

Captain's Blog

May

Saturday, May 3, 2008

The not so Dismal Swamp

Rafted up with some trawler folks and enjoyed happy hour at the visitor's center.





Went through a couple locks





Entered Virginia



The Dismal Swamp Canal reminds me of the C&O Canal back home, but without the towpath and with more boats.

[Rose](#) said...

Remember Scott's warning and do NOT click on the above comment! Its a spam!

[Split Decision](#) said...

Thanks Rose. Spam comment deleted.

[Amy](#) said...

From the name Dismal Swamp, I think I expected something that looked like a scene from a Harry Potter movie... It does look pretty!

[Split Decision](#) said...

I bet it was named by the guys who dug the canal with picks and shovels way back when. I imagine it isn't so pleasant in the summer with the mosquitoes.

Thanks to Peter Y. who visited me at the visitor's center and gave me a new (to me) laptop. It has Windows XP on it. Hurray! I'm working on getting it set up and working with my wireless modem, webcam, gps, etc.

Sunday, May 4, 2008

Back in the Bay



Sailing out of Norfolk I tried to stay on the edge of the channel. When I saw this guy coming towards me, I moved over even more. Then he sounded four toots, and the two tugboats pivoted him directly towards me. I looked over my shoulder and saw a side channel leading to a landing where hundreds of containers were stacked.

Fortunately, he passed in front of me, not on top of me. I snapped the pic after he passed.

I enjoyed an easy motor-sail into the mouth of the bay, listening to A Prairie Home Companion on the radio. But when a cooking show came on, the wind started picking up. In a matter of minutes, the cruising went from enjoyable to white-knuckle. I can imagine how nasty the conditions could be on this part of the bay, if the weather turned bad.

Oh wait, no need to imagine. This is the stretch of the bay where [I busted my rudder](#). In fact, I'm holed up in the same creek that saved my ass that time. I might spend the day here. It looks like conditions will be more favorable tomorrow on.

sv-footprint said...

I know exactly the spot you are talking about with that ship. They keep nudging over an over. I spent half an hour trying to call one of them on the VHF to find out their intentions to no avail. Then the ship spun right at us. The Captain came out on the bridge and yelled at us to get out of the way (we were that close) I yelled back that if he would have answered his radio, we could have avoided this whole thing. I've got to say I don't miss Norfolk harbor

[Split Decision](#) said...

Hey Maryanne, I tied up overnight at the High Street Landing in Portsmouth and said hi to Peter and Betsy. I'm typing this comment on the laptop Peter gave me. I finally got my modem working on it after updating Windows XP with SP2.

One thing I've noticed is that the XP laptop uses less electricity than my Vista laptop. With the Vista laptop, at a certain point my inverter will start to squeal, indicating it can't pull enough juice from the batteries. But if I unplug the Vista laptop, I can run the XP one in its place for hours without the inverter complaining.

Anyway, [your account](#) of leaving Norfolk harbor for Rhode Island makes my stomach turn. It's a good argument for not having a tight schedule when sailing.

[Split Decision](#) said...

Sails up, gps and webcam on. I'm in the process of migrating to the new laptop, so the gps and webcam will be sporadic for a while.

The next 36 hours look like a good weather window. I'm going to spend as much of that time sailing as I can. Presently have the motor running too and making 6-7 knots. There's a chance I'll reach Maryland today.

[Rose](#) said...

Go for it Scott and welcome home!

[Split Decision](#) said...

Thanks Rose. We'll see where I end up tomorrow night. It would be pretty exciting if it was the Broadway Pier in Fells Point. I'd have to celebrate with a pint or two at one or more of the fine local establishments.

[Rose](#) said...

i agree~!

[Amy](#) said...

I wonder if the dollar crabs are back on the menu?

[Split Decision](#) said...

Regardless of the number of crab traps I've dodged today, crab season is the same as tomato and corn season. June-September.

Foods should be eaten in season and sourced as locally as possible. Aren't you writing a food blog?

[Amy](#) said...

I know... I was just thinking about some of my favorite places near Broadway Pier.

[Rose](#) said...

So, where are you? From the gps, it looks like you are at Northumberland right around the edge of Virginia and about to sail across the Potomac River to Maryland?

I know you are anxious to get to Baltimore so I assume you will not try to visit us at Riverfield on this leg?

The weather seems ideal here so hopefully you are enjoying the same. I would see the sail up on the boatcam and the weather seemed really nice. Hopefully all is going well.

Wednesday, May 7, 2008

Smooth Sailing



I'm in Maryland! Actually dipped the hulls into Maryland waters before tucking into Smith Point last night. (The Potomac up to the Virginia shoreline is part of Maryland.) Unfortunately, I'm only in Solomons Island. I've got another 70 miles to go to Baltimore. A small craft advisory was issued starting at 6pm today. I decided to duck in here rather than searching for a port on the Eastern Shore. (The Western Shore lacks inlets between here and just south of Annapolis.) The weather looks to be unsettled for the next few days, so I may be here awhile.

I'd be pulling into Baltimore now, if I'd done an overnighter last night. But I've put the kibosh on singlehanded overnighters. At least while I'm cruising day after day. I've had a couple scares on my past overnighters. I get too fatigued at a certain point and am apt to make bad decisions. Once I get myself in a bad situation, adrenaline kicks in, I get pretty clear-headed, and am able to get myself and the boat out of the jam. But I'd like to avoid those bad situations altogether.

Passed the boat in the pic down by Deltaville, VA.

[Peter Y.](#) said...

Scott,
That looks like the schooner VIRGINIA, the one Mike helped to build. He did all the epoxy mixing...and thus the allergy now.

[Split Decision](#) said...

Peter,

Again, many thanks for the new laptop. I'm busy this afternoon installing my programming tools.

I'm amazed at how much less power it uses than my old laptop. The old one caused the power inverter to complain on a daily basis. The inverter has yet to complain about this laptop AND I've been running the generator a lot less.

The only problem is the webcam causes the computer to crash. I use a free program called Yawcam. But it's written in Java and is a memory hog. I'll try to write a little program while at anchor tomorrow, and get the webcam back online.

[Amy](#) said...

Hooray! Welcome home, sailor.

That is a beautiful picture.

[Split Decision](#) said...

I'm sure the picture would be a lot prettier taken with your fancy camera. Mine doesn't have a zoom, and I've realized that without cropping the image, the subject appears much farther away than in real life.

The freighter from the last post was a lot closer than it appears in the picture.

I wish I really was in Baltimore. It seems a shame that I wasted a lot of this weather window sleeping. You and I may have to do some overnights this summer. It just makes such a difference when the weather is in your favor. And now I'll have to sit a day and maybe more here in Solomons.

[Mr. Fred](#) said...

Welcome back to MD dude! Sounds like you are anxious to get back to Baltimore, but you are right at the mouth of the Patuxent and Riverfield is only 20 miles up river.

If the wind is not in your favor for heading up to Baltimore and you are stuck there for a few days, you could motor up to Riverfield. Or I have fri/sat off and could drive up to Solomon's and we could eat some good seafood.

Anyway, just sticking a bug in your ear. Get back to me so I can plan appropriately if necessary.

[Split Decision](#) said...

It all depends on which way the wind is blowing. But now that I'm back in MD, all aboard!

Where is Older Salty? I'd love to do some sailing with the boys!

But if the sailing doesn't work out, you know where I am. I wouldn't mind exploring Solomons if the winds aren't right.

Anonymous said...

Hey Cap.

welcome back to the Bay.

If you need to dock up, my dad's place is more likely open. Let me know. I'm sure it won't be a problem. Looks like a lot of rainy days are coming.

When's your B-Day?

Later-----

Older Salty

Split Decision said...

Hey OS, I'm in a pretty tight spot, but will keep your dad's place in mind. It's nice to have that in my back pocket. Last time I was in Solomons I had a boat blow into me. So I'm not real excited about being here with the weather predicted for the next few days.

If the weather is at all reasonable this weekend, and I'm not in Baltimore yet, you and the Freds are more than welcome aboard for some sailing.

Anonymous said...

Scott,

Dad's room is 1413 if you need him.

As far as sailing I'll have to get back to you, Mother's day and all that this weekend.

Big trophy rock fish are around maybe you'll be able to hook one early in the morning. LIC.

Needed.

Talk to you later

OS

Friday, May 9, 2008

Shhh!



The Admiral will be aboard soon. We celebrate her half birthday in June. Her birthday is in December, and its conflict with xmas is a sore spot.

I got her this wetsuit today. I hope it fits. Also picked up another anchor. Don't ask.

And please don't tell her about the wetsuit. I want it to be a surprise.

Amy said...

Don't worry, I won't say a word.

Is the anchor for me also?

Peter Y. said...

OK Scott, let's talk about anchoring. You have gone through more anchors than anyone I have ever met. More than all of them combined. There is something wrong here. Are you securing the

shackle pin? Of course you are using shackles between the chain and the anchor, and between the chain and the line (unless you do a line to chain splice). Anyway, you should secure the shackle pin with stainless steel wire or plastic wire ties. This is called "mousing" for some strange reason. Hopefully this is your last anchor purchase. West Marine stock will dip with the loss of your anchor purchases but that's too bad for them.

[Split Decision](#) said...

Peter, I'm way over losing anchors. I haven't done that since last fall. My talent is in bending cheap danforths.

Ross suggested that I invest in a Rocna anchor. They had a nice Delta at the Boater's World I walked to, but it looked a little heavy to carry back to the boat.

We'll see. When I get to Baltimore and we have a car, maybe I'll invest in a decent anchor and my problems will be solved. Hopefully I'll get to Baltimore this weekend! Not sure if I'll have the webcam running. I haven't found a solution to it crashing the new laptop yet.

[Split Decision](#) said...

At anchor in Galesville. GPS position is updated. Amy thought that because the webcam program wasn't working, the gps program wasn't working as well.

They're separate programs.

It was a long day of motoring into the wind. But the Bay bridge was in sight as I pulled in here. And I am able to tune in Balt/Wash radio stations. Almost home.

I may leave very early tomorrow morning. In the dark. The winds should be optimal early, but in the afternoon it's supposed to turn nasty. I'd like to make Baltimore tomorrow.

There's a classic (old) gemini just off my bow. "Storyteller". Seemed like a good neighborhood to set the hook for the night.

[Grampa](#) said...

Looks like you are really close to where we kept the Rainbow and also Rhoad River.

Welcome home.

[Split Decision](#) said...

I see Baltimore! Weighed anchor at 4am this morning. I wanted to beat the predicted weather: 2-3" rain 20-30mph winds.

I'm debating weather to tie up to the Broadway Pier, or pull into my old marina.

Sunday, May 11, 2008

Oh, Say Can You See?



I bet I've now seen all the lighthouses on the Chesapeake. And of course, coming into Baltimore I passed Fort McHenry and the location where the Star Spangled Banner was written.

I motor-sailed this morning from the West River to Baltimore, about 40 miles. Before this trip, I would have considered that a long cruise and quite an accomplishment. Now it's just a morning's work. I sure am a lot saltier. My new major accomplishment is cruising to Florida and returning with the boat and me still in one piece.

Rose said...

You made it. Congratulations and welcome back!

Amy said...

Hooray! Welcome home!

Split Decision said...

Thanks guys. The Admiral's Cup appears to have closed. I don't know how I didn't hear about this. The bar is a Fells Point institution. Sadly, there will be no dollar crabs this summer.

Laundry day tomorrow. I haven't done laundry since Beaufort, SC. Haven't had a shower since then either.

Haven't visited my house yet. I'm a little trepidatious about seeing its condition after six months apart.

[Amy](#) said...

No dollar crabs? Then it's all the better we're not staying there for the summer!

[Grampa](#) said...

The Wharf Rat might be a consolation prize. Sho-Me, the salty dog, remembers it fondly.

However, even they might prefer that you take a shower!

[Rose](#) said...

Just for your information, In short, the closing of the Admirals Club which actually happened the end of October was that the owners of the building, which sits at the corner of Broadway and Thames Street, decided to sell the place. The lease was up, and that was that.

[Split Decision](#) said...

Cold and wet here. I had Grampa's heater running for the first time in awhile.

I'm busy biking back and forth to the house, doing laundry. The house is in surprisingly good shape. It looks pretty much like I left it. That's a relief.

[Ross](#) said...

Scott,
I just returned from a Costa Rican surfing trip and am getting caught up on your progress.

Congrats on the successfull return home!

Another anchor gone huh?! There's gotta be a book in there somewhere.

Maybe that's why you're not telling about the demise of these last two - saving it for the book!

[Split Decision](#) said...

Damn Ross, first chartering a catamaran in the Bahamas and now surfing in Costa Rica. I thought I was living the life, but I'm starting to get jealous.

No story on this last anchor. It bent the second time I used it. The price tag sticker hadn't even

worn off yet. I don't know what to tell you. The weather wasn't bad or anything. The chain was wrapped around the anchor when I pulled it up. I guess that had something to do with it. Who knows? I just have a talent.

I'm going to invest in a cqr, delta or rocna while I'm in Baltimore. I'd like a rocna, but they are really expensive.

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Home Sweet Home



I spent the first few nights back in Baltimore, tied up to the Broadway Pier in Fells Point. Checked up on my house, and did a bunch of laundry.

Today I cruised over to my [old marina](#). I hadn't called in advance, but figured they would have room for me. I motored down my old pier, and my old slip was empty. Hurray! [My neighbor](#) in the photo is still here, as is Bill, the old coot who helped me get the boat in shape for the cruise. Sadly, my buddy Mike in the slip on my other side, is gone until June. But his boat is here, and Bill ran an electric line from Mike's boat for me. Guess I'll have to buy Mike another case of beer.

Seems like nothing has changed since I've left. Except they're replacing the decking on the piers and installing new electrical pedestals. I hope they're not going to start raising the rates at my trailer park marina. Even if they are, the dockmaster was nice enough to pro-rate my slip fee for the couple weeks I'll be here. Nice.

[Amy](#) said...

Nice. Have they fixed the toilets in the trailers or is there still a port-a-potty? (She asks with great interest...)

[Split Decision](#) said...

Sorry, plumbing does not seem to be as high a priority as the electrical work and carpentry.

[Matt Larsen](#) said...

Looking forward to hearing about all your adventures when we catch up with you at the end of June.

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

I Could Use Some Advice

Another post stolen wholesale from [Admiral Amy's blog](#):

A variation on the desert island question, only for real: If you were moving yourself to a boat for two months and knew you had limited kitchen space, what items in your pantry would you not be able to do without? I have a pretty standard cupboard of condiments and spices, and have to decide what to pack and what to give away/throw away.

I don't need to bring any cookware, since we already have the basics on board: cast-iron fry pan and a couple of sauce pans. There will be no baking, and we have limited and erratic refrigeration. So far, my list contains:

- cornmeal (for frying fish and other things)
- bouillon cubes
- any pasta, beans and canned goods I have in my pantry

[SV-Footprint](#) said...

Oh – here is one I may be able to help with – or at least give my opinion for what it's worth!

Firstly think again about any extra hardware! There are two things I LOVE aboard our boat that save time and energy.

- 1) A Large pump action thermos flask (the kind they use to serve coffee in the conference room) –

I boil water in the morning for our coffee/tea and boil extra for the thermos – and this keeps water steaming hot for the full day. I can make HOT tea even in the evening with this (or start off with hot water for pasta) – without having to use any extra propane. We keep ours on the counter with some non-slip draw liner beneath and lashed to an eye so it can't topple over. I think these are under \$20 at some place like Target. You can get more expensive unbreakable ones.

2) A pressure cooker – I know this takes up space AND is heavy - but this really cuts down cooking time and steam/condensation in the cabin – think potatoes, corn on the cob, soups, and those beans, all cooked in less than half the standard time! I cook extra rice for an evening meal, and use the spare for egg fried rice brunch!

Also we have a whistling kettle for boiling water.

OK now for food. We lived without refrigeration for years and always have a good stock of a heat treated milk called PARMALAT. It comes in cardboard cartons, in large and lunch box size. A lunch box size carton does me for my breakfast cereal and a cup of hot tea each morning.. If I know we are going to use milk for other things in the day I open the larger carton. It is REAL milk and tastes just the same, don't let anyone tell you differently. If you can't bear to drink milk anything but ice cold – you can at least purchase these ahead of time, and put the carton you want for the next day in your new cooler. They keep for about 6 months unrefrigerated (check the dates on the cartons). Depending on the store you can find it in either the coffee/tea section or the baking section – a blue and white carton.

Also look out in the supermarket for a range of Indian foods made by “Tasty Bites” and other brands. They come in a box (the size of a small rice box). Inside the box is a heavy foil like sachet with a fully cooked, ready to heat Indian dish – and you don't even have to dirty a pan – just boil in the bag. There is a huge range of these, and they take just 5 mins to heat up. I normally have a rice and two different Indian dishes – makes a quick, tasty meal. Again – no refrigeration required!

I suspect that you will be able to get to a store quite often, but if not you can consider sprouting. You can get all fancy but I just buy dried garbanzo beans from the store and sprout with them. This way you have something fresh for your sandwiches / salad dishes.

As for herbs and spices – well, I guess you know what you like. I would be keel hauled if we ran out of Tabasco, and for myself I really like Worcester Sauce I keep most of my spices in a plastic shoe box size box – and write on the lids what they are so I can find them easily.

Oh - and don't be afraid of purchasing eggs without refrigeration, they last for at least two weeks. (After that test them to ensure they sink and lay on their side in fresh water, and to be extra sure, crack them individually in a cup before adding to your cooking).

Other than that, I'm sure you have the basics. One more thing you might investigate is stove top cookies - there are hundreds of recipes and I tend to use the oatmeal/chocolate type (both Kyle and I are chocolate lovers). There are also stove top bread recipes, but I have not yet tried them (on the list), let me know if you find a good one).

Oops another essay - hope that helps.

[SV-Footprint](#) said...

Oh - and as for store bought bread.. Some last longer than others - I particularly like "Heath Nut", an Arnold brand bread. I swear it lasts 3 weeks, and tastes delicious.

[sandy](#) said...

Hi Amy, Welcome home Scott! I have enjoyed the blogs tremendously! Well, you may want garlic, coffee (the small french press is great, Rose, I think you can get one at Whole Foods) you can get 500 non dairy creamers at Costco for very little, rice, and I think Panko is great for frying things--very light and gets crispy, and now that you can buy crushed tomatoes in boxes, why not a few boxes? Just add a little butter, a whole onion and cook for a while and it is the best sauce for pasta.

When you are in Baltimore, please call. I would like to give you contact numbers and addresses for our friends the Frews who have sailed to the Vineyard many times and keep their boat in Mystic CT.

Sandy

[Split Decision](#) said...

Hey Sandy, we'll make sure to stop by before we head north. Grampa's coming over today, and we might motor over to the Broadway Pier and hit the Wharf Rat. Depends on our mood and the weather. We also might just hang out here at the marina.

[Lou & Meg SV *Starrider*](#) said...

This is a great post, and timely as Starrider was launched last week and we are in the middle of reprovisioning. Some of the ideas are great, and we have not thought of them. We have been stocking up on the Hormel brand of microwave meals. These do not need any refrigeration and can be cooked in the microwave, when cooked, eat right out of the container they come in. These are no replacement for a nice fresh cooked meal, but in a seaway they are an easy to cook way to get a hot meal.

Save the plastic containers they are great to drain your fuel filter into or for mixing up epoxy or gelcoat (something us Gemini owners are very familiar with), lol. On the plus side no dishes to do or water to waste. We try to avoid using the stove as we cruise in the summer and it just heats up the cabin too much. I think a rail mount grill may be in our future. For a quick hot lunch there are also microwave soups and meals that come in soup size microwave containers.

Meg and I are cereal for breakfast folks. We have avoided cereal because of the milk issue, thanks for the idea, Marryanne. We have been doing the pop tart thing for breakfast.

Keep the good ideas coming!

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Trip Retrospective

Found out that pictures posted to the blog are also in a Picasa web album. Unfortunately, only the pictures from this year are in the album, and I can't organize them without screwing up the blog settings. The first few pictures are NASA shuttle pictures, but soon after are pictures taken on Split Decision.

Amy said...

Pretty cool!

Friday, May 16, 2008

The Old Fart Club



Grampa Speaks:

Visit with Scott on the occasion of his officially joining the old fart club (as he puts it)

The Salty Sea Dog, Sho-Me, and I paid a visit to Split Decision today to celebrate the big 40 and inspect the boat to see how he and it survived the trip. Both look in fine shape.

We embarked on a short sail (motoring) over to the Broadway Pier, where we expected to tie up and walk the short distance to the Wharf Rat, a favorite of Scott, me, and Sho-Me. Unfortunately we did not get far before the motor began missing and stalled out. Scott observed that we were apparent jinxes for his boat and began working on the motor after anchoring. I guessed that the problem sounded like water in the gas, and that may be it, but the full diagnosis is not in. After drying the spark plugs and letting the cylinders dry out (while we enjoyed a beer), we started up again toward Broadway.

But alas, the same thing happened again after beginning well. So repeat the previous paragraph, but change the last sentence to back to the marina.

And alas, again, repeat the previous paragraph, at almost back to the marina. But we did finally make it back.

When we (Scott, me, and Sho-Me) went to Nick's, the bar/restaurant just up from the marina, we found discrimination is alive and well in Baltimore. Poor Salty Sea Dog was not permitted to join us on the outside patio and had to sit out lunch in the truck (more to add insult to injury, the truck belongs to Wookie, my regular truck dog).

But we enjoyed a couple of beers and fish sandwiches and good conversation about Scott's adventures and plans, and my plans for retirement.

See the attached photos to see Scott actually at work.







Pic of Grampa and his Admiral:



[Amy](#) said...

Retirement? Finally following in the footsteps of your son?

Sho-me looks very happy on the boat.

[Split Decision](#) said...

I was glad grampa got an authentic experience on the boat. It wouldn't seem right if we had an uneventful cruise over to Fells Point.

I'm not sure what the problem with the engine is. It's been pretty trusty since I replaced the spark plug boots in St. Augustine.

[Rose](#) said...

Happy 40th Birthday Scott!

[Rose](#) said...

Also, a pic of Scott and Grandpa would be nice. I do not think I have seen a recent pic of Grandpa ever on the blog.

[Lou & Meg SV *Starrider*](#) said...

Scott,
Happy Birthday! Glad to see your trip had a safe ending. Sorry to see your engine was acting up again. I wonder if it was bad Karma? I will be keeping an eye on your site for when you are prepared for your next passage. I think you will be passing NJ for that one. Maybe we can sail out and join you for a portion of your trip north.

Take Care,
Louie

[Split Decision](#) said...

Rose, as intelligent and boat smart Sho-me is, he couldn't quite figure out how to wrap his paws around the camera for a pic of Grampa and me together.

Louie, I'll keep the gps updated, and hopefully get the boatcam working consistently again. So you'll know where we are. I'd love to drop by for a visit. We should be leaving for NE the beginning of June.

Anonymous said...

Hey Capt. OLD Fart,
You made it.....
Both from your trip and now your
(O L D) Not..
Happy B. Day 40 Just a punk.
A salty Young Punk...
Hey the Big Memorial Day Pic. is Back at our house on the 26th
Hope you, Amy, any of the friends are able to come on down.
Baseball,Crabs and venison are the order of the day.
Got to run
Allison is waiting to be picked up.

OS

[Split Decision](#) said...

Older Salty,

You'll always have more "street cred" in the Old Fart Club than me, no matter how hard I try.

Maybe we'll sail down for this year's Memorial Day festivities!

Anonymous said...

Scott,

I'm going to be dropping M.A. off at the senior prom. at the Htatt at the inner harbor tomorrow (Sat)

are you around - maybe we can hang out? 7:30ish

O.S.

[Rose](#) said...

A great pic of Grandpa and his admiral. Nice to finally have a face to the name on your dad :)

[Mr. Fred](#) said...

Hey Dude!

How's it going. I miss South Ann Street and our various walks around Fell's Point. Always a thrill as you would smack the rear fender of a car and piss off the driver. Well, it only happened one time. No one got injured. It all comes with the Scott territory. Not that I am complaining. Stay in touch. All is well here. If you want to take a road trip - come on down. We can play some Guitar.

Sunday, May 25, 2008

Infrastructure



Just because I'm taking a break from blogging doesn't mean [Amy is](#).

[Grampa](#) said...

Amy, you're killing me. We had hot dogs, bake beans, and beer, and shared the hot dogs with the pups, including Sho-me, the salty sea dog.

[Grampa](#) said...

Scott, remove two of these comments. Don't know why this happened, except maybe I'm an old fart that doesn't know better.

Tuesday, May 27, 2008

Negotiations



Amy and I are trying to adapt to life aboard and going forward together. It doesn't help that I've lived alone for seven years and that we are now constantly together in a confined space.

One of the minor issues I'm trying to resolve is whether to steal Amy's boat posts from her blog and post them here, or just link to them. In any case, if you want to comment on her posts, you can do it here or there. We read each other's blogs and comments. Amy just posted [The First Week Aboard](#).

Thursday, May 29, 2008

CWCS: Nectarine Chicken



Cooking with Capt' Scott (CWCS)

Grill chicken

Cook rice

Make chutney sauce to pour over chicken:

Chop up nectarine and zucchini. Mash equal parts banana and water. Add nectarines and zucchini to banana mash and heat in pot until hot. Add hot sauce until desired spiciness is reached.

Grill nectarine garnish:

Cut a nectarine in half. Stick a fork in each half and grill over stove top flame like you would a marshmallow. Try to char the nectarine a little. It's done when it falls off the fork.

I like to grill chicken thighs and legs because they are nearly impossible to overcook. They are so fatty that they don't dry out. The only problem is that they are so fatty that they start grease fires on my gas grill.

At the supermarket we smelled the nectarines as we passed them in the produce aisle. That's always a good sign of a fruit that is ripe and will be flavorful. We passed strawberries, raspberries and blueberries too. They all looked good, but had no smell.

The zucchinis looked good at the market. My initial plan was to slice and grill the zucchinis as a side

dish to plain grilled chicken. I didn't have a plan for the nectarines.

I guess the nectarine chicken idea was inspired by our dinner at [Bicycle](#) last week, and the mix of flavors in their dishes. I like the balance of sweet and hot in a [chutney](#). Unfortunately, I couldn't find any hot sauce on the boat. I ended up borrowing a couple packets of Taco Bell hot sauce from a marina neighbor.

[Split Decision](#) said...

Amy turned the leftovers (I grilled six chicken legs and a pot of rice) into a fried rice meal. She posted about it [here](#).

I'm getting pretty excited about hitting the road again. We should be starting our cruise to Martha's Vineyard early next week. Boatcam and gps will be back online then.

Thursday, May 29, 2008

[Admiral Crankypants](#)



Yesterday we hauled a bunch of my toys off the boat. Golf Clubs, Bow & Arrows, jib that needs repair, etc. Today I organized my remaining stuff and cleaned out a space for Amy to use as a closet. Amy speaks:

I've been a little out of sorts for the last couple of days. As Scott has mentioned, we've both spent the last several years living alone and now, we're together in a space no larger than about 150 square feet. We've had a lot of errands to run before we leave Baltimore next week, and so have been running

around for much of the day. On top of that, I was still living out of my duffel bag, and feeling not at all settled in. Most of you that know me would also know that this is a recipe for crankiness.

[More on Admiral Crankypants' blog](#)

Friday, May 30, 2008

Eyes of a Beginner



Bought a new Delta anchor from West Marine. Any advice on its proper usage is much appreciated. It's made of thicker and higher grade steel than the danforth anchors I'm accustomed to. But if anyone can find a way to bend the shank, it would be me.

Also bought a new main halyard line, which I'll replace today. The old is almost certainly original to the boat, and is beginning to disintegrate.

[Ross](#) said...

Scott -

Glad to see that you've switched away from the Danforths. This Delta design is much tougher than the Danforth and should allow for transverse loading without bending the shank. I also like how they'll re-set when the tide/wind shifts making for a more restful night.

The attachment to the rode is important. I recommend a good swivel and shackle, then as much chain as you can manage before the nylon.

Ideally, you research the holding capacity of the anchor and then size the entire rode assembly so

that all portions have equal capability. It's truly a real life 'weakest link in the chain' scenario. An interesting thing is that you'll find the working load rating of the chain to be greater than that of similarly sized hardware such that a 5/16" chain will require shackles of ~ 1/2" size to match the working loads.

Also, the quality of these parts varies greatly depending on how they are manufactured. A "drop forged" shackle is much stronger than one which has been cast. Unfortunately, because most consumers aren't aware of these considerations many vendors don't provide information about it and/or strength ratings.

Avoid stainless steel hardware for underwater use. It is prone to electrolysis and hairline cracks.

I would absolutely avoid a shackle of this design:

<http://www.westmarine.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/producte/10001/-1/10001/139430/377%20710%20818/0/Anchor%20Hardware/Primary%20Search/mode%20matchallpartial/0/0?N=377%20710%20818&Ne=0&Ntt=Anchor%20Hardware&Ntx=mode%20matchallpartial&page=CategoryDisplayLevel1&isLTokenURL=true&storeNum=5&subdeptNum=242&classNum=519>

Years ago "Practical Sailor" testing revealed that they were could come apart.

As you'd expect, West Marine carries all this stuff. Better pricing can be found here: <http://www.defender.com/product.jsp?path=-1|10391|638271|34760&id=34889>

Ross

[Split Decision](#) said...

Ross,

I bought the anchor at West Marine. The price tag read \$172, but it rang up as \$122. Nice. It's a 22lb/10kg delta, rated for a boat 30-40 feet long. I connected it with an oversize shackle (not sure if it's forged or cast). I don't have a swivel. I'll try to take some measurements and pictures of the chain and shackle (maybe another post). Also, I asked for recommendations on the sailnet forums for deploying and retrieving the delta. I'll try the technique recommended [here](#) .

Also, you can post html links in the comments. Your links keep getting cut off. If you used the href html tag, folks could just click on your link.

Thanks as always for the good advice! Hope all is well in NC.

[SV-Footprint](#) said...

Ross's comments are spot on. You really DO need to invest in that swivel though (between the anchor and the first shackle-chain link). Chain will only spin so far, and eventually the anchor may be flipped out (or the schackle will break open) - the swivel prevents that, and also makes bringing

the anchor back aboard easier!

I don't think you need to know anything special to Set the Delta (compared to the Danforth). Once we have let out AT LEAST 3:1 scope (generally more like 5:1) we cleat the line and engine back to set the anchor and prove it is set (i.e. we stop moving even under power) - then let out the rest of the line.

Another thing you may consider is connecting a shorter length of line to the main anchor with floats (a trip line) - these serve several purposes - they help recover the anchor when it's dug under a rock or some such thing (pulling harder on the chain won't help much here); they help you "see" where your anchor is (and stop others anchoring over your anchor); Of course they can also help recover the anchor if the main line gets disconnected from the boat for any reason.

You should have at least 5:1 scope out (7:1 is better), and finally a bridle will help keep the boat from sailing around on the anchor too much AND give some redundancy if your main cleat gives way.

When I talk about a scope of x:y - I mean x is the max depth of water you are expecting and y is the length of rode (line + chain added together). What you are really looking for is that ANY pull on the anchor from the boat/rode is as HORIZONTAL as possible and not vertical.

If you ever find a Chapman's "Piloting and Seamanship" book/manual - they have LOTS of good reading on such things. (On a separate note, don't every buy Bowditch "The American Practical Navigator" you can download the PDFs for free [here](#))

Good luck with your next leg of the trip! And I enjoyed Amy's post of purchasing "tubs" for her clothes - Kyle and I went through the same thing and a trip to Target resolved many problems! he he.

[Ross](#) said...

Scott –

I followed the link to the sailnet forums post about anchoring technique. I agree with much of what that guy said. Also sv-footprint & I are of like mind on anchoring.

However there is one part of the 'sailnet guys' anchoring technique where we differ significantly – the importance of using the engine to back down on the anchor.

I like to let the wind/current drift me back while paying out about 25% of the total rode that I intend to deploy (For total rode length I usually go with the old classic 1:7 ratio). I snub up the backwards drift which is intended to 'set' the anchor. Then I'll payout more rode until I'm at about the 60 ~ 70% point.

Tie off the rode and slowly rev the engine in reverse until it's running at about ½ cruising RPM. Then just sit and observe for a minute or two to ascertain if you're experiencing any drag what-so-

ever.

I like to line up objects on the shore that are perpendicular to the direction that I'd be dragging, for example a dock that's right on the shore and a cell phone tower that's a mile behind it.

If any drag is detected then I'll move a bit and start over.

If the bottom is so soft that my anchor pulls out during this little test then it's a sure thing that the hold on the bottom is not adequate. I'd rather test the holding capacity right at the beginning and learn of any problems immediately, as opposed to having it pullout sometime later when I really need it (i.e. – a squall that arises at 2 a.m.).

After the anchor has passed the 'back-down' test I'll then let out the remainder of the scope. This is my 'insurance' for some extra holding.

Personally, I don't use an anchor float/trip line because I've seen times where other boaters will mistake it for a mooring float and start pulling it up. I've also seen the float line get tangled in propellers of other boats.

I know that some sailors like how this trip line can help free an anchor if it were to become entangled on the bottom, but since I'm a fairly competent free diver I'm prepared to go down and sort things out myself if it ever comes to that although it's not something I'd relish doing. So far I've never needed to dive on an anchor.

Ross

PS - How do I post hyperlinks to your blog so that they don't get cut off. I need a bit of simple instruction for doing what you said "If you used the href html tag". ???

[Split Decision](#) said...

Hey guys, I'll pick up a swivel tomorrow. Just measured my chain. I've got 25 feet of 3/8". I'll pick up a swivel tomorrow. There's a West Marine within walking distance. I'll probably tie a float to the anchor, so that I don't lose it. Although I have four danforths aboard as backups.

I also liked the idea I think I read on the gemini forum about tying a five gallon bucket to the stern when the tide and wind are spinning the boat around the anchor. I might have to try that out.

Ross, I've gotten into the habit of putting the engine in reverse when anchoring. The technique has shown me a couple times that the anchor was not properly set.

A short tutorial on using the html href tag (also appropriately enough called an anchor tag) is [here](#).

Amy posted some pictures of the marina we just left [here](#)

Friday, May 30, 2008

New Halyard

The old main sail halyard (line with which you hoist the sail) was beginning to disintegrate. The halyard runs from a cleat at the bottom of the mast, up to a pulley at the top of the mast, and back down to the sail. You might think that you would have to climb to the top of the mast to replace the halyard line, but that's not the case.

Sewed the ends of the old and new halyards together.



Taped the ends together.



Pulled the old halyard and then the connected new halyard through the mast. Cut the old halyard away. Tied the new halyard to the shackle with a bowline knot and cleated the other end.



[Rose](#) said...

Scott,

Only you would sew together two halyards and duck tape it. Hope it holds up in inclement weather. Looks like you two are enjoying yourself inspite of the close quarters.

[Split Decision](#) said...

Rose, this is actually standard procedure for replacing a halyard. Sewn & taped together, the new halyard is pulled through the mast by the old halyard. The old halyard is then discarded, or in my case relegated to backup dock line.

Amy complained last night that this blog post left "her wanting". Something about lack of character development, compelling narrative and a denouement. I'm trying to get back on the blogging horse, especially since the second leg of the journey is about to start. But I'll blame some of the lameness of my posts on her. It's a lot easier to write when there isn't a little blond distraction aboard.

[Lou & Meg SV *Starrider*](#) said...

Scott,

Oh Boy! Let's see you are to about to embark on an epic journey North. You and the Admiral need to work together as one, in perfect harmony. In an emergency, both your lives can depend on that perfect harmony thing. Hmmm, not even a week together and you are referring to her as a blonde distraction? I surely hope Amy has good sense of humor. My Wife Meg, read the post (and she is not even a Blonde) and she took it the wrong way. Us guys have to think very carefully about what we say to the Admiral. On a Gemini at sea there are not too many places to escape Her wrath! Be careful what you wish for (and say to each other). This will be a true test of your relationship with

each other. If you both make it up north and still Love each other (and still are talking to each other), this was a relationship made in heaven.

Scott, you are very lucky to find a gal like Amy, who wants to share your trip with you. I am sure you know that most gals hate sailing (no secret). I cannot tell you how many folks I talk to at the marina that say how lucky that I am to have a Wife that likes boating. Yes, it seems even power boat couples have the same issue.

We have had some small emergencies crop up when out in the ocean with our gem. By working together, with mutual respect for each other, these issues actually strengthen our relationship. One particular issue left our gem filled with much water and we could have sank (we now have bilge pumps in both hulls and never leave hatches open). We look back at those episodes, and realize who else would you want to trust your life with? While I was at the helm, my faithful Wife bailed the boat with 5 gallon buckets for hours. In the middle of this she got seasick, but kept going because She knew our lives depended on it. How many Gals do you think would want to go out sailing after that kind of episode? How about if that was your first date? Think she would ever want to see you again?

I thank my lucky stars every day that I have a Wife like Meg. I trust my life in her hands, and she trusts her life in mine. I hope your journey has smooth sailing and your relationship never has to be tested to limits as ours has. After 28 years of marriage, I cannot think of another gal I would rather be sailing with and spending the rest of my life with. So lets change AdmiralCranky pants to AdmiralHappy pants and go out of our way to make our gals happy!

[Split Decision](#) said...

Hey Lou, please apologize to your Admiral for me. I certainly didn't mean any offend anyone. I just meant that I had more time and less distractions to craft blog posts when I was alone on the boat. Conjuring up a blog post while sailing or motoring along for hours is a pleasant distraction. It's just that now there are other happy distractions on the boat, and the blog doesn't always get as much attention.

My Admiral seems to be in a much better mood. I think some of her stress came from moving out of her apartment and preparing for the new job in Richmond this fall.

Hopefully this summer will be a mostly fun and not too challenging cruise. I think if Amy had come aboard with me last fall, she'd have left the boat and maybe me by now. But the boat is more seaworthy and I'm more salty now, so we should be able to avoid a lot of the previous challenges and learning experiences. We have a month to get up to Martha's Vineyard, and will take our time and look for good weather windows.

We will leave the marina tomorrow and head over to Fells Point tomorrow. I have a few loose ends to tie up at the house. And I'm still concerned about the outboard. It isn't missing or dying anymore, but it still doesn't sound like it used to. I'm hoping

that it was just bad gas. I'll replace the spark plugs and clean the carb before we leave.

[Amy](#) said...

Hi Lou and Meg-

Thanks for looking out for us! Just to give the context, we were joking around last night about the lack of literary merit in his recent posts, and he wanted to share the laugh in his comments. I was as unserious with my jibes as he was about me being a distraction. And he's made me feel very welcome and comfortable aboard.

Tomorrow we begin our journey north, and I'm looking forward to it. (Although I do hope I don't end up bailing out the boat with a 5 gallon bucket! Meg must be a gem!)

The Admiral