re-provision, repair, and re-embark for the Aleutians and the south coast of Alaska. We hope to winter over at a marina near or in Victoria, BC, or maybe Port Townsend, Washington?

Next summer we plan to have a leisurely cruise up the inside passage, with all the scenery, salmon, oysters, halibut and Dungeness crab we can catch.

Best to all,
Tom and Susan