

THE CROSSING

by Casey Oagema

with special thanks to those who kept
the log and shared their experiences

THE CROSSING

Prologue

by Kon Marcus

"Felicity" is a 42' ketch-rigged yacht made by the Whitby Boat Works of Whitby, Ontario. She is owned and skippered by E.E. (Gene) Davidson of Holland, MI. Her home port is Macatawa Bay near Holland although most of her time is now spent in and about West Palm Beach, Florida.

During May of 1976 "Felicity" and a crew consisting of several members of the Atlantic crossing made a shakedown cruise to test the seaworthiness of the boat and compatibility of the crew. Details of this first major trip are contained in an account entitled "Adventures on the High Seas", authored by Casey Oegema and featured in "The Great Lakes Sailing Scanner" of October 1976.

Although Gene Davidson had been planning for years to make the Atlantic crossing these dreams seemed to come to a brief time of uncertainty following a vicious storm in the Bermuda Triangle during the early portion of this first trip. Time has a way of dimming those trying or unpleasant moments at sea and by the fall of 1976 the Atlantic charts were out again and Captain Davidson was signing on crew. By late 1977 Gene had a crew together consisting of most of the members of the first trip plus new men who were either seasoned and experienced sailors or who had a desire for this kind of adventure.

The crossing was to consist of four legs. These legs and the crew for each segment of the trip are as follows:

Leg "A" WEST PALM BEACH TO BERMUDA

Date of departure: 1 May 78

Date of arrival: 9 May 78

Captain: E.E. Davidson -- Holland, MI

1st Mate: W. Milholland, Sr. -- Indianapolis, IN

Crew: Casey Oegema -- Grandville, MI

Bill Milholland, Jr. -- Indianapolis, IN

Dan Richmond -- Grandville, MI

Leg "B" BERMUDA TO WESTERN AZORES (FAIAL) (HORTA)

Route: Great Circle,

Date of departure: 13 May 78

Date of arrival: 26 May 78

Captain: E.E. Davidson -- Holland, MI

First Mate: W. Milholland, Sr. -- Indianapolis, IN

Crew: Dan Richmond -- Grandville, MI

John Damstra -- Grandville, MI

Larry Mulder -- Holland, MI

Leg "C" WESTERN AZORES (FAIAL) (HORTA) TO EASTERN AZORES

(SAO MIGUEL) (PONTA DELGADA)

Route: Direct

Captain: E.E. Davidson -- Holland, MI

First Mate: W. Milholland, Sr. -- Indianapolis, IN

Crew: Larry Mulder -- Holland, MI

Leg "D" EASTERN AZORES (SAO MIGUEL) TO PORTUGAL (VILLA MOURA)

Route: Great Circle

Date of departure: 4 June 78

Date of arrival: 9 June 78

Captain: E.E. Davidson -- Holland, MI

First Mate: W. Milholland, Sr. -- Indianapolis, IN

Crew: Larry Mulder -- Holland, MI

Kon Marcus -- Holland, MI

Bob Hayes -- Allegan, MI

Leg "E" PORTUGAL (VILLA MOURA) TO GIBRALTER

Route: Direct

Date of departure: 11 June 78

Date of arrival: 12 June 78,

Captain: E.E. Davidson -- Holland, MI

First Mate: W. Milholland, Sr. -- Indianapolis, IN

Crew: Kon Marcus -- Holland, MI

Bob Hayes -- Allegan, MI

Leg "F" GIBRALTER TO JOSE BANUS, SPAIN

Route: Direct

Date of departure: 14 June 78

Date of arrival: 14 June 78

Captain: E. E. Davidson -- Holland, MI

First Mate: W. Milholland, Sr. -- Indianapolis, IN

Crew: Kon Marcus -- Holland, MI

Bob Hayes -- Allegan, MI

Contained in this story are some of the events that blended together to form the adventure that was a very unique experience in our lives.

For those who made the trip this record of the crossing will bring back memories of the feel of the ocean, the effect of the wind and the ever-changing and awesome kaleidoscope of the sky by day and by night. For those who read this and did not take the trip we hope you will enjoy it too.

THE CROSSING

The land is gone...there is nothing around us but sea and sky. Far to the east, rain clouds lie over the Bahama banks. Their billowing outline is the only relief from an otherwise unbroken horizon. The sea is deep indigo blue and is a warm 80 degrees. We are in the Gulf Stream, being pushed by a warm 25 knot wind out of the south east. Four hours behind us is Port Everglade at Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Ten days and 1200 miles ahead is Bermuda.

When does an ocean crossing begin? The dreaming, the planning and the training have taken years, with the last four months being the most intensive.

Aboard the Felicity are Captain and owner Gene Davidson, Bill Milholland Sr., Dan Richmond, Bill Milholland Jr. and Casey Oegema. Many sailors have dreamed of sailing their boats across an ocean. Some plan to, but few really leave the dock. Gene has left the dock and we have the privilege of sailing the first leg with him.

For the past few days the finishing touches were made to the boat. Food, water, fuel were all brought on board and properly stored. Before starting the crossing we spent an afternoon of sailing which brought to our attention some minor adjustments in sails and rigging that were needed.

At 11:00 A.M. on May 1, 1978, the check list finished, the boat left the Bahia Mar. A short distance along the inland waterway, a large bridge lifted both sides in a big yawn to allow us passage to the open sea.

The harbor entrance is alive with boats of all types, large and small for fun and fishing. They're all here --- fast little ones and large impressive ones --- a pretty sight to behold.

Along the shore are a large Navy cruiser and a Texaco tanker. Their size is overwhelming next to our 42 feet. This beautiful, deep water port will accomodate the largest of ships. Once clear of the breakwater our sails fill and we head out to sea on a starboard tack.

At noon we watch a thunderstorm building on shore. Black clouds roll with thunder and lightning, and rain is sweeping the waterfront to the north. The sun is shining where we are but a heavy rain must be driving everyone on shore for cover. By late afternoon we have settled into a routine. Gene and Bill Jr. have the noon to four watch -- A perfect time for an afternoon nap for the rest of the crew.

We move out into the middle of the Gulf Stream, our course to the north-north-east. The sea is rolling up behind us now, pushing us along. The Felicity raises her stern and slips along on the rolling swell. On some of the larger waves we reach up to 12 knots.

For several hours we are alone --- no ships, no small craft --- just ourselves on an empty sea. At 5:45 the first vessel to pass us is the Coast Guard cutter #624. She is a rather large ship with deep rumbling engines. It is good to know they are on duty and it's a lovely sight to look at as she passes on opposite course, close on our starboard side. Very soon she slips away into the evening haze.

Several large tankers and freighters cross our way as we remain in the shipping lanes. By 6:30 a rain storm builds in the west and is drifting our way. Soon rain is starting. Again, for the second time, Bill Sr. and I turn the watch over to Gene and Bill Jr. just as the rain starts. Good timing! We go below where it's nice and dry to eat strawberry short cake that Dan has made to top off our supper. He is the greatest of cooks.

Night comes upon us and the sky is alive with lightning. Some is so bright it is blinding, with loud claps of thunder following. Throughout the night there are rain squalls, and

lightning dances all around us. We are rained on several times but nothing very heavy. The wind is strong at times but soon drops off. By 4 A.M. most of the weather has passed. The wind has freshened and is steady now, coming from the northwest. For the next four hours we reach on a steady 15 knot wind. The night is warm, the breeze friendly. The sea has a gentle roll and the last sliver of a crescent moon hangs like a rocking cradle in the western sky, casting its shimmering light across the sea.

Morning breaks with a gray sky. High towering clouds to the east block out the sun as it comes over the horizon. It is up for some time before the clouds are gone and a new sunny day is ours. We come upon a small group of pilot whale close abreast. They seem uninterested in us and keep right on going. Later in the morning, four or five porpoise look us over and run on our bow. They stay for only a short time and soon leave.

The sea is the sea and there is nothing in this world that can be compared to it. Its waves can be hypnotic. One can look and look and never see with complete understanding what makes the sea what it is. Men have crossed it many times and others have searched her depths, but always mystery remains and the quest for understanding goes on. The sea is seldom at rest --- always moving, always driving ---kissing one shore and thrashing another. This great body of water is an awesome power to behold. This morning it is kind and gentle. Low 1 to 2 foot waves rock our boat in a slow but steady roll. The wind is down too so we move slowly.

Dan has set a fishing pole with fancy bait. Gene is repairing the wind vane steering and Bill is calculating our position from a sun shot. A slow and easy way of life has set in with this very compatible crew.

Late afternoon clouds form in the west with some lightning. Here and there some clouds suggest rain. The day is still very lovely and we have had to protect ourselves from the heat of the sun, having just come down from a northern winter. With the

coming of night the weather changes and we will have seen the last of sailing comfort for the next 2½ days.

Thunder and lightning are all around us. Heavy rain sweeps across our decks with gusty winds forcing us to pull down our sails. After a few minutes the wind stops or slows, and up go the sails again. This continues through the night and into the next day. All the time the sea is building. The 1 to 2 foot waves are now 3 to 4 foot and curling over on top with a white froth.

Early in the morning with the first gray of the day we are caught in another wind change. All around us are fog and rain and low flying clouds. The wind will stop and start up from another direction. We find we are headed south, then west, then north, with strong gusty winds at each turn. Suddenly out of the fog coming straight at us is a large freighter, standing high and ghost-like, her superstructure and booms reaching to a towering height compared to our small boat. She was hardly a quarter mile from us when she changed course and went behind us as though she was looking us over. We theorized that she must have seen us going around in circles on her radar, and came over to see what we were or if we were in trouble. After passing by our stern she changed course again, heading west. Soon she vanished into the fog looking as ghost-like going as she did when we first saw her.

We come upon a herd of pilot whale. They have a fin with a hook on top. They lie around the surface and pay very little attention to us as we pass through them. Their size is about 12 to 15 feet and they're sort of brownish black in color.

At mid morning all hands are called up on deck. Everyone is wearing a safety harness and life jacket. Coming down on us from the north is a sinister looking weather front --- a thick gray cloud with a white rolling leading edge. We fear a heavy wind with rain and take in all sails except a small # 3 jib. Slowly the front approaches and the wind shifts. It shifts again and seems to be going around in circles. The weather front has now engulfed us with little or no wind at all. After

an hour of this the wind settles down and we are once again on our way.

The sea continues to build. The sky is gray and cloud covered. The wind is stronger now, pushing us along at 8 knots. The porpoise have found us again. They spend a half hour or so playing with the boat, then leave. It's always fun to watch them and exciting to see at what great speed they move through the water.

By evening the sky begins to clear. The wind has come on stronger with this new weather front and we are forced to take in some sail. The sea is now rolling 8 to 10 feet. The sun is setting clear of the clouds and its large red surface is a beautiful contrast to the blue sea and gray clouds.

2000: The wind is strong now. The waves are getting larger. The sun, although set, is lighting the clouds high aloft, turning them yellow. The clouds in turn cast this yellow light on the surface of the sea. All in all a delightful moment that is only a moment, then is lost to the eye but retained as a good memory of life at sea.

As darkness approaches, the sky is clear of clouds and the heavens are full of stars. Along with the clear sky has come a strong wind that at times reaches 40 knots. We reduce sail again and are down to a #3 jib and a double reefed main. Higher and higher the waves roll in, and every once in a while one will send water frothing across our stern. The crew works hard to keep on course as the full fury of the winds come upon us. Gene takes the main down completely, leaving only the #3 jib to hold our bow before the wind. The sound and fury tear through the rigging and the boat is driven hard by its power. In the darkness the fury of this storm is magnified.

On into the night the winds continue to be strong. The ocean waves have turned into swells and grow still higher. The boat rides well over this sea. When it looks like we will be overtaken by a mountain of water the Felicity raises her stern and the churning, moving force slips under her keel with little effect.

In the morning the sun is once again shining. The wind has subsided to 15 knots and we are moving along on this sea that has been piled high by the night winds. The water is deep indigo blue with white tops that reflect the sun. As far as the eye can see are 8 to 15 foot hills of water which slide under and around us in a steady rhythm. The sky is clear, the crew is feeling good, and another day has begun. The good Lord has kept us safe and sent us on our way.

Our passage has been planned well by Gene. The first check point after leaving Ft. Lauderdale was 30 degrees N, 29 degrees W. This is roughly north of our starting point following the Gulf Stream. On the morning of May 3 at 0600 we were at that exact Loran position. This makes us feel good for during our time at sea we have been driven in many directions by diverse winds. From this point we take an easterly direction out into the Atlantic, leaving the U.S. coast far behind.

Friday is a mild day. Large ocean swells and rollers push us along as the winds settle down. We make good time rushing along before a beautiful rolling sea.

The afternoon is sunny and warm. The sea has settled a little, allowing us to ride a little easier. Bill Jr. decides to take a bath with sea water on the bow. He soon becomes aware that we have left the warmth of the center of the Gulf Stream and the water is no longer 80 degrees. While he dances around attempting to hold his footing on the slippery deck (and trying to hide) the others in the crew mischievously take his picture.

The evening is the best we have had at sea. The sun sets with beauty, showing many colors across the sky. To the south billowing thunderheads are piled 40 to 50 thousand feet, reflecting the sun in pink orange and yellow. A perfect end to a perfect day.

Night settles around us. The stars come out in all their glory and the sky is so clear you could almost reach up and touch them. The wind and waves are gentle now, with a nice 15 knot breeze blowing in over our deck from astern. We slip through

the gentle, rolling sea at 6 knots, feeling good about being sailors on this night. Way off below the southern horizon those thunderclouds we saw earlier with the setting sun are putting on a show of lightning. It is too far off to hear any thunder but is lovely to look at from a distance.

At 4 A.M. when Bill and I return to deck watch, shades of daylight are already in the eastern sky. Bill gets out his sextant to shoot a few stars but can get only one as daylight suddenly takes over and the night has passed.

The day is a perfect summer day. The sky is perfectly clear. The sea has a very gentle swell. By 10 A.M. the wind is gone so we pull the jib and mizzen staysail and start the motor. This also gives us a chance to charge batteries and cool the refrigeration units.

The crew feels good this morning. Dan has fed us a good breakfast and there is a lot of kidding and jokes are being told. This is a beautiful day to be out to sea. The storms are over, the ship is clean and dry, the air is clear, and spirits are high. A great day the Lord has made --- no wind --- the sea is glassy smooth.

Late in the afternoon we pass through several herds of porpoise. Some of the smaller ones come over and play with the bow waves for a short time and soon are gone. It's always fun to watch them. The sun has been hot, the sea smooth, and the wind still. This is our day for snoozing, reading, or just taking life easy.

As the sun sinks in the western sky we see two jets crossing north and south. Each leaves a jet trail that soon reflects the orange of the setting sun. A slight breeze is rippling the surface of the ocean. By 8 P.M. we are able to sail again. We move slowly at first, but it's good to have that engine off.

At dark we see one white light on the horizon. Large ships have two but we see only one which leaves us with a mystery. Any boat that has only one would not likely be this far out in the ocean. After a while this light begins to disappear. We must have been seeing only the highest light of a large ship

that was hull down over the horizon. Once this is gone we are alone again, moving farther out to sea.

As night progresses the wind begins to build. With the changing of the watch at midnight we change from a full main, # 1 jib and mizzen down to a # 3 jib and reef the main. We have lost our easy going. The sea becomes more wild with white caps and ever increasing ground swells. The wind is now gusting up to 40 knots --- our second big storm. By early morning the Felicity is being battered about by high winds and seas. The men on deck are tied down with safety harnesses and the men below find it hard to get about the boat.

With the coming of daylight the storm subsides a little and we are riding easier. The sea is a beautiful spectacle of rolling churning blue, topped with white foam that often shoots straight up in the air. The swells are about 8 to 10 feet high and come rolling in on us as though to engulf us. Their size, power, and noise are awesome. The Felicity is caught with the spray of some but she mostly allows them to slip under her with little or no effort.

The crew spends the day sleeping or reading. It's much to hard to get around the boat. Dan feeds us well even though his navy beans didn't soften up as much as they should. The day is grey, rough and windy. We have not made the progress we would have liked. This will bring us in later than we had planned. During the next evening the wind shifts almost 180 degrees. We have been running before a stormy sea. Now we are running into it.

Bermuda is due east of our Sunday night position. The wind and sea are running right on the nose. We must fall off to the south in order to make way against it. Monday morning breaks with a most beautiful sunrise. Clouds of many descriptions are turned from grey to bright colors to white as the sun climbs in the sky. The wind continues strong and the sea is rolling in on our port bow. The air is clean and clear with white puffy clouds scattered all across the sky. A lovely day for sailing, but we are still being driven farther south than we would like. The

highlight of the day is Gene calling home. We are 600 miles out to sea and yet the voices are loud and clear. It's good to hear a voice from somewhere other than our own group.

The wind and sea remain contrary throughout the day. Our progress is slow as the Felicity plows hard into the oncoming waves. Often the bow will raise high on one wave and come crashing down into another, sending spray high into the air, into the face of the helmsman, and washing over the after deck.

The night winds are strong. We take a reef in the main sail to ease the pounding. The boat plows on, not tipping as much and with less slamming into oncoming waves. Several large ships pass us during the night. One is a cruise ship with all her lights ablaze.

We are 90 miles from Bermuda. If the wind will come around we should be there by evening --- if not, tomorrow morning.
Tuesday A.M.

By midmorning grey clouds have completely covered the sky and the wind has increased to 20 knots. Once again we reef the main to ease the pressure on the boat. The seas are building and spray is flying high over the deck. The boat is covered from bow to stern with salt.

Dan is below, cooking up hot dogs and other goodies for lunch. This morning we caught him sitting on the deck tending his oven. He is very good at maintaining his balance and still getting out meals.

We are headed east now. The Island should come into view at any time. If we miss these islands the next stop is Europe. At 1710 Gene is the first to spot land. The Island is shrouded in fog but its faint outline can be seen rising up from the sea. On top of a large hill is the blinking white light of Gibbs Hill lighthouse. What a welcome sight after 9 days at sea. Spirits are high with a lot of chattering going on.

Night is coming on. We will not go into harbor this evening but will wait for morning to make the passage through St. George's Cut. We tack off to the southwest until 1000 in the evening.

The lights of the city light the sky with the strong white flashing beacon sending out a welcome flash every 10 seconds. At 2200 we tack off to the southeast again, standing well off the Island. By 0430 the first daylight appears in the eastern sky. We turn north to follow up the southeast side of the Island, picking out landmarks and blinking navigation lights as we go.

The sun comes up with a blaze of color. Clouds are on the horizon reflecting the red, orange and yellow of the rising sun. The Island is a low rolling line of gray that turns brown when the sun strikes it. Every now and then the sun will strike a window and send a flash of gold. What a lovely sight!

We move along northeast and a pilot boat slips out of the harbor to meet us. We wave, they return our greeting and pass us by. The harbor entrance buoys are now visible as we motor in toward land. Old Fort Caroline guards the harbor entrance and is a reminder of the past when protection was needed to guard against raiders from the open sea. At the harbor entrance is a small fortification that looks like a scaled down copy of the larger Fort.

Once in the harbor we see many buildings of pink stucco with white roofs --- the type of buildings the British must have built all around the world.

A large Dutch cruise ship is tied up on the right. An old sailing ship "Sea Venture" lays at the wharf. She was built back in 1612 and is quite a contrast to the Dutch ship "Volendam"

The "Sea Venture" is older than the Mayflower. She has a high poop deck and her two masts have crow's nests near the top. I sure would not want to make the crossing we have made in that old thing, let alone all the way across the Atlantic.

We tie up to a wharf and await the customs official. People along the dock are very friendly. It's a nice warm morning and it's good to be in port. We have traveled a little

over 1200 miles and have had all kinds of weather and sailing conditions. The trip has been a good experience with a good crew and a good ship. May the rest of the trip go as well.

The Felicity in Port

By mid morning we have cleared customs and immigration. The agent was very friendly and cooperative. We decide to leave St. George's Harbor and go around the Island to Hamilton Harbor. The trip will take about three hours so we let William Milholland Jr. off at the dock to go find his wife and arrange docking for us at Hamilton.

We put up the main to steady our boat as we slip out of the cut into the bright green shallow water that surrounds the Island. The passage to Hamilton is well marked but very exact. Should one stray from the channel he could be in trouble very quickly.

The afternoon is sunny and hot but we have just enough breeze to be comfortable. It's a real pleasure to pick our way through the reefs with land scenery on all sides. After looking at open ocean for so long seeing the many different houses and businesses that line the coast is a welcome sight.

By 1300 we close in on Hamilton harbor. What a lovely place -- beautiful green hills dotted with large homes and hotels, yacht facilities and Government buildings line the waterfront. Towering over it all are 3 large cruise ships. All in all a very beautiful place to be.

After fueling up and calling home we tie up at the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club where we are welcome guests for the next 4 days. This will be a time to relax, to sightsee, to clean up the boat and refit her for the longest leg across the Atlantic.

The sights we see are beautiful and we have fun renting mopeds, slipping on a helmet and running the roads of the town and countryside -- all on the wrong side of the road. These British will never learn where to drive. Days in a new port are always exciting-- the people, the new restaurants, the sights that are so different

from back home, the houses, the little cars, the narrow streets, the peaceful lagoons, the large vacation hotels and the beautiful beaches all blend into a very special set of memories -- memories that are unique for every port.

There is, however, a feeling that comes over you, very slowly at first, that is hard to explain. It is as though the sea is pulling you back. Slowly the harbor town seems to close in on you. The traffic noises that you hadn't noticed before begin to get louder and the routine of life in civilization reaches out to trap you. When this happens it's time to leave. The sea is drawing us back. When this begins to happen the sailor must go or be very restless tied to his moorings.

The replacement crew has arrived all white skinned and eager to be on board. John Damstra and Larry Mulder have come to take Bill Jr. and Casey's place. Saturday morning, May 13, the final touches are put to storing food, fuel and water. A good shave, hot shower and phone calls home are in order. By 1100 the Felicity is ready to leave the dock.

Casey is on the dock, all dressed in sport coat, shirt and tie, with his seabags at his feet. Most outstanding is his long sad face as he cast off the lines, unable to go along. For him it will mean an airplane ride; for the crew another adventure at sea. The boat slips away from the dock and we are winding our way back through the channel and out to the open sea. As the harbor at Hamilton disappears behind, the crew secures the dock lines, fenders and all other loose gear that lay about the deck.

One more short stop at St. George's and we will be on our way. As we approach the St. George's harbor we notice Casey's and Bill's jet thunder off the runway into the eastern sky. In three hours they will be across the sea -- the distance that has taken us nine days by boat.

Back out to Sea

At 1400 we have left the harbor of St. Georges. The wind is warm and delightful, blowing at 12 - 15 knots from the southeast. It's a perfect day to leave port. All the boat's systems are in perfect working order. The crew is happy to feel the ocean swell

under our feet once again, and the U.S. Navy has promised us good weather for the next five days.

The bright green of the islands shallow water soon gives way to the dark indigo blue of the deep sea. We are once again carried away by the magic and spellbinding rhythm of the mighty Atlantic Ocean. Porpoise surround us for a time, playing with the boat and looking us over. A good omen, this, as the sliver of land falls into the sea behind us. Once again we are alone in the open ocean; but wait! Sail ho -- the first we have seen since leaving the mainland. She seems to be going in the same direction but at a much slower pace. She soon falls well astern as the Felicity responds well on the wind. It's as though she knows her job and loves it.

The sun sinks behind our backs now. The sea is moderate, the breeze is warm and steady. The sky is only partly cloudy with stars shining bright and the first quarter moon slipping in and out of the clouds. Feels good to have a sound ship, sails drawing well, bright stars, and a moon to light a silver path across the sea.
May 14, 1978

At 0230 the wind picks up to 18 knots. We are pounding the oncoming sea a little too hard and we change down to a #3 jib. The ride is easier as the wind steadies between 15 and 18 knots.

The day dawns with a partly cloudy sky. The wind is fresh out of the southeast and we are on a close reach. Dan delights the crew with another of his great stomach and soul warming breakfasts. Even Bill feels good this morning. (Early morning is not his best time). After morning naps for the night watch the crew spends the afternoon in the cockpit talking and telling jokes. Many we have heard before but we still laugh at them all. This day is a good day at sea.

The days and nights blend into each other, both passing with little notice. Small things like a sail change or the turning on or off of the engine are noteworthy events as the sea has a way of hypnotizing and soothing in a way that no land adventure could.

The wind is moderate to still and the sea has a mild roll to a glassy smooth surface. During one dark night as the new moon set

set in the west we are visited by a large group of porpoise. They swim around the boat, snorting and playing in the bow wave. Sounds spooky on the quiet black sea at 1:30 in the morning. At night everything seems more sinister. Then quickly they are gone.

The early morning sun is a welcome experience after a chilly night. It brings with it the promise of another safe day of sailing and we find that our basic happiness is found in the warmth of that sun, a warm meal, and the joy of slipping into a warm, dry bunk after the night watch. I suspect that these three things have warmed the hearts of sailors as long as men have put to sea.

On the 18th of May we are in mid Atlantic. We are out as far as you can be out and to our surprise there is no wind. It is gone completely and the sea is glassy smooth. After 5 days of steady wind we turn on the engine and auto pilot. Gene is able to call home and even from way out here our radio transmission is excellent. It's good to hear the news from home.

May 19 is one of the good days when everything goes well. The wind is up and the pleasant motion of sailing, rather than the sound of the engine delights our feelings. The radar reflector is loose. A trip up the mast in the chair will be little trouble with the easy motion of the boat and only a 5 degree heel.

This morning we meet the tanker E.R. Wallonia bound for New Orleans with a load of crude. She told us that there was a Swiss and a French yacht ahead of us, headed for Horta in the Canary Islands. We thanked them for the information and a position report, gave our regards to the skipper and both passed on our separate ways.

The crew is happy and feeling good. We are "flying" along on beam reach. The sun is shining, the cook is baking beer bread. The bilge is cleaned and pumped dry, the engine room cleaned, and all things are in order under a delightful sail. Dan tops the day off with his finest steak dinner with peas, potatoes and gravy. No weight loss on this trip -- just a happy crew.

One of the tough chores is standing the 8 to 12 PM and the 4 to 8 AM watches. Those 4 hours in between are not long enough for a sound sleep. You have the temptation to not sleep during the day because of so many things happening but you are soon worn down if you don't get the rest you missed during the night.

One of the nice things about the 4 to 8 AM watch is the coming

of day light. One day the morning breaks cold and gray and on other days the sky is full of color. At times there isn't any sunrise because of thick cloud cover and it seems that the day just takes over and the night is gone. When this occurs the sea and the sky blend in several shades of gray. The white sails are the only contrast and one feels like buttoning up the jacket an extra notch or shoving your hands a little deeper into you pockets. Even a hot cup of coffee or soup is only small comfort against the feelings of a gray morning at sea. The mornings when the sun comes up and reflects on scattered clouds is most delightful. Colors dance across the heavens and the black of night is turned into gold, red, yellow and finally the blue of the day, broken only by white fleecy clouds. These are the mornings when you're glad to be alive -- when all the discomfort of the storms and nasty weather or that early watch that you have had to stand are forgotten. This is the time you enjoy most at sea. You are a part of a large living, ever moving picture that takes shape and dances in all the glory that only God can create. These are the sunrises that make it all worth while.

For the next day or two we trim our sails a little and try to catch the Frenchman who is ahead of us. We know he isn't too far ahead as we see his garbage from time to time. It's May 21 and we are moving along with a good steady wind. At times one has the feeling that you're a long way from anywhere. This feeling isn't always present but it seems to be today.

The log stopped working so we'll have to estimate our distance by speed and time. We have also lost our Loran. The distance from the U.S. to Bermuda is too great and it will be awhile before we come into the range of Loran stations on the Azores. We are using only celestial navigation and Bill has become very good at this complicated procedure. The sea around us just seems to go on and on and the thought of loneliness in this vast, open space is only broken by the coming of the porpoise again. It's always fun to see them and we all are on deck. This is one of the real delights of sailing the ocean.

From noon to noon we have made our best time this past 24

hours. We have come 168 miles and are marching along in brisk style through a moderate sea. The boat is sending out a wake 30 feet to each side as we plow through the sea with the #2 jib, main, and mizzen all pulling well. In the early morning we see a freighter passing ahead of us. This is a welcome sight. At least it's something to look at. The wind is freshening and the sea is confused. The surface has a ragged look with white tops. Several large waves break over our stern giving the helmsman a good soaking.

The next day is a good day for cleaning ship, clothes, and bodies. Everyone feels better after the work is done. We have on clean clothes and have had another expert meal by Dan. Contentment settles in over the crew. We are making good time. We figure we have only 00 miles to the Horta hospitality. The days are warm but the nights are getting cooler. During the day we are able to wear swim suits or go without shirts. The sky is blue and the sun warm. By 1500, however, the air changes and one by one we cover up with light jackets or sweat shirts. We haven't had to wear our long underwear on deck at night as yet.

At 1900 the sun slips down into the sea just as the moon rises. The setting sun fills the sky with color. How can one describe the beauty of the setting sun when colors are as far reaching and so quickly changing as these. Just to say that this was the prettiest so far is to understate this lovely spectacle, and tonight we have the moon. Today has been a good one. We have moved 160 nautical miles, cleaned ship, been well fed, seen porpoise and a large sea turtle, and topped it off with a glorious sunset and moonrise. Life couldn't be better.

With a full moon lighting our night sky we sail along on the same wind we have had for the past 98 hours. The night is warm and we ask the Lord to give us another 80 hours of these same sailing conditions. At 0130 a large freighter comes up from the southwest and passes ahead of our bow -- about 2 miles off. Her lights and shape in the moonlight seem very large but soon dwindle to a small speck as she slips over the horizon. The sun comes up with a blaze of red. The moon is still left hanging in the western sky, its shimmering light now overpowered by the coming of the day.

All systems on board are working well. We are under full sail, the men are happy and healthy, the freezer is holding with only 3½ hours needed to keep it cold and we have set a new 24 hour record of 180 nautical miles. At 1630 the sea is alive around us. Gene is on the helm with Bill and Larry sitting along the starboard side and here she blows -- a fifty foot humpback whale rolled and blew while passing us in opposite directions. He is less than fifteen feet from us. His long black hulk was so close it seemed like he was right under our boat. While Gene held the wheel Dan and John scrambled for cameras and all rushed to see this huge monster of the deep. It's a good thing he was the friendly sort or we would have had some problems.

With this close encounter filling our minds and conversation the rest of the day passed quickly. The night is once again filled with the brightness of the moon. So clear is the sky and so bright is the moon that only the very brightest of stars are visible.

May 24 - With the greatest part of the empty center ocean behind us we are now, if this wind holds, only 48 hours from Horta and things start to happen. At 0530 another freighter passes us, bound in a westerly direction. Shortly thereafter we have our first R.D.F. contact with Faial in the Azores. The signal is not strong enough for an accurate bearing but it's there and it has a 250 mile range. All R.D.F.'s have warning stations as well as necessary lights.

By mid morning Gene is able to make the first good R.D.F. contact with Flores and Faial. The Loran is also acting up which means that soon we will be able to navigate by Loran as well as celestial. Early afternoon another whale blows right close to us. Moving slowly on the surface these great mammals are indeed an exciting sight to see -- and a little scary too. Another large ship is also passing to the southwest on our port side. Late afternoon a freighter is coming toward us. She will pass close to starboard and we'll try to talk to her. She is the motor vessel Faix from Greece and we talk to her for some time on the VHF radio. She is coming out of Antwerpen, Belgium and is bound for Houston, Texas.

They confirm our position of $38^{\circ}05'N$ and $34^{\circ}00'W$. They gave us course of 84° to Horta and a weather report of 5-6 SW for this area. They had, however, just passed through a period of force 8 winds with rain and big seas about 300 miles northeast of here. We thank them for the information. They wish us good luck and once again we are alone in the empty sea.

Early evening we have another short conversation with a passing freighter but couldn't catch the name or destination. Shortly before midnight a Wilson Petrel flew into the main and landed in the cockpit. It lay there stunned for a while and then flew off.

Midnight May 25 - We are close reaching on a 12 knot wind and a 2' sea. Good sailing if the wind doesn't back off any more. We're getting close to the Azores now and don't want to sail any further than we have to. Flores is coming in strong on the R.D.F. and Faial is improving. The night sky is clear and the barometer is high so we are not looking for a big wind or weather shift. At 2 A.M. the small lamp is burning below, the moon is casting a long path across the sea and everything is still aboard, except Dan snoring down below. The rhythm of the waves passing off the bow could even put the helmsman to sleep with very little trouble. The night is now cold and the wind forward. We pull the collar up around the neck and snuggle a little further into the jacket to ward off the chill of the wind.

By mid morning the wind is up to 18 knots and we are marching along faster now on a building sea. Spray flies off the bow as the sky clouds over, turning the sea gray, broken only by the white spray. A large shark passes close in, looking us over. He is soon gone from view. We're glad to see him leave. The wind subsides in late afternoon and the Felicity is once again under power. At 2200 we sight some lights off the starboard bow. We have no idea what they are on or what kind of ship may lay out there. We will watch them closely. As time passed, the lights slid below the horizon and we never did see what kind of vessel they came from.

The night is chilly and by midnight the wind has returned. We have shut off the engine and once again are enjoying the sound

of the wind in the sails.

May 26 at 0400 - John Damstra is the first to see land. After so many days at sea this early morning sighting of the Island of Pico rising out of the sea is most exciting. The sun is coming up behind this 7,000 foot mountain, adding a new dimension to our world at sea. The colors of the sunrise with the outline of the Island and the excitement of drawing near the land all add up to an exciting morning.

The wind has slowed and we choose to motor in order to clear customs before the weekend. We should cover the remaining 45 miles by 1100. We couldn't have picked a better time of day to be making our approach to a whole new world. Dan chooses this time to celebrate our landfall by having a bowl of hot cereal -- (7 grain, no less) --. I wonder what he would have served us had we arrived after 1700 hours? By 0800 we take a bearing on the western end of Faial and this puts us 10 miles from Horta.

John has the privilege of cleaning the breakfast dishes for his sighting of land first. Captain Queeg Davidson declared John's reward. He also invoked the power of the captain of the sea and granted temporary divorces to all of the crew except one. He will remarry them again once back at sea.

The crew is happy and excited. What a beautiful place is appearing all around us! The islands rise up out of the sea to majestic heights. Sweeping up from the sea is a green terraced landscape that rises in a jigsaw pattern with the deep blue ocean for a base, and disappear from view in the clouds that shroud the lofty peaks. The coast line is steep and rugged and the sea is deep water all around. We are looking at the tops of extinct volcanoes that have formed these ancient islands. The green of the islands is a welcome sight. We make our run along the south side of Faial and by 0930 we approach the channel between the Islands of Faial and Pico.

We have travelled 1878 miles from Bermuda. It has taken us 309 hours at 6.07 nautical miles per hour average over the ground. We have changed sails 21 times (at least; seems like more) and our best day's run, noon to noon, was 180 miles. Of the 309 hours

only 38 hours were under engine power. And once again the good Lord has brought us safely to land.

As we close in on the port of Horta we see something new every few minutes. The islands themselves are high and lofty and as the detail of civilization begins to take shape we become aware of the new world that is beginning to open its doors to us. The sights, sounds and smells of this distant Island are soon etched into our memory. The ever friendly sound of the bell buoys that mark the channel, the high breakwater that juts out from the land to protect the harbor from the open ocean, and the ever present sea gulls screaming for a handout are three signs of a welcome harbor.

The buildings of the city are stretched out along the shore at the base of the mountains. Along the high walls of the breakwater we see sailing yachts from many places. We are among the first to arrive from the U.S. this spring. Many will follow as the summer season progresses. The fishing fleet has its boats both in and out of the water. Some pulled up on ramps are being painted and repaired for the work to come. Others are tied to docks or are at anchor. Whaling is still done in the old fashioned way from long boats. They have been successful as we see the man cutting up one of the large mammals in an open air slaughtering area.

We tie up to the wharf, safe and secure from the sea. We sleep well this first night in port and we are thankful for all we have experienced and for a safe trip. The story of what we see and do in the Islands could be the subject of another short story. This is a foreign country, a different culture, and the sights, sounds and smells are new and exciting. We will stop to look, to learn, to try to understand. These Islands have been the crossroads of the high seas for many, many hundreds of years and now too, we add the name Felicity to the list of boats and ships that have come by this way. The date is May 26, 1978, we are safe in port and we feel good.

Over the next 3 days we do all the usual cleaning, repairing and restocking of supplies. Most of our time is spent in sight seeing and taking pictures. Dan Richmond and John Damstra leave

for home. It's been good having them on board. They are good crew and we will miss them.

May 29 - It's time to move on. We see Dan and John off at the airport, pick up some cheese, bread, and strawberries and are now ready for sea. There is an American camera crew on the dock filming our departure from Horta. We impress them and ourselves by turning a four boat raft 180° so that the inside boat (us) got to be the outside boat. Smartly done, we cast off, raise our main, #1 Genoa and mizzen and proudly sail out of the harbor with the stars and stripes flying from our mizzen sail.

By 0900 we have cleared the harbor under full sail on our way south of Pico and then on to Sao Mique. There are only 3 of us on board; Captain Gene Davidson, William Milholland Sr., and Larry Mulder. Our deck watches are now 2 hours on and 4 hours off. The afternoon finds us sailing dead down wind under main and poled out #2 Genoa. The sky is gray, the air cool and this wind and sea are pushing us along at a gentle 5 knots. The evening blends into night and the stars are out in full glory. All is quiet on the Felicity as we sail among these tall, mountainous Islands. We can see three Islands - Pico, Sao Jouge, and Teyciera.

At midnight a haze forms around us. The night is now darker than the inside of a black cat. Standing the helm watch alone on deck gives you time to think but it's rather lonely. I suppose it's a small taste of what it must be like for the men who sail across the ocean single handed. I don't think I would like that. As morning breaks the Island of Sao Miguel is off our port bow and we are moving well with the wind building.

By 1000 we have the makings of a rather nasty day. There are storm clouds all around us. The wind comes and goes in fickle gusts from 10 to 30 knots with big seas building. The sky is becoming more sinister and we can no longer see the Islands, let alone the mountaintops on the western end of Sao Miguel. By 1100 we make our approach to the harbor at Ponta Delgada, the Azores. We move with extreme caution as visability deteriorates to zero. A nasty time to be coming into an unfamiliar harbor.

Once again Gene is in the right place and by 11:20 we are safe

inside the harbor. We tie up alongside a French yacht and an immigration officer comes on board to give us our clearance. Gene has to go ashore to the Port Captain to clear customs. One more safe passage in a strange new area of our world.

The trip by Kon Marcus and Bob Hayes to join the Felicity at Ponta Delgada is worthy to inject at this point.

The two men flew out of Boston on TAP -- a Portuguese airline. Their arrival in the Azores was at 4 A.M. on the Island of Santa Maria. As they approached the Island thick fog closed in around the Island and they were diverted to Lisbon in Portugal. At that early hour the airport was deserted and they had an early breakfast with the TAP crew. Outside it's dark and raining. After 3 hours' wait they finally bring a 2 engine turbo prop plane around to the front of the building. One look at the plane and an "I hope we make it" feeling sets in.

The flight to the Islands takes about 40 minutes. There is a lot of overcast but the flight is smooth. The sea below is in a froth, however, and waves seem to be building. As they approach Ponta Delgada the high rocky cliffs all around the Island are an unforgettable sight. The wind swirls and howls around these awesome cliffs and the plane rolls wildly from side to side. The air strip must be reached without error or the cliffs or the sea could claim all aboard. The three man crew of the plane are strapped in with shoulder harnesses, and the violent lurching of the craft makes them wonder about getting down. With great effort they touch down and roll up to the terminal to learn that in the past 6 months 3 of this type of plane did not make it in here and all on board were lost.

Gene greets them and by taxi they go to the harbor where the Felicity is tied to two freighters along a very high and large sea wall. It is good protection from the wind which is blowing hard out at sea.

On a walking tour of the town and harbor we are once again aware of the new sights and sounds that are all around us. From the language that is spoken to the way of making a living in this far off Island we realize that we have dropped into someone else's world and that we are the intruder come to look and

learn.

June 4, 1978 . The Felicity is ready for sea. At 10:30 we are away from the dock. Under full main and #3 jib we sail smartly out of the harbor. The wind is strong and the Felicity responds by heeling as she surges forward toward the open sea. Once again it's good to be free of the land and on our way with plenty of supplies and a good strong crew.

On board we have Captain Gene Davidson, William Milholland, Sr., Larry Mulder, Kon Marcus and Bob Hayes. The sea is building and we are heeled over. We reef the main and ease the sheets a little as the going gets rough and the spray begins to fly. These mountainous Islands create their own weather and wind patterns but they are also shielding us from the North Atlantic winds at the moment.

The trip along the south side of San Miguel was beautiful but now we are clear of land and the full fury of the North Atlantic is upon us. The wind is strong and the sea is high. We are in for a rough ride. The crew isn't feeling very well. Nothing tastes good and nothing stays down. Kon is sea sick and taking pills. Bob is lying on the cabin sole and our tough strong crew isn't much interested in food and is looking rather green.

We begin our first night out with a heavy sea and strong wind. The Felicity is heeled over and pounding through ever-growing waves. Crawling into a warm bunk with the lee boards up is the only place to be. We snuggled against the boards and wonder if it will all hold together. The Felicity is like a strong horse moving on into the night. The wind is tearing at her sails and the sea pounding around her hull. Sailing is a little rough but we move on with a steady march that comes with a proper boat and well balanced sails.

We stand 4 hour watches. The night is cold, windy, wet and dark. When you're not feeling well everything is magnified at night and seems worse than it really is. Why did I leave home?

Monday, June 5 The crew still isn't feeling too good. The day is warm but the wind and sea are still strong. We are sailing with a #2 Genoa and reefed main. We have taken down the mizzen.

The #2 makes a thunderous noise in heavy winds that are now screaming through the rigging. Gene claims the waves are only 3 to 5 feet. Everyone else says 10 to 12 feet. I think he wants us to feel better about this whole storm. Two freighters pass to the south going west. We see no others and have seen no sea life up to now. It's as though we are left alone on this stormy sea. Gene and Bill are OK but feel some queasiness. The rest of us have a greater degree of sea sickness but are still able to function.

We seem to be between two low pressure systems and are outrunning the one squeezing down on the Azores. The sky is partly cloudy with a cold rain that comes and goes, winds 15 to 30 knots and the sea still at 10 feet plus. Oh what are we doing out here? Bill has taken several sun fixes and plotted our position. Several ships pass. Some respond to our radio contact; others slip by without a word.

The night is cold and wet. Kon is on the helm and we are moving well. The boat sails best at 110°. But we must hold it up to 100° to compensate for the strong wind and current. The wind is blowing us southward and is continuing to grow stronger to just below gale proportions. Larry is very homesick and Kon is too. There is no let-up in wind or sea. Blow, blow, blow! Will that wind ever stop? Through the night one gets the impression that the helmsman is the pilot on a rocket ship, not a boat. Can't shake the fear that comes with the night sounds of the storm lashing at our boat. There is no moon and the stars are gone. All that we have around us is an angry sea, dark clouds and cold rain. Oh why did I leave home? By Thursday morning we are in a full gale. The seas are so high we can't see the horizon when we are down in the trough. Watch for ships. They come out of nowhere and a large red freighter appears to be on a collision course with us. We see him and call on C # 16. He responds that he is bringing freight from Africa to France. He also reports that the weather is often like this off the Portuguese coast. Soon he is gone from our view.

By mid morning the wind has come around again to the north

west, then to the north, then northeast. We are now hard on the wind. The Felicity is banging through the seas without any trouble and we should make a record crossing. The sky is wild looking -- no thunder -- just a light, cold rain.

Kon can't stay in his bunk with the boat pounding. Not wanting to go top-side, he stands in the companionway. Gene is not happy with heavy pounding but feels everything will hold. Bill is concerned and is constantly checking everything with searching eyes lest anything could give way. Bob seems to love it all -- wouldn't miss it for the world. He is sea sick and can't keep food down, but loves the action. He feels best while on watch and gets sick below. Larry is sea sick and home sick but continues to do his share.

The wind keeps up its high pitch as it thunders through the rigging. The pounding never stops -- no breaks -- and the spray continues to fly. We sail on, half sick, tired, hungry and in awe of the great power of the wind and sea. We are passing through a great storm that we cannot control but are able to survive.

With the coming of the day the crew is starting to get their sea legs and get in the groove. We are starting to bitch about getting our money back because of the lack of sunshine -- a good sign the crew is feeling better. Mid afternoon we speak with the motor vessel Falkner enroute from Halifax to Gibraltar. He reported weather moderate, force 4 to 5 winds from the north. The seas are beginning to set down. We have weathered a gale and we feel the worst is over. We stay with the reefed main and #3 for a while, just to see what will happen.

Late Thursday night the sea has moderated. Feels good to be riding a little easier. Looking back we can see the weather building to gale proportions and passing. The only damage to the boat was a cabinet failure in the galley and some line chafe on the weather cloth to starboard. Men and boat were pushed beyond normal stress and both bent a little but both held. The boat will be repaired, the men healed to feel the pride of having

been put to the test and winning.

June 9, Friday 0200 - Hard to believe -- The port watch screwed up and lost the wind. All that is left of our storm is a high running sloppy sea but no wind. We start the engine and motor as the seas continue to set down. In the distance we see lightning from the leftover storm, but it's moving away from us.

We have saltine crackers and peanut butter during the late night and early morning watches -- absolutely delectable! Such luxury! How good to be able to eat and enjoy it again. Below the men are sleeping soundly for the first time. As morning breaks we are riding easy. All is well and serene aboard. Fog is now closing in around us but we feel more at ease as we come closer to the Portuguese coast.

0700 We feel we should be seeing the coast soon. The mood changes on board at a time like this. The daily routine continues but an air of expectation takes over. R.D.F. and Loran are checked. We should see land soon and we are on the constant look for the first sighting. Visibility is very poor. We know land is out there somewhere but there are no signs, no boats, no fishing nets, no buoys. First one to spot land gets to do the dishes. Captain refuses to even look. At 0900 we peer through the fog and see what looks like a suggestion of a cliff. Fog can play tricks with your eyes but this time it is land. We have found the coast of Portugal.

We have logged 786 miles by log from Ponta Delgada, and 800 miles by chart. At 0950 we are able to get a fix on St. Vincent and St. Sagres. This puts us 42.5 miles from the Port of Villa Moura. We should be in by 1700. Ahead of us is a light house. But there isn't supposed to be a light house there. Nothing on the chart about there being one nor is there any need for one where that one stands. But there it is. Through the glasses we see two small boats about a quarter mile north of the light house. From our angle they look like they could be tenders. As we draw closer to the light house we are struck by the fact that it seems to be moving? Light houses don't move! The two small tugs are not moored to the light house. They are pulling it. What a

sight! What we have here are 2 huge ocean tugs pulling a "Texas Tower" oil rig by a huge cable harness. The whole rig is so large it overwhelms us and it's being pulled along at 4 - 5 knots.

At first sighting we thought we would go between the "light house" and the "fishing boats". What a mess that would have been! Nothing but large cables between the oil rig and the tugs. That would have damaged our hull. It would have been hard to explain how we traveled 3,000 miles across the open ocean and then were run over by an oil rig. The tower itself is like a self contained city. It must be at least 150 feet above the water. It's an awesome sight and we take many pictures. We set our course to go ahead of the tugs but close enough to them to see the men on board. They must wonder why we are out here and what we are up to.

By 1100 we are all feeling good. It's great to be off the stormy Atlantic and we are working our way along the Portuguese coast. The cook is feeding us peanuts and beer. We suppose he's trying to get out of serving us lunch. By 1300 everyone has had a hot water shower except Larry. The smell around here is starting to improve. There is a good feeling about closing with the Portuguese coast right where we wanted to. Our navigation is right on and we have made a stormy but safe passage. We are now in the lee of Portugal and the weather changes. It's a beautiful clear day, perfect for sight seeing. The coast is a sight to behold. High rising cliffs, beautiful landscapes, and caves with openings higher than the mast of the Felicity. We have 20 miles or so of this beautiful panorama that is sliding by us. It is along this coast that great seamen of many countries have passed for hundreds and thousands of years. It's hard for us in 1978 to visualize Roman or Phoenician sailors passing by, or the great Spanish Armada working its way up the coast. We have arrived at a land where history goes back much further than ours and we are enjoying our first glimpse of it. This is why we left home!

We motor along the Algarve and although we are still in the Atlantic we enter into the Gulf of Cadiz. The air warms and we remove our warm clothing and off come the shirts. Someone opens a bottle of champagne to celebrate. Everyone is relaxed and joyful and the going is easy. Gone, and for the minute forgotten, are

the hardships of the open sea. For now we are both excited and thankful that we are about to arrive at Villa Moura.

As we approach the harbor the captain orders all hands to clean up the ship. The sails are down and properly stored in bags below or neatly wrapped or covered on the boom. Loose gear is properly stored, dock lines and fenders brought out and all is ready to enter the harbor. What will land feel like?

The harbor is just ahead and the sights are just lovely. The white buildings with their clay roofs look like an ad for a travel bureau. The beaches with lots of swimmers and small boats are a warm and welcome sight.

As we round the black and white, permanently situated, genuine, for real lighthouse we enter a small harbor alive with colorful Portuguese fishing boats. Carefully we bring Felicity alongside a large floating dock. Several Portuguese dock hands are there to help us tie up.

Gene leaves for customs with all our passports in hand. Before all the formalities are completed we are told we must move the boat pronto. A war ship of the Portuguese Navy is moving into the channel and will need prompt diesel service. At least that is what we think he said. We are about to lay alongside a ketch from Houston, Texas when suddenly the skipper arrives and decides to leave for Santa Maria which is a short distance to the east from the port we are at. A man in a motorized rubber raft leads the way and we are assigned a slip. We tie up to the dock but we notice that the dock and the land are making us feel ill. We quickly return to the boat. People have become land sick before. This change in motion or the lack of it will take a little bit before we are in harmony with the land once again.

WE HAVE MADE THE ATLANTIC CROSSING AND ARE SECURE IN PORTUGAL!

Kon and Bob take a room at the Dom Pedro Hotel. The crew has dinner there on Friday and are delighted by a colorful group of Portuguese dancers who put on a show in the hotel lobby after dinner.

Back on board at the end of a long and eventful day we fall asleep quickly in a bunk that isn't moving. What a feeling!

June 10, 0900 With breakfast over the crew turns to clean the boat fore and aft, and from the upstairs to the downstairs, to the basement and the engine room. All systems are OK -- oil, water, and electronics. The cabinet is repaired, freezer defrosted, refrigerator cleaned and beer locker replenished. By 1300 we have a clean boat and are ready to see the sights. We climb into a small rented car and set out on the road overlooking the ocean where we find a small Portuguese cafe along a walk off the main road. We stop at the beach near Oura for some sight seeing and gift buying. Bill thinks Kon is a terrible driver.

Larry bought dinner at the town of Faro. The price was only half of what we expected to pay. Thanks to Larry for a good meal and a lot of laughs. A short stop at the Disco -- no one there -- and back to the boat. The end of a good day. All in all a good port at which to stop at the end of an ocean crossing.

June 11 - Larry is up early preparing to leave for home. He will be flying out as we leave on the next leg to Gibraltar. We have said our farewells to Larry and others around the dock and by 0900 we clear customs, start the engine, take in all lines and put out to sea. With the full main up we motor out of the harbor but will have to wait for the promised wind that was forecast to be 15 to 20 knots out of the north. It's after 1000 before the wind comes up, and then from the east off the land. We are once again on a port tack heading southwest with main and # 1 drawing well, sending us along at an easy going 5 knots.

At noon we have our 3rd cook in the galley -- Bob Hayes puts out a super lunch. We have been blessed with the best cooks on any sailing vessel in all the North Atlantic -- Dan, Larry, and now Bob. Mid afternoon and the wind is gone. The day has a gray sky that reflects on the smooth water. The fishing fleet is working their nets in tandem. We are struck by the length of cable between two boats -- we estimate at least a mile long.

Bob has prepared a banquet for the evening meal -- roast, peas, potatoes, gravy, hot biscuits, cauliflower, onions, Pico red wine and strawberry shortcake. We ate at the table below

while Otto, the automatic pilot, steered the boat. What a cook! Gene and Kon draw the 8 - 12 watch. With the wind gone we continue to motor. It's a good thing we fueled up at Vilamoura. The sky is clearing and the moon is new with the first sliver showing brightly in the western sky. When sailing at sea during the night the moon is a pleasant companion. This is the first new moon since Ponta Delgada in the Azores.

As midnight approaches we are passing between the fishing fleet to the north and the freighter lanes to the south. Rather exciting with the Portuguese coast to the east and the open sea to the west. We should see the Taflagar light about 0200 and we should be at Gibraltar at 0900. Bill and Bob take the 12 - 4 watch with Gene and Kon crawling into the bunks below. About 0130 Kon is roused to take Bob's place on watch. Bob feels very sick and looks like he could die. Don't know what is wrong. Must be something he ate. Bill becomes disoriented and we can't find Cadiz light. We search and Kon finds the light and we make our turn. Later we are not yet sure and we confirm that it is the light off the coast of Africa. Africa! What a thought! Africa on our starboard side and Spain to the port side. There are lots of conflicting lights and ships passing and it's a very, very dark night.

Early morning dawns with fog hampering our view of the Spanish coast and shrouding the African coast. We are surrounded by porpoise -- many large and small ones. These mammals must have occupied these waters for hundreds of years as sailors have written about them when passing through these straits. The straits are also referred to as the "Gates of Hercules" and mentioned in the poem about Columbus when he came through here from Barcelona, Spain and headed out into an endless ocean..

As we approach from the west we are surrounded also by many ships. The east bound are to the south and the westbound to the north-- the only time the British keep to the right. Kon calls a supertanker and gets a good response. He is bound from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean. He also gives us our position. By 0700 the day brightens up sunny and beautiful. We can see the African coast clearly. Its high mountains stand gray and barren above the blue sea but the low lying Spanish coast is still

enveloped in a misty haze. We are about 8 miles northeast of Tangiers. As we head north across the straits we pick up a good sailing wind and work up onto the Spanish coast. We sail around to the east and by 1000 are entering the bay to Gibraltar. What a massive piece of land!

Bill is still out like a light. Too bad he missed the sights all along our approach. Must be he and Bob had a touch of the same food poisoning. We are concerned but they are resting easy.

The Rock is very impressive. What a sight to see! As we approach, a parade of six submarines move out into the straits. All around are ships from all over the world. There are helicopters, cruise ships, naval vessels from NATO and Britain, submarines, freighters, and best of all there is the Felicity flying the U.S. colors.

By 1030 we tie up at the destroyer pen and are the 3rd boat out on a raft. By noon we have cleared customs and taken care of the other duties of entering port. Soon we are on our way to town to check it out.

Laundry is done, propane and groceries bought, phone calls to home, as promised, and ship clean up is completed. This is a good stop for a day or two before we leave for Jose Banus harbor in southeastern Spain.

Gene and the crew of the Felicity have done it! We have crossed the Atlantic Ocean from Florida to the coast of Portugal, and now Gibraltar. We have experienced storm and calm weather. We have visited new lands and have come to know each other, living in very close quarters, and have come away friends. We have experienced another high seas adventure that we shall all talk about the rest of our lives. I'm sure that each of us is grateful to God for protecting and caring for us to allow us this safe passage. We also are grateful to Gene for taking us along. The adventure in its truest form cannot be told properly even with all the words we have used. But as we read it will bring back the memory of many sunsets, sunrises, moonlit nights, harbor entrances and the hundreds of moments that filled our world at sea and on shore. Again, thanks, Gene for the trip.

For all that has been said so far, it is but a prologue to

the Mediterranean adventure and the trip back across the Atlantic and up through the islands to Florida. All that shall have to wait until another time.

As we left Gibraltar we looked back out through the straits at the Atlantic that now lay well astern. Gene was heard to say, "You know, boys, when we make the trip back we should....."