

Monday, June 6. 2011

Patience

Monday, 06.06.2011, 12:00 local (16:00 UTC), 12:20.29N, 072:49.04W (47nm north of Riohacha, Colombia). So, the trip to Cuba is not going as well as hoped. First of all - due to damages and the weather - we're not going to Cuba at all, but to Colombia. Which looked like an easy trip from Puerto Rico given the predominantly easterly winds and our boat's very good sailing capabilities. The best sailing capabilities, however, are nothing in the face of no wind. And an impatient captain. Sometimes Liz comes and sits with me in the cockpit. I say sometimes, because according to Liz it is not often that I can be found just sitting in the cockpit. Either I work on something, I sleep, or I run around on deck doing sailory things. But sometimes she catches me sitting in the cockpit, and she will then always come and join me to hold, to talk, or to look at the sky and the sea together. I cherish these moments, because they are short lived. Involuntarily I will notice that something is amiss or needs to be done, and jump up from our quiet musings to go about a new task. She says it's one of the reasons why she loves me. I know it's one of the reasons why calms are so hard for me to bear. It is too hot to be out. It is too hot to be in. It is too hot to do anything but to lie unmoving in the most distant corner from the sun. It might be all right if everything was quiet. But the opposite is true. A sailboat sitting in a new calm is a very noisy place, as old seas slap against it's sides, lines rattle, and blocks bang. They call out for me to stop them. But I am helpless. And that is not a state any captain likes to be in, much less an impatient one. When I left Germany on a sailboat 20 months ago, I hoped that my experiences on the trip would teach me patience. So far my progress in this regard is incomplete. Maybe I have to sail for another 20 months. I'm running, however, out of patience. Instead I am learning to me more adept with tools. Take the grinder, for example. Coming from a family of weavers, carpenters and mechanics I learned at an early age to use files, sanders, saws, and drills. I sawed and drilled everything. One of my favorite subjects was the living-room furniture, despite the spanking that it earned me. But the wood was just too wonderful. To my defense I can only say that the holes and cuts were very small, and that I made them with great care. We also had a grinder at home, which impressed and frightened me with it's sheer abrasive power. But it is not a device you use on wood, since very quickly there would be nothing left of the wood. Therefore it was not until I started living on a steel sailboat that I came around to use it frequently. Reluctantly and carefully at first, but later more often and more confidently. Yesterday I used it to make a new hand crank for my engine. Because of the way the engine was put into the boat, the original hand crank cannot be used. The space is too small. With the help of my newly made hand crank I hoped to be able to start the engine despite the broken starter motor. Unfortunately, I couldn't. The hand crank worked fine, but I just couldn't turn it fast enough to start up the engine. The last of my options exploited, we will have to sit out all te calms. And sail into the anchorage or use the dinghy to pull us in. When we get there. We haven't made it very far in the last days. There is some wind in the morning before the oppressive heat builds up, and some in the evening when the thunderclouds pass through and we try to stay away from the lightning as much as possible. But otherwise we are sitting in the water, unmoving. This morning we went fast enough for dolphins to find interest in our bow-wave, and they swam with us for half an hour. Liz took a seat on the bow fence and watched them excitedly. I ran around with the camera and took pictures, as much of Liz as of the dolphins. Then our speed dropped below 4kn again, and the dolphins were gone in the blink of an eye. Now we are back to drifting with less than one knot, 1804m per hour. Which equals one step per second, slower than walking pace. Talk about patience.

Posted by Axel Busch at 11:05

Patience... yes... I found that hard too, sitting still with some many bits of rope to play with, especially when the wind is light. I'm willing you a 12 knot breeze and no thunder storms to race against

Chris (in the ever so normal world of work and house-hunting)
Anonymous on Jun 8 2011, 16:21