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Wednesday, February 16. 2011

Lost in electronics

Day 12, Wednesday, 16.02.2011, 12:00 UTC, 19:11.5N 40:05.5W, 25Ã‚Â°C, 1017 mBar The relative peaceful weekend with no more problems had lulled me into thinking that I was on top of the game now, and that the rest of the trip would be nice & quiet. Haha! Monday taught me better with the Chartplotter and Furler causing trouble, and yesterday it went on in the same tradition. I was just cutting the cake to celebrate the fact that I've covered more than half of the distance, when the boat suddenly turned into the wind. I climbed into the cockpit, saw in passing that "STLK FAIL" was written across the autopilot display, and quickly jumped to the rescue of the tiller-pilot. The rudder was lying far on port, and the tiller-pilot was extended as far as I've never seen it before. I steered the boat for an hour myself, thinking about the best course of action. Then I decided to furl the genoa away, lash the tiller down and go over the complete Raymarine installation while the weather is relatively nice. I wanted to understand how the problem came about, fix it, and find out what possible alternatives there are in case it happens again and I'm pressed for time. Six hours the boat sat there without moving as I removed panel after panel to check each connection. I'll spare you the details. It's hard enough to connect the little wires in places you can hardly reach when the boat is not moving. But when it's moving ... Well, at least I think that I should not have any more problems with that stuff in the near future. And should the autopilot quit it's job next time with a "STLK FAIL" (Seatalk Link Failure) error, I know that it's enough to simply disconnect it from the other Raymarine devices. It will work happily on it's own. But if it detects a problem on the common bus it shuts down. Unlike the other Raymarine devices, which just don't show the missing data. Interesting, huh, considering that the autopilot is the only device of that whole installation that I really need. My phone, the iPod, even the camera has a GPS and can tell me where I am and where I'm going. But now that the wind-vane is out of action nothing else here can steer the boat while I eat my little celebration cake in peace. Think about it, Raymarine guys. After I was back on course, with the spare tiller-pilot steering, I took apart the other one and made sure it's going to move ok again. Then I cleaned the cockpit, galley and floor, because I like cleaning. It's dirty, you clean it, it's clean. That simple. No crypted error messages necessary to tell you it's dirty (e.g. NT CLN), no rebooting necessary to find out if the last two hours of work were wasted or not, and no jumping between states. Clean or not clean. And it looks nice too. In the meantime it was dark and the moon high above me in a clear sky. Time to practice some astronavigation! You never know, the way it's going on this trip tomorrow all the GPS satellites might suffer a catastrophic software failure and need a manual reboot. Or cleaning. Maybe I should apply at ESA/NASA for a position as janitor on the ISS after this trip. I could clean the station and in my spare time fix stuff. Like plumbing, solar panels, navigational computers etc. Hang on! The "Space Quest" adventure game series of the late eighties comes into a whole new perspective suddenly! 1310nm to go.

Posted by Axel Busch in Vespina at 06:25

You are a Jack of all trades!

It's dirty,you clean it, it's clean. That simple. Well said!
Anonymous on Feb 16 2011, 10:46