

# CHANGES

up the Potomac River to Washington, DC, stopping at Mount Vernon along the way. Tolling the ship's bell three times has been a tradition since the night George Washington died.

Washington, DC has been one of our favorite stops so far. We anchored on the Washington Channel next to the welcoming Capital YC, with the Washington Monument serving as one of the bearings for our anchorage. For a small fee we were granted access to a secure dinghy dock, Wi-Fi, the yacht club facilities — and the very friendly members of the club. Even though we were there for two weeks, we barely scratched the surface of what there was worth seeing in the District of Columbia.

We then wound our way up the Chesapeake, and made stops in St. Michaels and Annapolis, and then crossed over to the Delaware River via the C&D Canal. It's a tight squeeze in that canal — which we traversed at night — with all the container ships.

We continued north up the Delaware and spent a few days in Philadelphia. We found a small anchorage just north of Penn's Landing, and had time to visit the city's amazing historical center, have a few cheesesteaks, and run up the art museum's steps *a la* Rocky Balboa. Dante had been learning about the Constitution, and visiting Independence Hall brought his history lessons in books to life. The National Park Service does an outstanding job of interpreting our nation's historic sights.

**After harbor-hopping up the East Coast of the U.S., the Massaros spent 16 solitary days sailing to the Azores, then eight more to Portugal.**

We sailed directly to New York City, motoring under the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge just as the sun was rising. It was an amazing sight and gave us a feeling of great accomplishment. We briefly anchored by the Statue of Liberty for a photo shoot.

Transient slips in New York Harbor are quite expensive — upwards of \$6/foot per night — so we made our way up the Hudson River to the 79th St. Boat Basin, which is operated by the New York Parks Department. We secured a mooring for \$30/night. The price was right and the access to the city was excellent.

We made our way up the Hudson River, passing beneath the Tappan Zee Bridge to Tarrytown, where we picked up family. We would later anchor for a week at Croton-on-Hudson while visiting with relatives. Then it was back down to New York Harbor, up the East River, through Hell's Gate — wisely timed with slack tide — and into Long Island Sound.

We made our way over to Mystic, home of the famous Mystic Seaport, where our Uncle Roger joined us for a sail to Block Island, Rhode Island, and Cuttyhunk, Massachusetts. Of all the anchorages we'd stayed in the previous year, Block Island on Labor Day was definitely the most crowded! In spite of that, it was still a great place to visit. From there we went to Cape Cod, leaving the boat at Hyannis while staying with family and getting *Benevento* and ourselves ready for the Atlantic crossing.

It was amazing to stop and think of all we'd seen and done in just one year of cruising. We can easily see how cruisers could spend years in single locations we've visited, such as the Sea of Cortez, the San Blas Islands, the Caribbean, the Bahamas, the ICW, the Chesapeake Bay or New England. We realize we're moving too fast, but that's the trouble with having a timeframe of only two years to do our trip. We've perhaps been a bit too ambitious in planning, but it has been worth it. Just about everyone has told us that the most dangerous piece of equipment on a sailboat is a calendar. They are right.

Our trip across the Atlantic was thankfully uneventful. It took 16 days to get from Cape Cod to the Azores, and then another eight days to make landfall in Lisbon, Portugal — which, like San Francisco, is at latitude 38. It was during the crossing that we used a professional weather

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**At the Statue of Liberty for a photo shoot.**



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service — Commander's Weather — for the first time. We were pleased with their forecasts and service.

Now safely on the other side of the pond with a little time to reflect, we recognize that cruising is no vacation. Between home-schooling, provisioning, boat repairs, laundry and passage-making, it's a full-time job. But it's also the adventure of a lifetime. As it happens when you live life large, time seems to compress and expand like an accordion. Time is flying by for us, but when we look back at our photos it seems as though it's been ages, not just a year, since we left San Francisco.

Our trip has been an incredible experience for Dante, who turned 11 in the middle of the Atlantic. He has become more worldly and mature, through both direct learning and osmosis. His favorite experience so far has been the San Blas Islands, we suspect for the friends he made as much as the snorkeling and



*Lewis and Alyssa were so busy during their Maui-to-Oahu run that they didn't get to take many photos, so we're using some shots from their time in the South Pacific. Spread; Alyssa thrilled at all the open space. Insets from top. Lewis on high; Lewis with his kite; and Alyssa filleting.*

scenery. "Boatschooling isn't very much fun, but cruising is awesome!" he says. I think it's time to give him longer watches!  
— the massaros 11/30/2014

**Eleutheria — Tartan 37**  
**Lewis Allen and Alyssa Alexopolous**  
**Maui to Oahu Sleigh Ride**  
**(Redwood City)**

Let me start by reminding ourselves and fellow cruisers that sailing and schedules don't go together. We have always held true to our rule that visitors can choose either a location or a date to meet up with us, but not both. This prevents us from pushing our boat and ourselves in conditions that we would not find ourselves in by choice.

The rule has served us well — until we broke it just before Thanksgiving by sailing from Maui to Oahu in order to

meet family. The story that follows is that of our punishment for breaking the aforementioned rule. Neptune was paying attention to our lapse in judgment and smacked us for it.

We sailed up the leeward side of Maui as far as the Kaanapali Coast before hitting the 30-knot headwinds gusting down the Pailolo Channel between Maui and Molokai. Ahead of us was a sea of whitecaps and waves that periodically broke. We double reefed the main and sheeted the sail as flat as possible. We then furled the genoa and raised the yankee on the inner stay, leading the sheet outboard and sheeting it flat, too. We decided we were then ready for the channel and fell off.

When the sails filled, *Ellie* heeled and bore off on a beam

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY ELEUTHERIA

reach across the channel at 7 knots. Even under reduced canvas she was making too much way on. This was the first time I wished we had a third reef point. I decided the wind wasn't putting a dangerous load on the rig yet, so I would just handsteer and enjoy the roller coaster ride across the channel. After all, it was only 12 miles until we reached Molokai — and what I assumed would be a good lee.



*You have to land a fish fast to beat the sharks.*

We tore across the channel with big wind and breaking seas pooping the cockpit every five minutes. But we're young and hardcore, so we threw out a handline with a cedar plug, convinced that we could land a mahi at such speeds. After 15 minutes the bungee went tight, and I called Lyss to come pull it in. The sailing conditions demanded 100% of my attention, so she was on her own to land the fish.

Using her gloves, she pulled in a wildly flailing 42-inch mahi, with blood splattering everywhere. We'd heard that flipping a mahi over and hugging it might calm the fish. We then tail-wrapped it, made some cuts, and threw him over the leeward side to bleed out. Alyssa finished bagging the filets just before we passed the eastern point of Molokai. We were happy to have fresh fish for the first time since the Marquesas.

We discovered that the trades howl down the Pailolo Channel, split at Lanai, and turn down the coast of Molokai, ripping down the Kalohi Channel between Molokai and Lanai. So instead of finding a pleasant lee, we found more 30-35

*Just when Lewis and Alyssa needed it the least, they hooked a 42-inch mahi. But Alyssa landed it before the sharks could get a bite.*



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knot winds and the same big seas. The only difference was that we were now sailing with the wind on the starboard quarter, so there was much less motion and strain on *Ellie*. Although it was still blowing 30 knots, we had a nice sail



**Sailors aren't the only ones challenged by the entrance to Lono Harbor during a big winter swell.**

toward Lono Harbor, which we assumed would be a good overnight anchorage.

Lono Harbor features a man-made breakwater on the SW end of Molokai. It was built so sand harvested from Molokai could be taken to Oahu to create the beach at Waikiki. We read that you can enter Lono Harbor in most settled conditions.

As we approached Lono, we started to see breaking waves. Studying them, we saw that they were breaking on the east side of the breakwater, suggesting that it was just the trades breaking against the wall. Business as usual.

According to our chart, the entrance to Lono is about 50 yards wide, which I felt was adequate, even if we had to fight the wind to get in. As we got closer, we could see that sometimes there was a swell all the way across the entrance, but never a breaking wave. Deciding it was safe, we began to close on land.

A half mile out, I told Alyssa that I was noticing a large swell, and that we should keep an eye out as a rogue set could catch us in shallow water outside the breakwater entrance. That would be very bad.

**Lono Harbor as seen from above. If the surf throws you into the breakwater, both you and your boat will become nautical 'toast'.**



NOAA

We were in 25 feet of water and lined up with the Lono entrance a tenth of a mile out when Alyssa yelled, "Oh my God!"

I turned my head and almost had a heart attack, as I was staring at what I estimate to have been an 18-ft wave, half of which was breaking in a barrel! At this point we were less than 70 yards from the entrance, and that wave was on a mission to break right where we were, then crash into the harbor entrance.

I threw the wheel hard to port, spun *Ellie* around, lined her up with the wave face, and gave the engine full throttle. We climbed up the wave face with the breaking barrel only 15 yards to starboard!

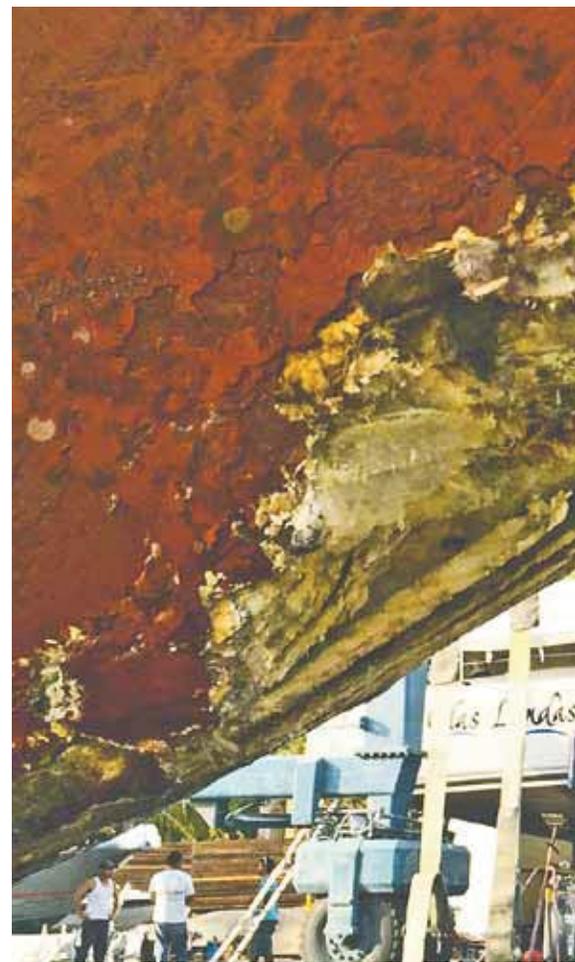
Once we reached the crest of the wave we saw the next one coming. It was even bigger and it was already breaking! I bore off to port and then lined up with the face before it hit. Thankfully we made it over the wave before it closed out, and then made haste to deeper water. Once we were safe, it sank in just how close we'd come to shipwreck if not death. Had we been caught broadside by either wave, we certainly would have been rolled and thrown into the breakwater. We'd certainly been foolish trying to enter a harbor when a large swell was running.

The trades were blowing too hard to try to beat back up the coast of Molokai, so we resigned ourselves to an unpleasant night at sea. We would make Oahu by morning, tuck *Ellie* into a marina, and celebrate just being alive. There was just one catch. We had to cross the Kaiwi Channel at right, in strong trades and with a huge NW swell running.

Conditions weren't bad until we cleared the lee of Molokai, at which time we became exposed to the full wrath of the stiff NE trades and gigantic NW swell. That's when the seas got very steep, confused, and started breaking. The wind was at 33-38 knots sustained, and

we were running downwind with 1/3 of the jib poled out to port. The wind had created 13-18 foot waves that were mixing from the north and east around the SW corner of Molokai. This sea state combined with the NW swell to create tremendous washing-machine conditions.

We thought *Ellie* was handling the sea state well until a few breakers crashed into the cockpit. That's when I focused my hardest to take the optimum track down



the wave faces and make sure we didn't round up into the wind, which would have put us beam-to the seas and at risk for capsize.

I was focused on the next set of waves when we were lifted up the crest of a particularly large wave that broke while we were at the top, then thrown into the trough below. The whisker pole hit the water and dug in, shuddering the rig and stopping our forward progress. We were alarmed and confused at what had happened.

I got *Ellie* lined up again, and after getting her back on course took a few minutes to inspect the rig. We were elated to find there was no damage. We thought the sail may have ripped from the force of the pole being pushed aft in the fall, but the line leading from the pole to the bow held, and saved the sail, pole — and quite possibly the entire rig.

At this point we were so startled that we began thinking about other options. Could we make for Lanai? No, as that was upwind. Could we run back to the lee of Molokai? No, as that was upwind, too. Could we lie to our sea anchor? We

# IN LATITUDES



LATITUDE / RICHARD

*The large gouge in the bow of the Westsail 42 'Daneka' was caused by a pinnacle rock off Punta Mita at 20°45'.843 North, 105°32'.889 West. At a bearing of about 80°, it's "about .786 nm NW of the point north of Punta Mita Light," reports skipper John L. Larsen. Details in 'Cruise Notes'.*

could, but we'd be in the shipping lanes and the trades were forecast to get even stronger over the next two days. Keep running dead downwind? No, because it was a heck of a long way to the Marshall Islands. We had only one option: continue on to the lee of Oahu 60 miles away. It was going to be a long night.

It soon got dark, which meant there was no moonlight by which to see the waves. We took turns at the helm for the next eight hours. Dodging shipping traffic outside Honolulu was an added bonus to all the fun we were having with the weather.

We covered the 60 miles in record time, and made the lee of Oahu by 2 a.m., at which time the wind and waves began to subside. We motored into the lee of the island and dropped the hook behind a curve of sand in front of a power plant. Exhausted, we gave each other a hug, happy to be safely anchored after a very trying passage. We also swore that we would never again violate our rule

about pushing it to make a schedule or accommodate a visitor.

We also vowed never again to cross between islands when the trades are pumping. Sailing in Hawaii is no joke! We hadn't seen seas that large since we left Northern California last year. We were also very proud of *Ellie*; she is one tough boat to have come through unscathed.

We're now in the beautiful Ko Olina Marina on Oahu. It's the most expensive marina we've ever been in, but worth every penny as far as we're concerned. This is resort country club living at its finest — beaches, pools, grass, grills, showers, laundry, restaurants, live music, watering holes and most importantly, flat water. After 9,000 miles in the past year, including the South Pacific, *Ellie* deserves the TLC that we're giving her.

We'll be back in Oahu in January to get *Ellie* ready to head south again. We plan

to be in the Line Islands by April, the Cooks by May, Samoa at the beginning of June, Tonga by July, Fiji in September, New Caledonia in October, and Brisbane, Australia before the onset of cyclone season. At least that's the current plan we've written in sand at the low tide mark.

— lewis & alyssa 11/22/2014

## Careyes Resort Past and Present (Mexico's Gold Coast)

The Wanderer posted the drone photograph he took of Careyes — see next page — on his Facebook page on January 13, and received a lot of entertaining comments. So he made it a January 14th 'Electronic' item, and got even more responses. We liked the responses so much that we're sharing some of them with you. The last one gives the definitive report of what's going on at Careyes now.

(To read the original post about Careyes, see the January 14 'Electronic Latitude'.)

"I used to anchor in the cove just below the resort on the hill and put a long stern line to the pier to keep from swinging. One time I was there when the now-defunct Club Med was having Lesbian Week. There was great scuba diving around the little islets." *Ted Reed*

"I love Careyes! I believe Heidi Klum and Seal were married there in 2005. Teal and I were there also with our trimaran *Savannah*. Too bad we weren't invited and/or didn't have a drone like the Wanderer." *Lihn Goben*

"Careyes is a fabulous location that we visited in the 1970s when the Playa Blanca Club Med was still in operation. Upon our arrival we were notified that they were out of cash. A number of *banditos* on horseback had robbed them the previous day! We have stopped there many times since on *Dj's Dream*. The anchorage is tight against the rocks,

*Looking down on the Careyes anchorage from one of the luxury accommodations on the hill. We'd rather be on a boat.*



LUXURY ESTATES REALTY