

# Not a Sailing Trip

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How I spent my Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years and Birthday vacations.

Last November I journeyed to Stockholm Sweden to help with a Yacht delivery. The original plan was to bring the boat all the way back to Seattle via the Panama Canal (more on the grand plan later). So on November 15<sup>th</sup> I found myself on a retired Swedish Rescue Ship, built in 1948 and 19 meters long with a displacement of 65 tons and rated as an icebreaker wondering what the heck I was doing standing in a snow storm. My name had been pitched into hat for a crew position by Michael V. Colyer and Barbra Keller part time SSYC members from Olympia. I am still wondering what bad things I did to them for this recommendation. The jet lag did little to restore my sanity.

I arrived ahead of the spare boat parts that had been sent ahead (things like SSB radio, survival suites and such). Actually the shipment was in Stockholm but there was some problem with the paperwork and customs, several days were spent on the phone and visiting assorted government offices by Keith (the one in charge of this whole thing). Getting parts in without customs penalty proved to be a bit of a problem as the ships title had not been transferred from Swedish to US Registry so Customs did not want to release parts to a Swedish registered vessel, many Fax's and phone calls over several days and the ship's registry was finally changed and the parts released.

The wait for the parts was spent on other ship work. The boat was cramped for storage space, it was made for short term safety patrols in the Baltic Sea and the last owner had used it for cruising with his girlfriend so storage for several people and food storage for more than a few days had to be addressed. We had to add shelves for food and clothing and books, hangers for foul weather gear, a navigation computer, backup GPS and the list went on. When all else failed for storage we stuffed it into the lazaret which was a very big cave in the stern with some emergency bunks that were turned into storage shelves for everything from food to oil filters.

There was an Internet Cafe in a 7-11 store about a mile from the boat and I was able to check on news and do some email back home. There were about 15 computers set up on a balcony and for 19 Kroner I was able to get about an hour of connect time. The news seemed to stay the same, same players just change the talking points a bit from week to week. Quite an improvement from when I started working in Alaska during collage and the only link out was a SSB radio or

a mail plane that came once or twice a week weather permitting. Sometimes the Alaska weather was so tough that we would go two weeks between mail planes. We used to save all newspaper that spare parts were packed in and take the pages up to the mess hall and read them. The packing material news worked well until the story was continued on a page that did not make it into the box. Other times the newspaper from before we went to Alaska and the stories were a bit stale.

The temperature was about freezing in Stockholm most of the time. It started to get dark around 2.30 or so in the afternoon and the sun was a bit slow on the startup - at 59 degrees north latitude we were about 600 or 700 miles north of Seattle. We get spoiled in Seattle being able to boat year around. There were a few kayakers out every day. The recreational marinas just close up and the boats are hauled out of the water. The water around Stockholm is freshwater and freezes in the winter. I only saw one orphan sailboat that was still in the water.

I don't know if it is global warming or not but the locals say this is a real warm fall. There are a large number of ducks that seem to be settling in for the winter, I am not sure what they will do when the water a freezes.

The pedestrian signals all have a strange set of audible signals as they cycle through the walk / don't walk lights, there is also a light to show that the button has been pressed and a crossing for a pedestrian has been requested, beats the daylights out of our press and pray cross walk signals back in Seattle.

When I was purchasing some candy at the 7-11 store the clerk bragged that "Sweden makes the best candy in the world." They had a very large selection of bins with over 100 different types of candy. I kept score the rest of the trip and the clerk was correct. No other store I visited ever had anything approaching the variety of candy that I saw in Stockholm. Over 25 different types of licorice alone.

After I arrived we spent about 10 days working on the boat. Keith and his dad had arrived a week ahead of me and Bill the other crew member came over the day after I did.

Bill took over the cooking and did a great job. Keith and his dad had a vegetarian diet and Bill and I are meat eaters so Bill had to keep two sets of menus straight.

All the instruments and controls on the boat were in Swedish so we had some fun times trying to figure out what some of the switches did. Then there were the secret switch combinations requiring 3 switches to all be in the right positions for the autopilot to work. Turn a switch and look around the boat and see what turned on.

On the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> Keith decided it was time to start the journey, so into the evening we ventured. If you look on a chart, it is a significant navigation problem just to reach salt water even with computer based charts hooked into a GPS unit. . The Boat Broker had given us some pointers as to which way to head, the short cut was only about 50 miles to salt water. Even with the Chart Plotter on a PC it took a fair amount of concentration to take the right turns and stay out of the way of local freighters. Sweden is "area A" for navigation aids which means that red and green are reversed from what we are used to in Puget Sound. That added to the fun and resulted in some strange course tracks and confusion about what side of the light was the good side by some of the crew. Picking out lights after dark is always a bit of a black art and with red and green reversed it was sort of like magic at times. Reminded me of a Marx Brothers Movie at times as "automatic" would take over reading the lights at times by one or the other of the crew. In places the channel was only 100 yards wide between the banks with oncoming traffic.

Around 7pm we approached the locks at Sodertalje that would get us out of the "fresh water" (still several hours from salt water). The bad news part was that the locks were by appointment only and we had red lights as we approached in the entrance canal. The judicious use of reverse stopped us before we stormed the gates at the locks, but we ended up sideways in the canal. Keith thought this was a sign that it was time to tie up for the evening. We found a spot along the canal to the locks and tied up for the evening.

The next morning after consulting the Sailing Directions I had brought we called the locks on the radio and set up an appointment to lock through. The drop in the locks was only about 2 feet so after getting the lines ready as if we were going through the Ballard Locks they just had us stop the boat in the middle of the lock while they dropped the water, easier than at Ballard.

The first part of day 2 in the Grand Adventure started well with a tourist type journey along the outlying coast areas of Sweden. Lots of little islands that we had to pass to the correct side of. The early morning could have been put on a tourist post card. When we cleared the islands the weather started to pick up. It then got downright nasty and we found out first hand the fine handling traits of icebreakers. The Baltic sea is shallow, around 100 to 150 feet in most areas, this means the wave action is short and choppy. The waves came up in the 8ft range and were square, the length seeming to match the length of the boat. We had green water up the hawse hole for the anchor chain on a regular basis with the bow of the boat going into freefall at the same time. With no stabilizers the boat had a roll of 45 degrees to either side and a roll period of 5 seconds from down 45 on port to down 45 degrees on starboard and back to 45 degrees down on port. For even more fun the pilot house put you 10 to 12 feet above the roll center. Try climbing part way up the mast on a sailboat and doing a crash jibe every 2.5 seconds with the boat going through 90 degrees of roll while doing this, repeat, repeat, repeat, yes a very physical boat. Then from time to time a wave

that was out of phase would hit us on the beam and the boat would do sort of a cork screw barrel roll.

After a few hours of beating our heads into the weather Keith decided enough was enough and we turned back toward a safe harbor. We did a night approach to Arkosund, sort of like playing video games and hoping that the chart datum was correct as the approach is short on navigation lights or land that will show up on the radar screen. The Sailing Directions use the term "local knowledge required." A couple of days were spent in Arkosund changing filters and doing boat fixing. The starboard engine had some bolts come out of the flex coupling to the gearbox and it took some time to disassemble the coupling to replace the loose bolts and tighten them up.

The next stop was Simrishamn on the south part of Sweden to repair a leak in the hydraulic system that controls the variable pitch prop. Someone had used electrical tape when they installed one of the seals on a ram and some of the tape ended up under the lip of the seal.

Simrishamn was a fishing village that went into decline as the fishing declined. The area had a couple of decades of slow and decline until being reborn as a tourist destination and artist colony with about 7,000 people in the town and outlying areas. The harbor was in the old part of town, very scenic with houses several centuries old. Cobblestone were used for the sidewalks and streets. Different colors of stone were used to mark the streets in place of paint for crosswalks and parking lots. The cobblestones were arranged in a series of sweeping part arcs, the street crew said that it helped the stones to stay in place. The arcs gave the streets and sidewalks an artistic feeling, much more appealing than our plain cement. The cobblestones should also have allowed the rain to soak into the ground better and not have the massive rain water runoffs in the US.

Simrishamn's small town jungle telegraph was working well and we had not been in port long before a newspaper reporter showed up to interview us! Our boat had been stationed in the Simrishamn area several years ago and everyone wanted to know what was happening with the boat. We even got our pictures in the paper. Several locals stopped by to look at the boat and say hello while were in port. Everyone that had served on the boat or knew someone that had said "she sure did roll and wander" referring to the rolling of the boat from side to side and the fact that it did not want to go in a straight line very well. It was common for the bow to wander back and forth in a 20 degree window from side to side while underway.

There is a small museum in the town. The museum had three floors of exhibits showing life in the area back several centuries. There was furniture and tools for everyday living with sections of rooms from different ages and models of houses and courtyard scenes. Spinning wheels for spinning yarn by hand, manual

looms, some as large as an office desk and as tall as the ceiling. The operator sat in the loom and did all the weaving using their feet and hands to power the loom. The top floor had sailing and fishing exhibits and many scale model ships from the square rigger days. Today's commercial fisherman would have been right at home with the nets and much of the over 100 years ago technology. The sailing section had navigation instruments from 100 years ago that would still look at home today on the bridge of any ship. The parallel rules were made of brass and not plastic as today, the dividers were brass and did not have a center screw. The knot meter might not make it on a modern cruise ship though, the old throw a line over the stern and count the knots that go by in 28 seconds. The speed measured in knots is from counting the number of knots that went through the fingers of the navigator generally in 28 seconds. The reason for 28 seconds is they figured that there was about two seconds lost in throwing the log off the stern.

The leg from Simrishamn Sweden to Kiel Germany went well if you discount the vessel traffic that looked something like Lake Union just after the fireworks on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July is over (but these were full sized freighters) and the part outside of Kiel when we shut down the German navy's live fire exercise when we went through the middle of the target area.

At the south end of the Baltic Sea the shipping lanes choke down real narrow. We had 6 to 14 ships on the radar all the time within a 12 mile radius, part of the time only half of the radar screen was being used with half of the screen showing land. I got the good night watch, with a dog leg in the shipping lanes we were running down the right edge of the lane with 6 or more ships on the radar at all times, some passing within 150 yards of us. Bit of a trick to be very predictable and follow all the proper Nav. Rules when the boat has a built in 20 degree yaw even with the autopilot engaged. Part way through the watch I ask the crew that was helping me with the watch to tell me what the lights were on a ship that was overtaking us. The reply?? "One big ass mother with a lot of lights" yes, the glamour of life at sea. The ship overtook us in the narrow part of the shipping lane with a little less than 150 yards to our port.

Cutting the corner approaching Kiel and shutting down the German Navy got us a welcoming party at the dock. The Police, Coast Guard and 2 sets of Customs inspectors. Keith had seen the firing range on the chart but figured that the weather was so ratty that nobody would be out using the firing range. Having radio problems did not help when we did not reply to several attempts to contact us. A German navy vessel came out to look us over, circled us a few times then let the Coast Guard take over and escort us into the harbor. We had two full customs inspections of the ship, lifting deck plates and going through every duffel bag and storage drawer at least twice. This was a real good time not to have been a terrorist or smuggler.

Sunday December 4 after waiting a couple of days for the weather to clear we transited the Kiel Canal. The trip takes about 8 hours from one end of the canal to the other.

The canal is a different experience, one big ditch about 57 miles with locks at each end. It was first opened in 1897, back in the good old days of steam shovels and horse drawn carts and the good old hand shovels and pick axes. The canal has been upgraded since it first opened and will take ships up to 235 meters (770 ft) long, 32.5 meters (105 ft) wide and 40 meters (131 ft) tall and the maximum depth of 9 meters (29 ft) so they are large ships. Most of the canal has 2 way traffic. The freighters look a lot bigger when they are only about 150 ft or so to your side as they go by.

The Navigation Rules for the Canal fill a 70 page book. There are a series of traffic light type light signals that tell which ships can pass and which ones have to stop for oncoming traffic. The ships in the canal are divided into six different classes. Class one being the smallest (us and other pleasure boats) up to Class 6 for the largest freighters.

Most of the freighters, even the large ships went into and out of the locks without assistance from a tug. The pilots on the freighters made transiting the locks and the canal so easy.

A ship can proceed past the lights based on the combined size of the two ships that are meeting oncoming. When we came to the first set of lights (two red flashing over top each other) Keith got a bit nervous and kept asking what to do, in the 70 pages of special Navigation Instructions there was the answer, I told Keith to run the red light it's for the other guy. He kept on going but had a you had better be right look on his face.

The canal has ferries in many places as the bridges need to be high enough to get a 40 meter (131 ft) ship safely under the bridge. One ferry was a hanging ferry, suspended by cables under a railroad bridge and it sort of flew across about 10 feet above the water. It was a bit of what the heck is this when we first saw it.

Brunsbüttel is the west end of the canal. The marina did have showers (not all the marinas had showers) but the hot water is only turned on for part of the day and I just missed it the first morning. The nearest Laundromat or what ever was 20km away in another town so I ended up washing my cloths using the flat rock method in the shower.

Leaving Brunsbüttel on December 8<sup>th</sup> we had a 5kt current down the Elbe River - what a quick ride for a while with 12 knots over the ground. The ATONS (buoys) had a bow wake as we passed them! But somehow the Germans have figured

out how to get the ATON's to float straight up in over 5 knots of current. Leave it to the Germans I guess.

Out into the North Sea we passed a 20 foot open fishing boat with two people on board, they were about 30 nm from the closest land. Seemed a long ways out, tough way to make a living.

I got both the "good" watches in the English Channel and the approach to the Channel. In the German Bite 4 VTS lanes plus a 90 degree sector with no VTS all come together and go different directions in a small area. Bill & I had 30 to 35 boats on the radar all the time using a 12nm radius, and not all of them were going in the same direction, others overtaking, some crossing ahead and some crossing behind, was a bit intense, I think bill was happy that I was in charge of the bridge and not him, oh this was all done at night by the way. Later on I got the watch when we choked down to two lanes right at Dover, - only a few miles wide at Dover, again at night, we had 30 to 35 boat on the Radar screen at all times, 12 nautical mile radius but only ships on half of the screen as the Starboard (right) side was land and shallow water, story of my life, I get all the good jobs. The pucker factor was quite high for several hours in both areas.

The big boys have displays on the bridge that tell them which ship is which. Listening we would hear a ship come on and discuss the courses of each other. There were a couple of times where "ship xxxx you are on a collision course please alter your course," the response on at least two times was "I am working on it." No hiding from each other for ships 300 tons and up with the automatic identification system.

All the sides of the VTS lanes had buoys marking their limits. It was strange to see the ATON's out of sight of land in the North Sea. The water is only about 30 meters deep so anchoring the ATON's is much easier than the 700 foot water in Puget Sound. The high amount of traffic also was aided by the buoys. Fishing boats would sometimes fish almost right to the edge of the VTS lane, in some cases there was not enough room to go between the outside of the VTS lane and the fishing net.

It was a different feeling going past Dover and Dunkirk, seeing the plot on the chart, the shipwrecks on the chart in an area of so much history. I had a feeling not unlike being on hallowed or sacred ground. I could not help but wonder what the captains of all the little ships that did the evacuation of the troops thought, putting out to sea in wooden boats with no armor and no weapons, the memories of the pictures I have seen, did they think of history, or in grand ideas, or did they pass it off like my Dad did of his WW2 time in the Coast Guard as just something that they had to do, sort of a shrug of his shoulders and his 3 bland war stories, how he made the captain sick with his cigar smoking on the bridge and getting "I am putting you down as a good rough weather man for the cigar smoke" and a couple of other equally bland adventures.

Several times our course took us right along fishing floats. We had to play dodge ball with the floats to keep from winding the line in the propeller. Some of the floats were only about 12 to 16 inch in diameter which meant that you don't see them until about the 50 to 100 yard marker if you are watching real close. Other fishing floats were small gray floats with about one inch of freeboard with a small whip sticking up about 2 feet and a small (6 inch) square of plastic (that sometimes looked like it came from a garbage bag). The floats were a reminder that keeping a good lookout and not reading a book or something else is a real good thing. Winding up 30 to 50 meters of line in the prop would not be a good way to spend the night.

The watch stander reset the Autopilot on the sunrise watch this morning and we did a slow turn into the sunrise before it was noticed that the watcher stander was not quite watching and the course was reset. It was a nice sunrise, should have been off the port side and not dead ahead.

Entering Brest France the morning of December 12<sup>th</sup> we were met yet again by a Coast Guard boat, this time with an armed boarding party on board and no they did not bring party favors with them. We did not check in with VTS and did not respond to repeated attempts to contact us on the VHF radio. We were not required to check in but visually we looked like a ship that would normally be required to check in. There is a downside to looking like a work boat. When we tested the radio with the French Coast Guard it still did not work. That helped to get us off the hook a bit and the fact that we had my copy of the Sailing Directions open with notes in the book about entering the harbor and things calmed down a bit. The odd part was that the radio worked on some frequencies and not on others.

The boarding officers were real helpful. We were not sure where we could dock our boat and the French Coast Guard spent over ½ hour on the phone and radio finding a marina that had a deep enough berth for us.

Brest was flattened in WW2 by allied bombs - as the Coast Guard Officer said "lots of Germans here." There are almost no pre WW2 buildings, the downtown has a regular urban feel to it, sort of regular urban. The residential streets are narrow and twist as the town rebuilt on the old street lines but with new buildings

One of the Coast Guard Officers in the boarding party lost 1 Grandfather to Allied Bombs and the other to the Concentration Camps so his family was double hit by both sides, sort of a sad commentary on the state of mankind.

There was a big Nautical center and Sailing Center next to the marina. Every day there were up to 50 kids out on the water. I counted over 450 small boats in the fleet - from Lazars and Optimist types to over 55 Hobie Cats ( 15 & 16 ft long). I was told that all school children have required on the water classes.

Océanopolis is a large marine center next to the marina. It sounded like a standard aquarium before I visited it, but they have 10,000 animals and 1,000 different species in this big marine research and ocean center. Océanopolis also supports ocean research all over the world and their exhibits covered literally the entire world. They had artificial tides to make some of the tanks just like the sea. The penguins had special frozen ice to walk on to keep their feet healthy.

Water is a separate item on the menu, very hard to get sometimes, the food issue was not helped by my only knowing about 2 words of French and none of the menus had English versions. It cost 8 euro for a hamburger and fries for lunch ( 10 dollars and nothing to drink)

I had a chance to do a little museum hopping - Musee De La Marine is a large Fortress that has been in use since the time of the Romans. The French use it now as a Navy Headquarters but part of it was open to the public. Thick walls made of all stone blocks. It did survive the Allied bombing. The Le Musee des Breaux Arts had mostly paintings many going back to the 1500's.

Pastry shop on almost every corner, all the items I tested tasted great. It did take supreme control to walk past some of the shops.

The banks in Brest were not in the money exchange business. Foreign exchange is done by the Post Office. The exchange rate was not all that good and there was a 5 euro service charge on \$100us or 6,25%. Bill did \$70us and had the same service charge so I guess I got by better. They also did not like \$100- bills. I found out after I got back that there are some "Super \$100 bills" in circulation and that has made many banks and countries not want to exchange them.

Bill had a very sore tooth that had him in real pain. We found a Tourist Help center and they gave him the names of 3 English speaking Dentists. He picked one close by and camped out on their door step in the morning. Turned out that the tooth was mostly ok but had an infection around the root. A prescription and a visit to a Pharmacy and a few days later his tooth was back to all good.

The weather when we left Brest into the Bay of Biscay on Monday December 19<sup>th</sup> was nice and mild. Our weather router had given us a very good forecast for the next several days. Well that lasted about one day and we ran into an ugly cross swell from the left that was short and confused. We got really smacked around for about 9 hours. The ride was like being in a tumble washing machine. While 8 to 10 ft swells does not sound like much, they were short and square on the port forward quarter for a while then they moved aft and we finally had to head toward the Spanish coast for some shelter. Even after the course change we got swells almost on the beam. It took us 10 hours before we were able to get some shelter from the coast. 45 degree rolls were common which is a lot for a power boat -

but the boat came right back up, another part of the problem is that the left-right-left (one full cycle from port rail down to starboard rail down and back to port down is 5 seconds, and the wheelhouse is about 12 ft above the roll center so the motion was quite severe. The ride was like being part way up the mast of a sailboat during a crash jibe. I had several sore spots and just missed having blisters from hanging on.

We had a couple of close encounters with some large freighters, never ceases to amaze me how big the ocean is and yet there is still another boat out there on a collision course with you. Some of the training and general bull sessions on types of right of way problems did come in quite handy. Part of the problem in figuring out if the other boat is on a collision course is that our course swings in a window of about 20 degrees. The radar plot is then a bit tricky and called for extra attention, but had the last ship passed ahead of us by about a mile with no bad words at us on the VHF.

We arrived at Puerto de la Coruna Wednesday morning December 21<sup>st</sup> and dropped the hook and went to sleep. Daddy Deitzel (Keiths dad) flew out Christmas eve, he could not wait to get off the boat after this last ride.

A Coruña is an older Spanish town with an old world feel to it. The streets are narrow and twisty with wide boulevards along the waterfront. Majestic old stone buildings some dating back to the middle ages. The marina looked to be quite old and I would not be surprised if it was several centuries old judging from the way the steps of stone go down into the water and then you jump a bit to the floats. Wide boulevards surrounded the marina. It was common to see people of all ages walking along the marina and the rest of the waterfront. The marina had SOS stands along it's edge every 50 yards or so. The stands were along the line of a phone on a post. They were to let anyone summon help in an emergency without needing to find a phone booth. It was a nice safety touch I thought.

A walk through A Coruña the day before Christmas had none of the frantic sales and holiday push that we have come to expect in the US.

I spent parts of the first two days visiting a few of the museums.

Castillo de San Anton y Museo Arqueologico is a fortress from the late 16th century that that guarded the harbor and is now a museum showing the history of the local area. There are exhibits all the way back to prehistoric metal work (bronze age tools and some stone tools) there are also several cases with swords and early fire arms. One thing that mankind has always been good at is killing our fellow man. One of the rooms was a chapel. The curators did a very good job with the exhibits showing the history of the area. There was also a boat that was made the old fashioned way, and I mean old fashioned. The boat was woven out of twigs ¼ to 3/8 inch in diameter forming several layers to build the

hull to around 2 or 3 inches. The outside of the frame was then covered with hides. For sure they don't make them like that anymore.

Another museum was Museo De Bellas Artes. It had painting, more painting and sculptures. Many of the paintings were religious themes, one of the rooms had paintings in the shape of windows that were 12 ft wide and about 18 ft tall. It was like being in a great cathedral.

Christmas was quiet in A Coruña. The streets were deserted most of the day with a few people coming out to walk along the harbor. In the late afternoon and into the evening more and more people came out into the streets. No stores were open, a few resurants and bars were open, but people just seemed to be walking the streets. The Churches had bells playing most of the day. Christmas day was quiet and more subdued than in the US. Walking over to the internet place there were a lot of people in the streets but not the mad day after Christmas that we seem to be addicted to in the US.

The streets in A Coruña are narrow and twisty when you move away from the wide boulevards along the waterfront. The streets twist and turn, it looked like the streets were laid out by someone that just threw a plate of spaghetti on a map and laid out the streets from there. You walk in one end of a street and it twists and turns until the direction of travel at other end is completely different. There was an absence of street signs in places so a map was of limited use at times. The streets were so narrow that in order to get one way traffic the small compact cars had to park on the cobblestone sidewalk almost against the buildings on either side of the street. The twists were subtle at times like optical illusions. One of the trips to check my email I was so confused as to which way was which that I ended up a mile from my destination. Quite an accomplishment since the Internet Café was about 1 ½ miles from where I started from. At that point I whipped out my trusty handheld Garmin GPS and proved the part in the book that GPS units don't work very well where they can't see the sky. So there I was walking down the center of the street holding the GPS way over my head trying to help it see more than one satellite. Several locals looked at me and just shook their head with the "Crazy Americian" look on their face. I was finally able to get a position fix by standing in the middle of an intersection and dodging a few cars. The rest of the journey to the Internet Café was somewhat uneventful if you discount the 4 wrong turns.

We left A Coruña at noon on Tuesday December 27 and headed toward Lisbon. We spent most of the time short tacking the shore 3 to 4 miles off the beach to keep from getting pounded by the rollers. The wind was up a fair bit several times but it came over the land so keeping close to land helped reduce the fetch (the distance the waves have to build up) of the waves, wind and rollers from the stern were better than the beam but we still got some rouge waves that hit us on the beam and gave the patented 45 degree rolls in both directions, doing 90 degrees in 2.5 seconds. The boat is very physical to operate with the constant

rolling. Bill was able to sleep through most of the stuff but even he was worn out after 48 plus hours of continuous running. It was great to get tied to a dock and get some hot showers.

We stopped in Cascais Portugal about 10 miles west of Lisbon. Cascais is at the mouth of the river that runs past Lisbon. When we came in Keith called VTS (traffic Control) and we must have sounded like amateurs and VTS was very helpful getting us pointed toward the marina in Cascais "oh yes sir they take boats your size and so on) we think that they just did not want us coming up the river at 5am. But the town is nice.

Cascais is what I would call Euro Quaint Tourist - the shops are set up for the tourist trade, the restaurants seem pricey and the internet cafe is almost 3x what it was in A Coruña. The town is quite old, a Citadel that overlooks the harbor and marina dates to at least the 1300's and was used as a military headquarters for many centuries. The Citadel is very impressive, they don't make them like that in Seattle for sure. The people are quite friendly and most of them speak some English which made it easier for us in the town.

At the same Latitude as San Francisco the many of the restaurants have outside seating. The town has sort of a quaint old world feel. The buildings are also quite old in many sections of town

I visited a couple of museums and a cultural center in Cascais. It is a different feeling to walk in a building that is older than our country. The contemporary art was by Manuel de Brito and Colecao da Artista, very powerful. The sidewalks have a wave pattern to the cobblestones, must be tough on the drunks looking at the sidewalks that seem to move.

Cascais still has part of a small commercial fishing fleet and you can see the nets and pots on a quay set aside for just them. Net mending has not seemed to have changed much in hundreds of years except for using synthetic line in place of the tarred marline other natural fibers. I think in some fisheries there is a move to make the fishermen go back to a material for the pots that will rot out after a time so the pot will stop fishing if it is lost and stays on the bottom of the ocean. Otherwise the pot could fish on for years just trapping fish and crab in them to die.

I spent New Years in Cascais. It was different than in the US. The Bars were real quiet leading up to midnight with midnight being somewhat of a non-event. There were a lot of people out walking in the streets and the squares. After midnight some started to slowly drift into the Bars. Even after midnight the area was subdued. So maybe it is just an English Speaking tradition to get drunk and rowdy in a Bar at Midnight.

The decision was made to leave the boat in Lisbon to have some safety work done on it and the owner came over to survey the situation and talk with yards the day I left Lisbon. The schedule has slipped a bit, I think we were supposed to be going through the Panama Canal about the day I came home.

I was able to do a little touring in Lisbon and visited three museums Downtown Lisbon had a lot of empty buildings but there was a lot of construction so I think that the old town section is on the rebound. It was still a different feeling to see buildings older than the US is and other buildings from before the great Seattle fire.

Even when the building was totally gutted for remodeling the front of the building was being saved. Several buildings had the entire interior removed with just the front wall standing. The walls were held up by sandwiching them between reinforced vertical I beams sometime reaching 50 feet into the air.

My checked luggage hit the bingo button at the Lisbon Airport security x-ray and I got to go down into the bowels of the airport, past the bomb sniffing dogs and bomb squad folks to where the guys with big guns were guarding the x-ray machines (I still am not sure who would want to steal an x-ray machine). They did not like the extra reload for my inflatable PFD. The Continental people kept acting like I was trying to bomb their plane, repeating "compressed gasses" over and over. Never mind that they had 500 of the little CO2 cartridges on their airplane that I was flying on (the inflatable PFD under the seat). Then when I got to the x-ray area and started to take the cylinder out of my PFD they said no it was ok, that one was allowed in the PFD and one spare PER PIECE OF LUGGAGE, but my other bag was on the airplane and nobody wanted to help put the two extra reloads in the other bag, so they are still in Lisbon, free to the first person into Lisbon.

It was nice to be back in Seattle and off the boat. Things were still moving a bit for a few days when I closed my eyes. The trip back took two flights. Lisbon to Newark (8 hr flight) and Newark to Seattle (6 hr flight). The flights were not too bad, but both had significant turbulence. The landing in Newark was a 3 bouncer.

A special thanks to those that helped watch my boat and kept my bills straight and watched the condo. I would not have been able to do the trip without you.

I also kept a lessons learned book so look for some of the lessons to show up in the classes I teach.

The class that I took for my Coast Guard Captains License proved very valuable especially the sections on Navigation Rules and Lights. Time on the water and time in command was also valuable and being used to seeing and working with the freighters off Shilshole made me more comfortable than some of the others

when we first started operating around large freighters. Knowing the Navigation Rules and the class discussions helped to predict what the freighters would probably do.