

Thursday, March 8, 2012

### Exciting times in Panama

We're busy preparing for the trip to the Galapagos and beyond. We're hearing a lot about how hard it is to stock up in the Pacific and that everything is very expensive, but by now we know that these reports have to be taken with a grain of salt. Information tends to develop a life on it's own once it's passed down the information chain, especially when sailors are involved in passing it on.

But yesterday an email from our friend Andre, who is in the Galapagos at the moment, came in, asking for a shipment of lures, wine, Nutella, and chocolate. He reports prices for wine 4x as much as here, so there is something to it, at least when it comes to wine.

Stocking up on fuel (140l) and water (300l)

While Liz managing the supplies, I'm still working on improvements, upgrades, and repairs for Gudrun. That work experienced a small setback on Tuesday, after I had to fight a fire near the anchor windlass.

Results of a brief cable fire.

The "Up" switch got stuck on the handheld control for the windlass and set it in motion. Only the motion was abruptly stopped a foot later by the anchor chain relieve line which is tied around the chain and a cleat. With the switch engaged but the chain locked in place, something had to give eventually, and it was the cable between control box and windlass motor.

Resolution: Fight fire with extinguisher, wait until smoke clears, take forepeak apart, inspect and replace damaged wires, install a new circuit breaker switch to prevent this from happening in the future. Put everything back together. Now, where can I refill my fire extinguisher around here?

Liz returning a dinghy that had 'escaped' from our neighbors.

When we're not busy with our own boat there is plenty of stuff going on on other boats to keep us entertained. Like dinghies escaping from our neighbors, or outboard engines not starting, which results either in a tow or a hand in repairing the thing. Or both. And then there's the Allbrook mall for shopping. I don't know why but the voices in my head told me to buy a PS Vita.

Despite all those attractions work on Gudrun progresses steadily. Last night I finished installing the PowerSurvivor 160E desalinator, which was the last big project - I hope for a while. Today I'll check over the installation (always advisable after working in the dark), and then we'll run it for a few hours for testing. Very exciting! We also have our Zarpe, so all we need to do before leaving is stock up on food, do the laundry, get the passports stamped ... and wait for the last shipment of spare parts to arrive from Miami. Amongst the shipment is a spare starter motor for the engine, which, given the trouble I've had with that, I consider now essential to have.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:31