



Log #17 - How Neptune attends to details or How do you say “filler up” in Spanish?

Last we heard from our intrepid sailors, Michael and Suzan, they had helped another boat through the Panama Canal, learned new culinary skills with Spam and discover that Suzan CAN overload a car without much effort.

The Brits are coming!

We departed lovely Panama City en route to Salinas Ecuador, the seaside community close to Guayaquil. While in Panama we were grateful to welcome aboard Steve and Deb who graciously gave us or rather me a helping hand being the ‘one handed sailor’ as I was still re-cooperating from hand surgery. Steve and Deb are unique as they are highly consummate sailors as owners of their own cruising vessel, a Moody 38, moored snugly in a marina in Turkey. They originally took off from England and joined another boat for the ARC World Rally but personalities being what they were and their extraordinary experience, things did not work out. So we were able to snag them to accompany us to Ecuador.



New Crew members for MaaMa

That’s a funny word

Steve and Deb were great, Brits right down to their knickers. As such, we were able to add new colloquialisms to our vocabulary. Of course we knew the meaning of ‘bloody’. Bloody this and bloody that, etc. Or how bout another beer mate! which isn’t that Aussie. But what was new was ‘Pear Shape’. Now I happen to like the shape of pears, rounded at the top and more rounded at the bottom and when received from Harry and David...what a treat. But this meaning was all together different. When a Brit declares something to be ‘Pear Shaped’ it means something has gone awfully afoul or decidedly wrong...much the same as when we say F__k or other colorful explicatives!

Deb, Deb. Fish On!

Fish On...well this was a ‘yank’ term and Steve and Deb got to experience it for the first time! It seems that they had never hooked up with a fish in their many years of cruising exotic waters. So there we were fishing with the ‘old meat line’, our 50 foot



Quite the first fish!



Quite the fish - wouldn't you say! Takes a meat claver to get through the spine, a good inch thick!

1/8 inch dacron line with snubber and stainless steel leader with plastic squid attached. This we drag for any "F.O.O" aka "Fish Of Opportunity". To say the very least with this rig, very little is safe from us that's under seventy pounds...any thing larger and MaaMa would turn into a cannery.

Deb caught her first fish, a Mahi Mahi that came aboard at a whopping 40 pounds. Our technique may be a little crude as we usually drag the critters for 30 to 40 minutes after hook up in hopes of drowning the devil, thus eliminating the need to look the fish in the eye and then club it into submission. But this fish would not succumb. So we brought it up to the stern of our boat, set a gaff behind its gills, gaff breaks off, struggle to get fish back to boat where the technique was to spray alcohol directly into the gill set...this they don't like but its much faster and hopefully more humane then clubbing the fish to death. This being said, we dispatched the fish, Suzan conducted cleaning and filleting class for our previously fish-less guests and great filets and steaks were soon aboard and packaged for the fridge and freezer. Michael immediately prepped a marinade of fresh squeezed limes, garlic, black pepper and a secret French seasoning salt and a hour later lunch was served...ummmmmm...ummmmmm good! To say the least our 'Brits' were hooked!

When you are out of fuel you are out of luck ... sometimes.

Most of the run from Panama to the Equator was uneventful, just as we like it. We did divert to the Las Perles islands for a few days of beachcombing and general enjoying and then headed south against the Humboldt current - a whopping 3 knots of current against us. But to our chagrin and cruising budget, there was no wind, so the entire passage was done all under diesel power. Diesel at Panama was over \$4.00 per US Gallon, we took on 200 gallons, you do the math. More on CPG 'cost per gallon' as fuel, no matter what the cost, will be paid especially if you've run out.

Three days out at the noon briefing of all the rally boats, we answered a call for help and the need for fuel from another ARC boat...a catamaran owned by a couple from the UK. Seems that they had consumed nearly all of their diesel... a paltry 200 liters of diesel in tanks below deck and another 100 liters carried in jerry cans on deck (total 75 gallons! What were these people thinking? Now MaaMa should not be confused as a tanker, but we carry 375 gallons just to be sure). They were about to become becalmed and would have to make for the nearest port, which happened to be on the Columbia/Ecuador border. Really not the place you want to go in the dark on a Saturday evening. There surely would not be a fuel dock open until Monday morning and it would likely take them until Tuesday to "clear in" to the country with the various agencies before being allow to proceed to Salinas. So we did what sailors do - go to their aid. We diverted about 30 miles and met up with them at about 45

minutes before sunset. The seas were a little difficult so that precluded any attempts to tie side by side. It was going to be a mid-ocean fuel transfer by dinghy. So with Steve at the oars (too rough to try and put an outboard on the dinghy), he rowed back and forth about four times and we transferred 40 gallons of fuel. We did not leave empty handed though, Steve returned with a bottle of champagne!



Mid-ocean refueling

Pollywogs to Shellbacks and crossing the line!

We crossed the fabled "Line" with our Lat/lon reading 0000N and 080.39W that's when Michael and Suzan appeared on deck with their crossing costumes...planned well ahead in Seattle for this auspicious occasion. Suzan attired in her...and Michael in his....well enough said, pictures say it all.... even the little bit Suzan is willing to show. So that you know, it is an old sea fairing tradition to costume crew to make this crossing...sometimes including tattooing, hair cutting and shaving of various parts ...so we were very tame by many accounts. We further celebrated by opening the bottle of 'gifted' champagne which washed down smoked salmon and cream cheese with capers prepared by Suzan. Our guests Deb and Steve dug in as well. And champagne was definitely the drink of the day! As we had neglected to buy any champagne for the crossing, Neptune seemed to provide. So I suppose we may have curried some favor with him after all.

We arrived off the Port of Salinas at 4 in the morning and given the limited charting information we hove to and waited for daylight and the new day for the fresh smell of diesel.... But that story will have to wait for the next installment.

FairWinds ☺), Suzan and Michael



At the equator! Albeit not very fast...



This is an accomplishment - smiles all around



Crew (Hilton) from other boat assisting with getting fuel out of the reserve tank



New shellbacks



Jerry cans by dinghy



Michael always has an outfit for an event



No wind except when it rains and then it pours