

Tips For Prospective Blue Water Cruisers

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PART 2

WENDY HINMAN AND GARTH WILCOX SAILED 34,000 MILES OVER 7 YEARS ABOARD THEIR 31-FOOT WYLIE-DESIGNED BOAT, VELELLA, CIRCUMNAVIGATING THE PACIFIC OCEAN, WITH A FORAY INTO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA.

WENDY IS CURRENTLY WRITING A BOOK ABOUT THEIR ADVENTURES.

REPLACEMENT PARTS AND SPARES

Make sure you have approximately a 1 year supply of regular maintenance items (like filters, belts and oil, stainless bolts and nuts and the like) and replacement parts for critical systems on hand. You can seal them in shrink wrap to protect these items until needed. Racor fuel filters have been a challenge to get in many locations. (Lucas CAV filters seem to be more available for a fraction of the Racor price in areas in the South Pacific). Stainless steel shackles, pins and other hardware have been mostly unavailable outside of New Zealand and Australia and probably most major yachting centers, as well as line, electronics, most adhesives and sealants, boat-specific electrical and plumbing parts, and of course, replacement parts for specific models of yacht gear. West Marine ships products all over the world and having a catalog on board is handy for figuring out solutions. Getting mail in some places can be difficult and import policies can delay your plans and create various hassles. (Make sure you have contact information for major suppliers of specialty gear you have, such as watermakers, autopilot, electric windless, etc. just in case you need them later). Lead acid batteries and engine oil (but not always the kind you want) are available most places where there are larger towns. Machine shops are good in many population centers where there is light industry. Many boat yards and chandleries offer higher quality work and carry a wider variety of products in the more



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popular destinations and you can ask other cruisers about specific places. Planning ahead by making sure you have spares or doing preventative maintenance when you are in more developed areas can help minimize breakdowns and related hassles later.

Sometimes countries have more affordable quality products than the U.S. or cheaper labor rates. Talk to



COSTS OF VOYAGING

How much it costs to cruise really depends on your lifestyle and expectations. Some think of cruising as living a simpler lifestyle and others think of it as a once in a lifetime trip and this attitude will influence how you spend money. The size of your boat and the sophistication of your equipment also makes a big



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other cruisers for the current situation. New Zealand, for example, is an excellent place for doing work on the boat. Labor rates are much lower than the U.S. with highly skilled labor. Most local products are of decent quality, and importing products is quite easy they since waive all import duty for

difference in costs. As more yachts visit an area, while more services become available, prices also tend to rise. We are trying to live within a budget of about \$1000 a month including boat maintenance and finding that a bit challenging. Some months we spend very little and others

HANDLING FINANCES / MONEY WHILE VOYAGING

ATMs and credit cards work well in some countries but can be useless or expensive to use in more remote areas. Having travelers' checks and a little cash (some single US dollars and \$10 and \$20 bills) is always a good idea to cover you in various situations. We've traded clothing and other items for things

in some remote areas, such as northern Vanuatu, where money is of little value since there are no stores.

Setting up automatic bill paying can help you manage your money, but appoint someone you trust and provide them with a power of attorney and a



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foreign vessels. New Zealand has good locally-made mechanical items (epiglass, oars, stainless), although imported items and especially electronics cost more. Prices can vary significantly from store to store. Good quality sails and canvas work cost less due to cheaper labor rates (although most canvas dodgers we saw weren't as attractive as ones designed and built in North America) even though materials often cost more. Australia is less ideal but offers another place to do a major overhaul.

we exceed the budget significantly. Our biggest cost is boat repairs and upgrades. The simpler your boat, the cheaper the repairs will be. There are many boats out here on a far higher budget than we are and often locals consider all foreigners to be rich and charge accordingly. But there is plenty to do that doesn't cost anything - snorkeling, swimming, surfing, hiking - and we try to focus on those things. Hanging around with people on your same budget can make sticking to your budget easier.

checkbook to handle things that undoubtedly will come up because it is hard to anticipate everything. See section on Handling Mail and Business Affairs, for more info.

EARNING INCOME WHILE VOYAGING

Getting paying work is possible on an informal basis in construction or boat maintenance / deliveries, teaching English or some restaurant work, but getting a work permit to work for a short time in an office position is much more

challenging. Those wanting to work might need to stop for a longer period to find the job and then make it worthwhile for an employer to hire them officially. Often immigration visas specifically forbid one from working in a country so usually any work is done under the table. We have heard of people getting taken advantage of while working under the table since they can't complain. A trade or skill that might be

U.S. yacht in transit can eliminate problems with customs and be adequate to keep people from returning packages if you are not sitting right there. American Express will collect mail (for a short time for cardholders) and many marinas, yacht clubs and hotels will accept your mail in advance of your arrival with warning, but due to misunderstandings they can be returned. The cruising guides for each

collect numbers for your credit card so you can contact them outside the U.S. (Also renew your driver's license and passport early if you can to prevent inconveniences later.) Don't carry everything in your wallet. You can't use credit cards everywhere anyway, so don't take the risk of losing them and having to replace everything at tremendous inconvenience. Make copies of



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useful to other yachties (equipment installation, sail making / repair, varnish / paint prep, rigging, electronics repair) could help earn some income. Many note these special skills on their boat cards. Yachties generally help one another gratis in the spirit of community, so approaching regular yachties on a

country give you an idea of where you can send mail. In some places, like Vavau, Tonga, people never got their mail, but this is a rare occurrence. Because we have someone at home handling our affairs, we can minimize mail forwarding to a couple of times a year and usually choose to wait until

everything you are carrying in case you lose it and leave it with someone you trust. Carry a copy of your passport in your wallet and often you can avoid having to carry the original, especially to cash traveler's checks. Carry a copy of your boat documents as well and always keep the original



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work for payment arrangement should be done carefully. Megayachts with professional crew expect to pay for services.

HANDLING MAIL AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Sending mail to General Delivery or Post Restante still works pretty effectively without any advance warning at all and can be collected upon presentation of some form of I.D. Often merely addressing packages: hold for

we've reached countries we've heard are reliable. There are mail transferring services that you can hire and some will even manage some of your affairs with a limited power of attorney. You may want to consider setting yourself up automatic bill paying and checking your accounts online to minimize mailing issues.

Double check expiration dates on credit and membership cards, and request replacing them early while it is convenient. Note the international

on the boat (This is your title to the boat). On board email can be useful for managing affairs in remote areas. See Communications section for more info.

INSURANCE

Insurance for health and boat seem to present challenges to most American yachties, and few people seem content with their arrangement. Many Europeans are uninsured. Do some research beforehand and ask

a lot of questions to make sure you are covered in any situation you might find yourself. Get an agent that is easy to reach by email and helpful in answering your questions. Policies have various requirements which could include: one or multiple surveys of the vessel, more than two people aboard for longer passages,



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restrictions for traveling in certain regions, and limiting the amount of time offshore in a calendar year. We've heard about insurance cancellation or lapses in coverage with little warning. Insurance is very expensive and we've heard stories of people paying nearly the initial purchase price of their boat in a matter of a few years. We decided to self insure by buying a boat that we could afford to lose or fix out of our

COMPUTERS

A laptop computer is handy for viewing electronic charts and receiving weather faxes, getting email aboard via SSB, with DVD's for watching movies and CD burners for backing up files and storing digital photos. Few yachties are without a laptop on board these days and many

lighter and bypass the inverter. The new computer unfortunately can not use the same one but we were able to find one on the IGo site. (Note: many newer computers do not have serial ports, but they are still needed to hook into weatherfax demodulators, GPS for electronic navigation or Pactor II modems for onboard email. We bought

add a second laptop for back up. We bought a cheap used one off the Internet and have stored it in a Pelican watertight case. A Pelican case is a good investment to protect it from moisture and in case you need to take it ashore. We also found a laptop handy for preparing emails and logs in advance to send from a floppy when we get to a shore side Internet access location. Computers can draw a lot of power. Different laptops draw different amounts

a USB to serial port adapter. You can also buy a PCMCIA card adapter at many electronics stores for moving files, especially digital photos across computers.)

DINGHIES

The dinghy is our car and as a result it is a very important piece of boat equipment which gets a lot of wear and tear. Each type of dinghy has its



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own pockets (The cruising book written by John Neal and Amanda Swan lists a number of insurers and has lots of other useful information included). Health care is readily available and inexpensive outside the U.S. and usually of decent quality in major centers. There are doctors out cruising that can be consulted informally via SSB as needed and some services exist that offer formal advice via radio or email.

of power. When we bought a new computer, our power usage rose dramatically. Running the computer off of its own battery and then recharging it is a way to save power. The inverter can create a hum that interferes with weatherfax signals and also takes significant additional power to run the computer than would otherwise be required. We found a power cord (via Targus web site) that enables us to plug the old computer directly into a cigarette

strengths and weaknesses and no one thinks they have the ideal dinghy for all situations. Inflatable ribs with engines are great for going places fast, but the engine better work because they can hardly be rowed even short distances. Being able to plane in the dinghy with 4 people can make for some great expeditions. Having bigger tubes makes for a drier ride, yet could make it harder to stow. Keen divers like to have big dinghies

to hold all their dive gear and sometimes up to 4 people. Hard sailing / rowing dinghies can be great fun in flat water and last the longest with minimal maintenance but can also be hard to stow. We have a 2 part nesting, sailing dinghy which is very quick to launch and fun to sail and row. However we worry about it

towing bridle with a back up painter is a good idea when towing, along with a floating painter to avoid wrapping it in the prop when backing down while anchoring. Being able to hoist the dinghy alongside at night can reduce bottom growth and the possibility of theft, yet if the wind comes up in the night or there is

GETTING UNDERWAY

Each time we move the boat or go sailing we must consider how well we need to stow the boat for the trip. When we are stopped for long periods, we begin to move in. For short calmer trips, we may not be as well stowed, but might



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being stowed on deck in very rough weather and we are unable to plane with an outboard motor.

Stowing the dinghy on the boat so that it is easy to launch and safe aboard in rough sailing conditions is a challenge we all face, but most particularly on smaller boats. Stowing an outboard motor in a safe and inconspicuous location is another issue. Raising and lowering a heavy

significant rainfall that cannot drain, a dinghy hoisted alongside can be precarious.

Many dinghy docks and landing areas leave a lot to be desired. A light dinghy can be easily beached above the tide line yet may not be as durable. Some buy wheels for the dinghy for landings when the dinghy must be moved far from the water's edge. Native kids sometimes play in them while they are

get caught by surprise. Preparing to get underway includes: getting out relevant charts/guidebooks, plotting a course, stowing solar panels, rolling up the awning, stowing the dinghy (stowing dinghy seat, oars, and sails below and placing the dinghy on foredeck, wiping down its bottom and tying it down), stowing items below (rolling up carpet and putting it in the v-berth and



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outboard between the big boat and the dinghy is easier with a hoist mounted on the stern rail. Every time we go sailing, we consider whether we should stow the dinghy or tow it for the duration of the trip. During short sails when conditions are calm, we sometimes tow the dinghy. But, sometimes the wind can come up unexpectedly and having a dinghy in tow can be a bit unnerving in marginal conditions. Having a good

left unattended. Dinghies can bash against the dock or rocks in rough conditions or as a result of wakes and using a dinghy anchor can help to prevent that (And the dinghy anchor is essential for most snorkeling expeditions). A long floating painter or cable (with locking capability) enables yachties to fit a larger number of dinghies at a crowded dinghy dock and reduces some of the wear and tear on your dinghy where there is high traffic.

putting away any loose items from the shelves or counters), closing all hatches, removing sail covers, removing the line that dampens boom motion, turning on instruments/GPS, starting the engine, hauling up the anchor and washing it and the foredeck off, hoisting sails, and putting out the fishing line.

To be continued.