

Tuesday, February 15. 2011

More challenges

Day 11, Tuesday, 15.02.2011, 12:00 UTC, 19:18.2N 37:47.5W, 24.5°C, 1018 mBar It didn't clear up yesterday, but stayed overcast all day with the occasional drizzle of rain. Which didn't matter much, because I was busy inside with the Chartplotter (Raymarine C-80). The thing wouldn't turn on anymore but kept on rebooting. To my surprise this behavior was covered in the manual: do a factory reset like this then re-install the firmware. How fortunate that I had prepared a suitable compactflash card before the trip with the necessary utility and firmware! Before the reset I tried to extract my waypoints and tracks from the memory of the unit with the help of the utility, but that caused the thing to crash too. So after the reset I had to set up everything again. It tells something about the internal problems a company must have when a product is shipped like that and the latest firmware, which could solve the problem, is from March 2008 and labeled "Development build". Shortly after having solved that problem I received an email from my friend Henk, a fellow single-hander, who is at the moment waiting for me in St. Martin. He says I shouldn't worry too much about damages on the trip. A long journey like this is very tough on the material and everybody has damages.. Just repair them on the way or when you get there. That lifted my spirit somewhat. Knowing something in theory or having a friend tell you "it's ok" is not the same thing. By that time the wind had dropped and I wanted to furl in the genoa to set the parasailor. But the genoa wouldn't furl in. Or furl out. It wouldn't furl at all anymore. Talking about damages, ey. But usually that's no big deal, it's just the furling-line getting fouled-up in the drum. I had a look at that, but it seemed ok. Then I removed the line which should make the sail unfurl itself completely. But it didn't. Then I removed the drum. Nothing, at least nothing obvious. Nothing loose, no screws missing or sticking out. And looking up to the head of the sail it looked ok too, no halyards twisted around the slider either. A mystery. The next step is usually to unshackle the sail from the furler, pull it out and then take it down. But by that time the wind had already increased to 25kn and it was getting dark. Chances were I would be without my primary sail for the night, or maybe the whole rest of the voyage. So before doing that I called Octavio from Alisios Sailing, who had installed the thing. And I also asked my brother Ralf to have a look at the schematics, the guy's an absolute genius with everything that moves. But no news on either side. The big question then was: Sail down or not? I decided not to. Reasoning that it's furled away enough for the nightly 30kn-Party, and that I can always take it down and had done so in much worse conditions. Of course this night the wind increased to 40kn. It's hilarious isn't it . Well, I kept the sail up, but de-powered it by trimming it badly. I didn't get too sleep much, because I checked the sail often and when not the boat was moving so crazily and everything was banging and clonging that sleep was out of reach until things calmed down to 20kn this morning, the sail still furled in as before. I fell asleep. Dreaming of Sails, lines and wrenches. But hey, what's that! The angry sound of the genoa flapping in the wind intruded into my peaceful slumber. I jumped out of the bunk, went outside, and behold! The genoa had unfurled. Interesting. What had happened? Applying Occam's Razor, the simplest explanation is that I must have developed super powers on the trip and can now fix stuff in my sleep. Call me "Sleepman"! If you require my help simply project a big pillow-shaped icon into the cloudy night sky of your city and I'll come and fall asleep for you. I only hope it's not urgent, because it takes a long time to get anywhere with a boat. I put the whole thing back together and was able to furl the genoa in and out again. Whew. But it doesn't run as smoothly as it should. I have to pull a lot and then it turns one time. Pull, pull, pull, turn. Pull, pull, pull, turn. And it should turn just as I pull. Like the stay tension wasn't right, but it looks ok. Hmm. Maybe I have to sleep over it some more 1440nm to go. Half-way there!

Posted by Axel Busch in Vespina at 06:17

Halbzeit... Dann gibts den kleinen Kuchen schon nicht mehr?
Anonymous on Feb 15 2011, 15:44

Dear Sleepman,

Please keep an eye out for my big pillow-shaped icon tonight! I need some stuff fixed...

And now I think you are more than halfway there.
Anonymous on Feb 16 2011, 05:48