

***S/V Montauk Light***  
**Trans-Atlantic**  
**5/24 – 6/20 2014**

**The Boat:**

Sky 51 (1982): LOA: 50'7"; LWL: 44', Beam: 14', Draft: 7'  
Cutter rig w/ main, Yankee, staysail and cruising spinnaker  
Perkins 85 hp  
Fuel: 130 gal in three separate tanks  
Water: 110 in two separate tanks w/ Spectra water maker  
Fisher Panda DC generator  
CAT II, 406 EPIRB  
ICOM 802 SSB w/Pactor modem  
Iridium SatPhone with external antenna  
SPOT transmitter  
VHF  
2 Chart plotters  
SIMROD Auto helm  
8-man life raft

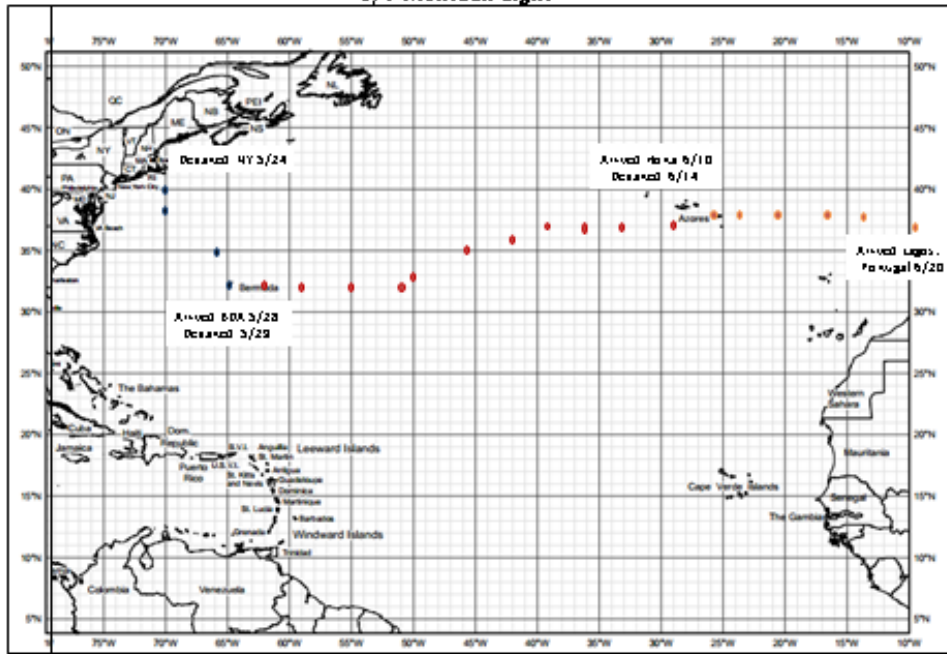


**The Crew:** Jerry Nigro (NY) Capt; Mike McGovern (DE); Benjy Bertossi (MI), Steve Runals (VA), Arshak Sarrafian (MD)

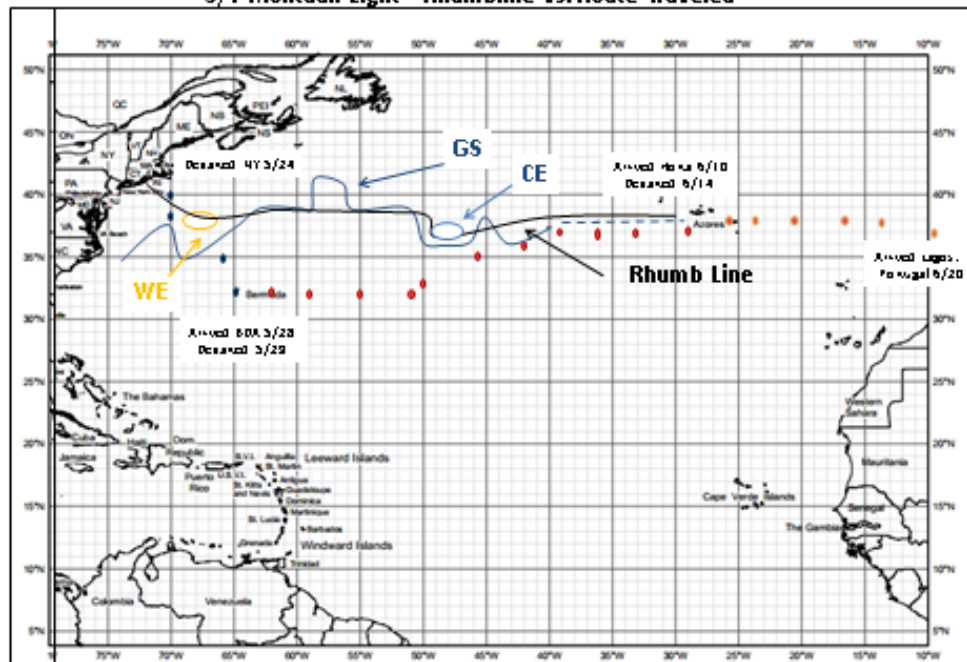


The Route: (All times local except for arrival in Lagos - add 1 hr. for local time there)

Trans - Atlantic : 5/24 - 6/20  
S/V Montauk Light



Trans - Atlantic : 5/24 - 6/20  
S/V Montauk Light - Rhumbline vs. Route Traveled



**NY – Bermuda (BDA), approx. 680 nm:**

Departed Sat 5/24 @ 1100, arrived BDA 5/28 @1400 hrs. Don't have a good log distance reading for first 24 hrs (24-25<sup>th</sup>) but the data for the other three days: daily avg distance 180, spd 7.5 knots. Best day 215 nm, a second 180 nm. During period 25-26 boat moving at times 9.5 -12.4 knots.

Great send-off party by friends and Jerry's boat club members – even put together a short “well-wishing” video. Number of well-wishers on dock as we depart almost puts the dock awash. By 1230 under full sail making 6 knots. Light winds and motor sailing by 1600. Winds generally from NNW and W 3-18 knots during day and evening. Barometer steady at 1021 and then raising by mid-night to 1024. AIS working well picking up numerous boats. Thru Plum Gut and around Montauk Point. Next several days winds generally from W-SW 5-26 with waves 1-4 ft generally from W. On 25<sup>th</sup> boat moved very well wing-n-wing with Fisherman poled out. AIS and sailmail continue working well. Early morning 27<sup>th</sup> Arsho falls down companionway steps and hits his back against stove safety bar. He has severe pain on left side above kidneys. By 0800 Jerry makes decision to alter course to BDA to seek medical attention. Notified Bob Cook (Ocean-Pro Weather and Routing) and BDA Harbor Radio on decision by sailmail of route change and to request assistance. 1000 hrs on 28th Jerry spots BDA; docked by 1400 hrs. Arsho's wife meets him at customs dock and gets him to medical clinic where they find he has a cracked rib. Customs very helpful in getting us checked in and helping with Arsho. Able to tie up across from Customs Dock for the night. Cruise ships no longer stopping at St Georges – too large to enter the Cut. The cruise ship terminal is now converted to a reception station for small boats. Nice to have dinner ashore and a night tied to harbor wall.

Each day brings dolphins and seabirds to and around boat. Wx generally warm with rain off and on. We run the generator and water maker allowing **showers**. Each evening we have very satisfying discussion of the day's events over a beer or glass of wine and hors d'oeuvres. Evening of 27<sup>th</sup> the generator fails to start. Find the fuse links are blown, replace and it starts. Contact several ships by VHF during passage to ensure safe passage.



**Approx. daily runs** (generally 1200 to 1200 but does not take into account time changes made at noon as we moved east):

24-25: –

25-26: 163 nm  
26-27: 215 nm  
27-28: 180 nm

**BDA – Faial (Horta); approx. 1900 nm:**

Departed BDA 5/29 @1100, arrived Horta on Faial 6/10 @ 1800 hrs.

12 days, avg. daily distance 151 nm, speed 6.3 knots. Best day 170 nm, least 134 nm

Departure from BDA delayed to tighten alternator belt and work on a starter that fails to function after several successful starts. Benjy works on starter and finds nothing obvious other than a small amount of residue on solenoid. Reassembled, motor starts – no further problems. After refueling, underway by 1330 hrs. and sailing wing-n-wing. Generator failed to start, bled fuel system – starts. Squalls, dolphins and lumpy seas. A series of passing low pressure systems between BDA and Azores prevent the development the Azores High pressure system that normally dominates this part of the North Atlantic. These low's combined with GS eddies shifting West drive us further to SE. 29 thru 31<sup>st</sup> W-SW winds 10-21 knots. Able to finally alter to a more direct course to Horta on 6/2, winds S, SSE 15-30 knots. 6/3 determine the refrig is not cooling and temp on freezer is higher than expected; auto pilot not holding course (replaced with spare control module). Winds thru 6/8 generally W/SW/SE 5-22 knots, highest 27 with occasional gusts to 32 knots on 6/3, seas 1-4 ft. Barometer 1024 – 1025 with generally overcast skies during evening and morning, clearing at night and during the day; occasional squalls. Sail wing-n-wing on several occasions, some rolling but boat moves well with this configuration. Water temp 67-70 degrees. 6/6 – 6/8 winds NE-NW 10-20 knots. 6/9 winds shifts SW/SE 5- 22 for remainder of trip, seas vary from flat to lumpy. Some great sailing. Knotmeter not working again - pulled, inspected – nothing found, reinserted, working. Boat wet at times; several times AIS acting up – incorrect direction and speed – resets itself after 10-15 mins. Great night skies with lots of stars till moon comes up. Adjusted time based on moving East during this leg by 4 hrs. over the course of the trip; Horta on DST.

Wx updates from Bob and confirmation forecasts from Joan (see communications para below) by airmail over SSB keep us moving and generally avoid the worst wind and sea conditions from passing low pressure systems. Generator and motor sailing keep batteries charged and power for water maker. Dolphins, seabirds and some beautiful sun rises / sets but no “green flash”. Great evening hors d’oeuvres followed by excellent dinners prepared by Mike or Benjy mark the successful passage of each day.

**Horta** – what a great place, fully prepared to receive and support the large number of cruising boats that arrive each year. Early afternoon of 6/10 we see a bank of clouds ahead in direction of **Faial**. Looking to the right we see a larger cloud bank and above it a dark outline which grows as we approach, turning out to be the tip to the very high volcano on **Pico**. Both islands remain covered in clouds until very close. Rugged coastlines, ashore green fields broken into numerous small plots. Round the final point and into the entrance to harbor in overcast skies and increasing winds. Jerry docks at customs dock in high winds at 1800 hrs; told to clear in the next day. Harbor filled with boats of every size and condition at anchor

and tied to docks and sea wall. Told there are almost 600 boats from all over – very few US, but lots of German and French. We arrive on Portugal Day, a religious holiday celebrated in the Azores but not Portugal. After securing the boat, we investigate the music from a band playing above us and are met by a large crowd of people celebrating the holiday, a free glass of fine local wine, local sweet bread and directions to a great place for dinner. Dinner at **Atlantico's** is excellent. A fine meal followed by a night secured to the customs dock wall, a great to finish this leg.

After clearing in, a very easy process all taken care of within Harbor masters office, we move to a spot along the sea wall beside a French catamaran and German boat. Boats either in slips or tied up together along the sea walls - as many as 3-4 deep. Time in Horta is filled with numerous boat repair projects supported by trips to Mid Atlantic Yacht Services (MAYS) store and support from their refig technician, some reprovisioning, exploring town to include examining the incredible ship logo drawings on walls around the harbor and catching up on sleep. The marina has shower, laundry and snack bar with internet to support the large numbers of boats coming and going each day. Mike and Benjy take a ferry over to **Pico** and short tour of the island. Overcast, rainy and very windy during most of our stay but times of sun highlight the incredible range of colors from boats and surrounding buildings. Peter's Pub is a great spot as well all the places we eat for dinner. Great meals ashore each night to include one cooked over lava rocks. In addition to arriving during the Portugal Day holiday, we also have the chance to see the cars and some of the racing of an island road rally.



**Approx. daily runs** (generally 1200 to 1200 but does not take into account time changes made at noon as we moved east):

- 29-30: 140 nm
- 30-31: 170 nm
- 31-1: 155 nm
- 1-2: 155 nm
- 2-3: 155 nm
- 3-4: 149 nm
- 4-5: 135 nm
- 5-6: 158 nm
- 6-7: 160 nm
- 7-8: 147 nm
- 8-9: 156 nm
- 9-10: 134 nm



### Horta to Lagos, Portugal; approx. 947 nm:

Depart on 6/14 @ 1015, arrive Lagos 6/20 @ 2250 hrs.

6 days, avg. daily distance 150 nm, speed 6.3; best day 174, least 135 nm

Depart Horta under an overcast sky and windy conditions – triple reefed main and ½ Yankee sailing NE to round **Pico** just ahead of an approaching cold front. Our intention is to stop for an overnight at **Sao Miguel**. Sailing between **Pico** and **Sao Jorge** in gusty winds 5- 30+ knots, initial boat speed 10+ knots. After working thru the gusty conditions for the majority of the day; decision made to motor sail east till clear the tip of **Pico**. 6/15 Jerry makes the decision to not stop at **Sao Miguel** and head to **Lagos**. Wind down on 6/16, ran fuel tank 3 dry. Restarted engine and flew spinnaker for short time in lumpy seas. Ship traffic increases each day with some huge ships of over 1000 ft. passing as we approach the European coast. Winds thru 6/16 SE/E <5 – 25, sea flat to 4 ft. 6/17 to 6/18th NW/SW 8-18 knots, seas 1-4; 19<sup>th</sup> thru 20<sup>th</sup> winds S-SSE 10-21. Flying wing-n-wing downwind at times helps to stabilize boat in lumpy seas. Work thru several starting problems with generator to include blowing last set of fuse links – unknown problem but most likely caused by shorted commutator on starter motor. Water maker works well after we figure out how to remove the air bubbles from the pre filter – showers for all. Sometimes glassy flat seas, able to see reflection of moon and stars; other times great sailing - night of 6/19-20 sailing in winds 12-18 knots @ speeds of 6.5 - 8.9 knots. Sighted **Cape Vicente** and European coast at 1715 hrs. on 20<sup>th</sup> – Roman's thought it was the end of the world.. Final 19 nm run to **Lagos** in fading light reveals a rugged, dry coast with several small harbors. Approach **Lagos** in overcast skies, light rain and falling wind – very dark night but lights by harbor guides us in. Imray cruising guide very accurate and far more up-to-date than our charts. Sighted the entrance light to **Lagos** harbor at 2215 hrs; tied up at reception pontoon just beyond fuel dock by 2250 hrs.



**Lagos** – the start and end point of numerous ARC rallies. An old Roman town and a one-time capital of Portugal. Great port and a well-known tourist destination. Unlike the coast we passed approaching Lagos, town is located on a beautiful sandy beach. Reception location and fuel dock short of a pedestrian lift bridge and marina docks. Very easy entry procedures, all done by marina staff who emailed our arrival info to customs office. Once cleared in and refueled, are given a slip, docked and secured by early afternoon on 21<sup>st</sup>. Beautiful area with lots of restaurants and bars within marina compound; easy access to town. Unlike Horta, majority of boats and people are British or Irish with several French boats tied up around us. Several boats still here from the ACR rally from Caribbean.

World Cup soccer the major event seen on almost every available TV in the marina and in town. After talking with several boaters who recommend the nearby marina yard, Jerry makes arrangements to have boat pulled and stored until return trip. The last night all the crew are together, we walk down to the beach after a great dinner at a small local restaurant and have a chance to watch some beach seine fishing, a process that brings a local community together setting, pulling in and sorting the twice-a-day catch.



**Approx. daily runs** (generally 1200 to 1200 but does not take into account time changes made at noon as we moved east):

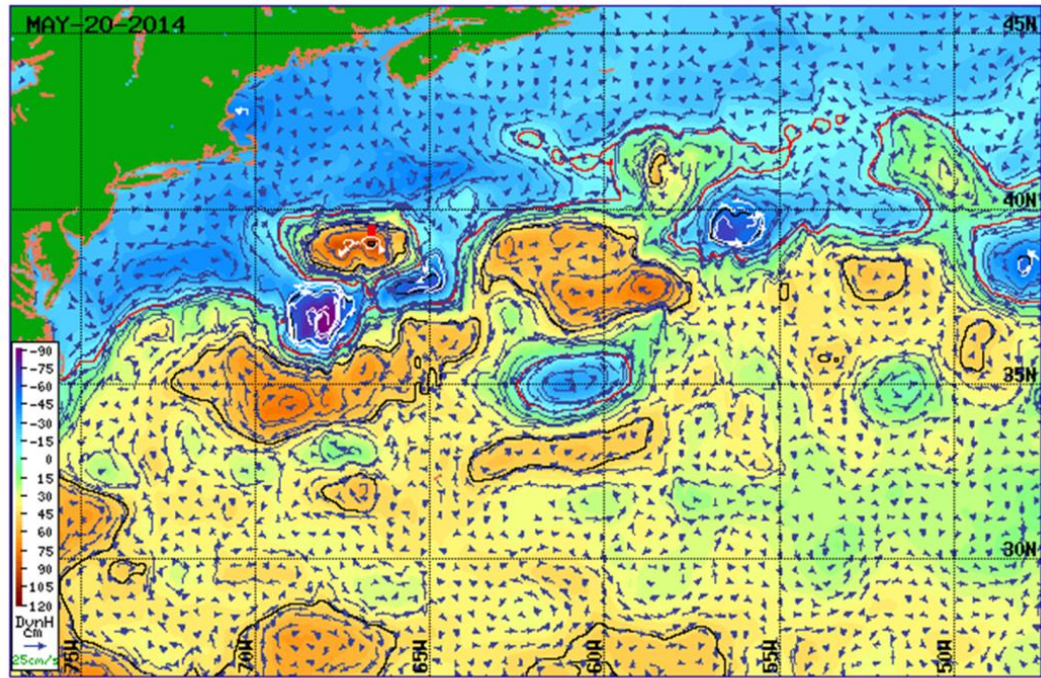
6/14 – 6/15: 135 nm  
15-16: 136 nm  
16-17: 148 nm  
17-18: 150 nm  
18-19: 155 nm  
19-20: 174 nm

### **Observations:**

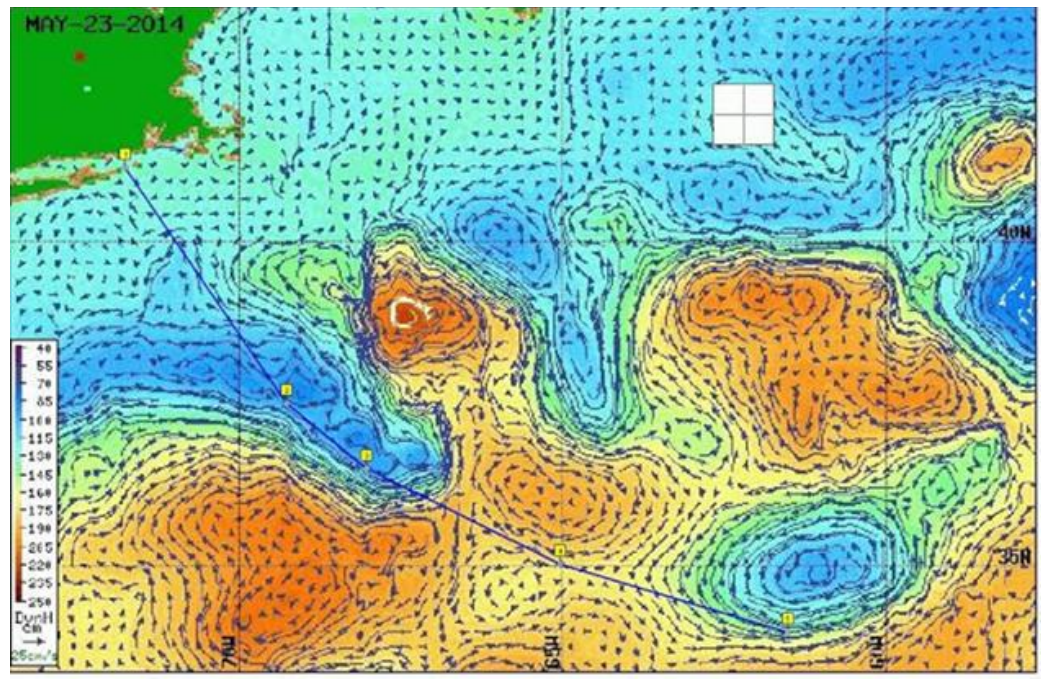
**Weather/Navigation:** (See route overview above)

Utilized Bob Cook from Ocean-Pro Weather and Routing as wx router. He did a good job of utilizing favorable currents and keeping us out of severe wx. Combination of several passing low pressure systems, associate cold frontal passages and GS counter currents resulted in a course that was significantly further SE than expected based on the Gulf Stream track. We provided Bob the boat's position, course, speed and wx related information daily, received routing and wx updates from Bob every other day. Info generally passed by sailmail utilizing SSB vs. SatPhone. Additionally, received BOUYWEATHER.COM forecasts from Joan Conover by sailmail. Joan is an amateur wx forecaster who made a similar trip several years ago and helps SSCA boats with wx info around the world. GRIB forecasts for our route were also requested and downloaded from sailmail generally at night to minimize download times. The combination of this data plus our observations and barometer readings generally confirmed each other and were 85% accurate in forecasting wind conditions. GRIB files provided wind direction and speed but not wave conditions. The data Joan provided by BOUYWEATHER.COM, a commercial program, as well as input from Bob included wave direction and height. At times it seemed we had too much routing and wx info. Passageweather.com was also used prior to departure to get weather and Gulf Stream info. While in Horta we saw many cruisers using Passageweather for their planning.





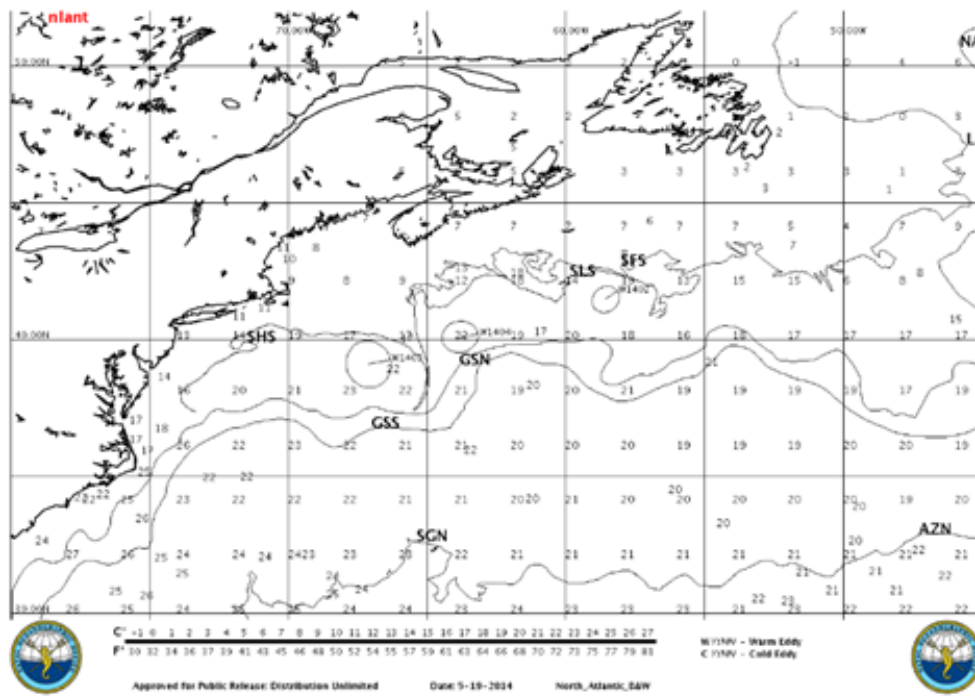
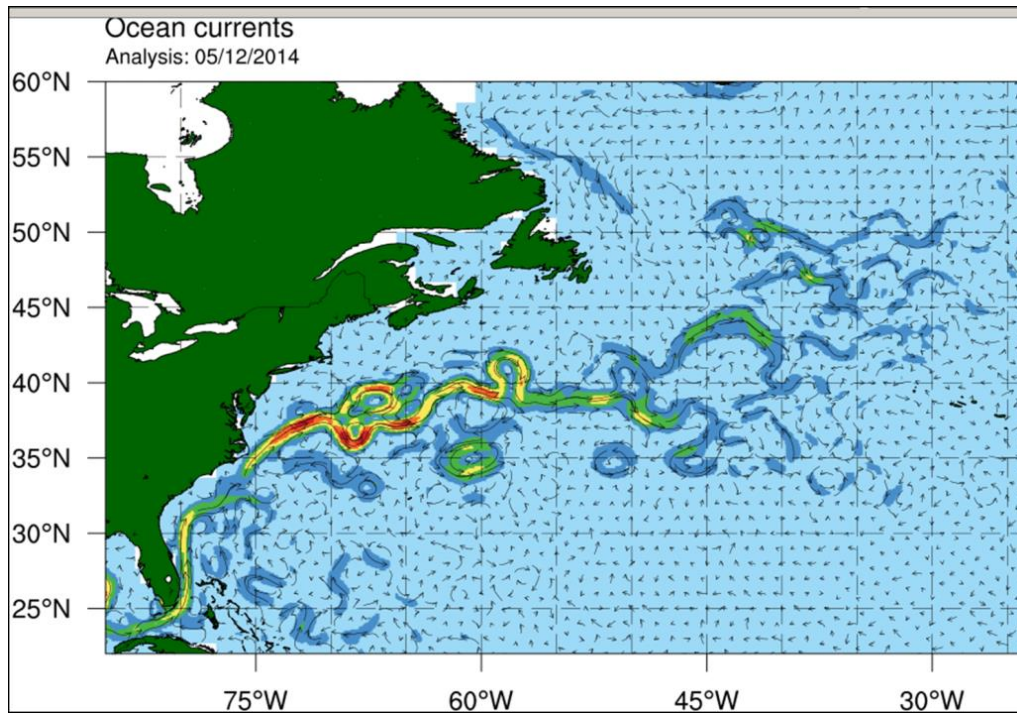
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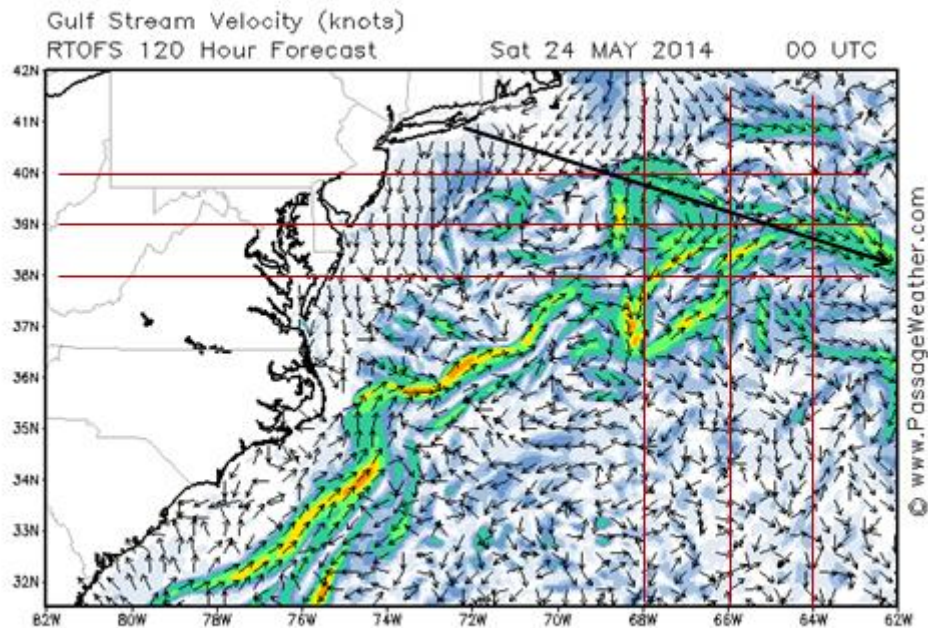
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Initial Routing Plan





SLS- Slope Front, SFS- Shelf Front Secondary, SHS - Shelf Front Primary, AZN - Azores Front



Utilized the excellent Imray RCC Pilotage Foundation Cruising Guides for the Atlantic Islands and Portugal and Spanish Coasts as well several Imray charts for the North Atlantic and Azores. The NGA charts we had requested for on-demand printing were significantly out of date. They did provide good general information but the Imray charts and cruising guides had the most current info (2011).

### **Communications:**

ICOM 802 SSB w/ Pactor modem provided HF radio contact and airmail (Sailmail and HAM) throughout trip. Airmail requires a \$250 annual fee but seemed worth the money because of its reliability. Radio contact daily with the Cruisehimer net during the first leg of the trip to BDA and first few days after BDA. Daily able to send and receive short emails and receive GRIB files. Messages composed and then saved to send when able to get a good connection with a shore station: 2400 – 0400 hrs. good times to send and receive large messages like GRIB files. Radio propagation impacted the ability to conduct radio calls but generally did not impact airmail, occasionally the use of the SatPhone was needed to make timely connections. Use of the airmail system does require picking the best shore station and time to send/receive – the software helps select. The auto pilot had to be turned off when the SSB radio was in use. The Iridium SatPhone with an external antenna worked very well. Worked thru several maintenance issues with generator and watermaker by talking with company technicians over the phone; very reliable communications. AIS provided an excellent capability to monitor passing ships, providing closing info and ship's names for effective contact when required. Contact with passing ships on VHF channel 16. The SPOT transmitter proved an effective way for friends and family to monitor our progress. Excellent instructional videos on ICOM 802 operation at <http://www.bigdumboat.com/LTS/radiovids.html>.



### **Meals:**

With input from the crew, Mike developed an all-encompassing meal plan and spent considerable time preparing many of the major components of the dinner meals – either cooking or marinating meats and then freezing the food. A great effort on his part that took into consideration the possible variety of wind and sea conditions we might encounter. This prep work paid big dividends each day. Mike and Benjy took turns making breakfast and dinner meals. The daily evening “cocktail hour” provided an opportunity to savor the sailing conditions and the day’s events. Resourceful use of on-board provisions for several of the meals produced new food entrées to include the use of SPAM. Great meals each day – no weight loss on this trip. On a lighter note; we did try – especially Mike - to catch fish, any kind of fish. Finally caught one and after a “long and despite struggle”; once landed only to have Mike decide it was too small and thrown back? So no fresh fish underway!



### **Observations:**

- Boat prep becomes an all-consuming activity for owner and Capt. The need to balance boat prep, responsibilities at home, setting up things for an extended absence is very challenging. The ability of the crew to arrive early to help the skipper proved very helpful.



- Extended cruising requires the spare parts and the ability to fix inoperable equipment. Immediately prior to departure and during the trip the following equipment was repaired or replaced:
  - Before departure:
    - AIS: initial equipment worked but proved unreliable. Jerry able to get a new system and installed the night before departure. Worked well throughout trip.
    - New headsail arrived the day before departure
    - Installed new ICOM 802 SSB w/Pactor modem – excellent support from Dockside Radio
    - Airmail – initial setup of sailmail worked, then did not. Upgrading the circuit breaker fixed system
    - Cabin fans. Installed one in forward and aft cabins. Very helpful especially during the first two legs
    - Numerous pre departure actions – navigation prep, stowing of gear and provisions, cleaning boat, etc. to include updating Rx medications for emergency use
    - Alternator belt tightened
  - In Bermuda/Enroute to Horta:
    - Engine alternator belt tightened
    - Engine would not start - Starter motor examined, reassembled
    - Changed generator oil and main engine fuel filters
    - Generator would not start – bled fuel system
    - Fresh water pump – belt pulley tightened
    - Leaky forward hatch and starboard side forward chain plate recaulked
    - Frig and freezer not working properly – fixed in Horta
    - Auto pilot control module failed – replaced with spare unit
    - Cockpit chartplotter input keys not working – not able to enter new waypoints or activate radar, GPS display remained functional. Utilized a second chartplotter below with functioning GPS data but outdated chart data to plot waypoints and get distance and estimated arrival times.
    - Retuned portside cap shrouds
    - Guide for main hatch reglued
  - Horta:
    - Tech from Mid Atlantic Yacht Services fixed refrig and added coolant to freezer
    - Generator starting problems – bled fuel
    - Leaking forward toilet fixed and seat hinges replaced
  - Lagos:
    - Numerous projects to prepare boat for extended stay to include main engine oil and filter change and preparing the watermaker for storage.

- Food prep: Mike's comprehensive meal plan, associated provisioning and meal prep were excellent. His pre departure efforts made meal prep once underway much easier. Very important effort. Great meals each day.
- Watch system: The initial watch system with a 5 man crew had a two man watch with rotating crew for period 2000-2400 and 2400 – 0400 hrs; remainder of time a one man watch that rotated manning. Once Arsha was hurt and left in BDA, went to a system with Jerry and Steve 2000-2400, Mike and Binji 2400 – 0400 hrs. Jerry and Steve alternated the 0400 - 0800 and 0800 – 1200 watch and Mike and Benji alternating the : 1200 – 1600 and 1600 – 2000 as a one man watches. Worked well.
- Water maker: The water maker generally worked well after we resolved a problem with the water maker caused by air bubbles entrained in seawater intake. We lost capability to make water until we resolved that problem (even though Spectra rep said air in water shouldn't be a problem, it was!). Recommend having a hand held TDS meter as a backup when trying to determine if water maker is working correctly, this would prevent contamination of potable water supply if water maker needs to be run in manual mode.
- AIS very helpful. ID of passing boat name and closure data proved very helpful. Need to keep in mind not all boats have transmitting AIS or AIS at all – still requires an alert watch.
- Shore based support: Shore based support provided updated wx and routing info. This input combined with downloaded GRIB files proved very helpful. An ability to download surface charts would have also been helpful and is a capability the SSB radio can provide with the right computer software; a capability to have loaded and tested before departure for future voyages. Other shore based support included: medical on-call support provided by Dr. Eugene Oneill; Mr. Joe Obrien and MJ Lewandowski monitored progress and kept friends and family updated on our progress. MJ also kept an eye on potential ice flow issues. Having the ability to contact or be contacted by support able to access a wide range of information/contacts available ashore was very helpful and provided an effective way to keep folks aware of our progress and issues as they developed at home or on the boat.
- Turning off autopilot for SSB was required each time the SSB radio was used either for voice radio transmission or airmail. After replacing the autopilot control module, we turned off the autopilot each time the radio was used.
- While the SIMROD autopilot did an excellent job steering, hand steering was required when using the SSB radio and also proved helpful when sailing off the wind in lumpy/rolly wave conditions. It minimized the work of the autopilot, reducing wheel movement and boat roll making for a smoother ride.

- Fish nets and Portuguese Current: the Imray cruising guide warned of the potential for numerous floating fish nets along the Portuguese coast as well as south setting current. We selected waypoints to account for both but did not see any affect from the current and saw only two buoyed fish nets. At one point we thought we saw a strobe from another fish net that turned out to be a shore based light.
- Entry/departure clearance into BDA remains straight forward at the customs dock. In Horta the clearance in/out – marina check-in, customs and immigration - are all handled within the marina office. At Lagos the marina staffs handled all check-in and notified the customs/immigration we had arrived by email.
- In BDA, fuel dock separate from custom dock. In Horta the fuel dock is located at the marina office, recommended to refuel during check in. In Lagos the fuel dock is next to the reception pontoon.
- WX during leg to BDA was generally warm during the day but wet (squalls or wave action) and cool/wet at night. Leg from BDA to Horta was about the same but not as wet or as warm during the day. Generally very pleasant once sun up. Leg from Horta to Lagos generally dryer but much cooler during the day and especially at night. Once away from NY, water temp varied between 49-74 degrees, generally in mid to high 60's. Coolest water temps first two days after leaving BDA. Layers and good foul wx gear important.
- Boat Insurance. Multiple companies reviewed, Pantaenius Yacht Insurance gave the best quote and seemed most knowledgeable (1-914-381-2066).

“The sea, especially in moments of fury, demands first your attention, then your endurance and finally your patience and acceptance. If you lack any of this capability, the sea will soon find you out and make it known that the shore is where you should make your home.” James Baldwin, ***Across Islands and Oceans***



