

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." - Mark Twain

2012 Singlehanded TransPac

San Francisco Bay to Hanalei Bay, Kauai

Event log of s/v Tortuga W32 #207

Captain Randy Leasure

ahoy everyone!!!

tortuga and i arrived safely yesterday around noon local HI time in hanalei bay rounding out just about 17 days total time for the journey!

thank you all so much for the kind words of encouragement and support throughout the trip. it meant a lot to me that i had so many people supporting and rooting for tortuga and i all along the way! i'm still pretty out of it and tired and its really odd to be on land now and not moving around. :) it was great to see all the other racers last night in the park by the beach and catch up on their stories and experience as well.

i was never able to get my sailmail program working again but i did keep an update on each day, which i've included below if you are interested in catching up on my ships log. the admiral and i will be enjoying the beautiful town of hanalei for the next few days as i decompress, get things put back in order on board and ready for dave king and his crew to deliver tortuga safely home to san francisco starting next week.

it was an amazing experience overall and i'm so glad i was able to do this race and overcome the challenges to make it to the finish! also attached is picture of tortuga and i crossing the finish line yesterday.

mahalo! xo team tortuga
(July 18,2012)

Day 0:(June 29,2012):

ahoy dear friends and family!

the time has finally come! after countless hours of preparation and more boat dollars spent that i've long since lost track of, for tortuga and i to start the 2012 single handed transpac race to hanalei bay hawaii!

the race starts this saturday june 30th at around 1130/1200 in san francisco bay, just off tiburon, out and under the golden gate bridge and ends about 2100 miles later on kauai at hanalei bay.

for those of you in the bay area that may want to watch the start of the race there are 2 options. you can see the start from corinthian yacht club decks or if you are feeling adventurous you can

watch the boats sail under the bridge from the walkway on the bridge.

as most of you know, my communication will be very limited during the voyage but i will have the ability to send very short text based email updates during the journey. because of the limitations of the email through single side band radio, i'll be sending these updates to dani from my sailmail address who will then forward them on to the group as i'm not able to receive and answer multiple emails.

additionally, all of the boats in the race will be carrying transponders so you'll be able to see our progress and cheer team tortuga along the way once the race starts. the transponders are just a way of tracking and with all things electronic they can stop working, so if there is a time when there is no update, have no fear, the transponder has likely just stopped transmitting and we are happily sailing along.

tracking info: <http://yb.tl/shtranspac2012>
race info: <http://singlehandedtranspac.com/>

s/v Tortuga is given a once over by Team Tortuga. [Images of the work.](#)



(L-R) Duke McGill, Doug Lamb, Jay Bietz, Randy Leasure, Dave King (not pictured, Danielle Machado, Jim and Julie Focha)

mahalo! - i would not have made it to the starting line without the support of team tortuga's admiral and my north star, danielle.
additionally team tortuga's westsail owners association pit crew who gave countless hours of blood, sweat and tears (okay, that was me) helping me prepare the boat: jay, jim & julie, dave, doug & duke.

xoxo team tortuga



Torgua w32 near the Golden Gate Bridge June 30, 2012 heading to Hawaii.

Day 1 (June 30, 2012)

LL 37.10.32N/123.28.94W 5.4kn 230deg

ahoy! well its been an eventful 24 hrs. thanks to everyone who came out to see me off! it was a mixture of excitement, nerves and just plain relief to finally hit the starting line. there were a lot of boats to dodge getting out of the bay with the great schooner race starting the the same time as the SHTP and the fog was rolling in in typical summer fashion. once outside of the bay the fog stuck around with a few moments to get a glimpse of another boat or the coast line. kind of fitting to head out into the fog and not see any of the other boats. off into the unknown! i shook out the reef and put on the bigger jib and spent the afternoon tacking back and forth to get off shore as much as possible and keeping an eye out for all the commercial shipping traffic watching the AIS and radar. the sailing has been quite pleasant despite the wet fog with just enough wind to keep the boat moving around 4-5knts most of the day. saw a few pods of dolphins and with the water so calm, i can see giant jellyfish all around. the fog broke around 2300 and there is a beautiful moon and a starry sky. ok back to more 20 min cat naps.

xoxo team Tortuga

Day 2 (July 1, 2012)

LL 35.42.50N/125.44.80W 7.3kn 240deg

been sailing along at a nice clip all day trying to keep up boat speed and not run south too far. seeing 7-8knts. hand steering for a while then taking more naps. not seeing any of the other boats on AIS anymore in the am. saw rainbow a few miles ahead of me this morning. i think most people turned it off after we all got out of the major shipping lanes. although i saw a huge tanker this morning cross my bow about 3 miles off so i'm keeping it on! more ships LA bound in the PM. winds and seas really hit the fan around 1800. wind speed steady in low 20s with gusts higher. switched back to working jib and took in 1st reef and then second around 2000. auto pilot overpowered otherwise. did a nice job of cleaning off big jib by dragging it along side during sail change. i could see how one can be used as a drogue. thank the gods i had a few of the hanks clipped to the life lines. neptune didn't get it but gave me a nice 1st shower of the trip. :) craptastic weather helped by playing good music (thanks for the tunes mike!) wilson has been eating more than his share of chocolate. will have to take punitive measures if it continues. xoxo team Tortuga

Day 3 (July 2, 2012)

here we are on day 3! it had been a pretty rough ride throughout the night and was almost like the longpac qualifier race i did last summer but not as windy. i'm sure the guys on the littler boats are checking their sanity. i feel their pain knowing how cush i've got it compared to them. it's got to be super wet and cold for them. i've been keeping dry aside from the starboard scupper drain area still leaking (sorry dave!) luckily it's the port rail in the water or i'd really be in water triage mode since all my electronics are there. good thing i've got extra towels to cram up in that area to mostly keep the dripping to a minimum. it's hard to do anything with the boat moving so much so you've got to plan out your moves on deck or across the cabin :) it seemed to ease a bit today and i was self



steering on and off all day to keep up good boat speed. the auto pilot does well but you can really get in the groove with the waves self steering. saw a couple 9's on the gps sliding sideways down some of the bigger seas. sweet! i can feel the wind speed is in transition, just when i start to get ready to shake out the 1st reef it starts gusting again some more during us back up into the 7's. maybe it will settle in sometime over night or in the am. no sun to speak of so hoping it peaks out tomorrow to help charge up the batteries and lift spirits! had a tasty dinner; mixed green salad and "chicken" parm with some tcho chocolate to top it off. ok back to boat yoga and holding on. xoxo team tortuga

Day 4 (July 3, 2012)

LL 33.48N/130.47W – 240deg 6.8kn - full main & drifter

ahoy! team tortuga had quite the eventful day 4 today. the sun finally came out and the first part of the day was a "10" sail for sure. got to break out the shorts today and put away the foulies. the winds really lightened up by mid afternoon and the wind was still too far forward to carry a

drifter or spinnaker yet. i wasn't expecting squalls this early in the race but i've had too many to count today. the earlier ones were nothing more than some passing dark rain clouds with lighter wind. as the afternoon developed they started to get more wind with them. i can't really out run them in any way and they seem to be everywhere today. more fun - i saw that the pin where the autopilot drops into the caprail mount was working its way loose. i disconnected that and switched to the monitor wind vane for a few hours while i worked out a fix with some epoxy to hold the pin mount in place better and let that cure. it seems to be holding for now so i'm back to the autopilot which seems much better with all the erratic winds of these squall lines i find myself in right now. i hope they dissipate here soon. the night sky is completely black all around. lets hope for clear skies again tomorrow! back to the squall fun...xoxo team tortuga

Day 5 (July 4, 2012)

LL32.44N 133.29W 6.9kn 240deg sail config full main& drifter

happy birthday america! live from planet tortuga, all is well! last night was a bit of a rough and rolly night. what i thought were some squalls ended up being the weather pattern through the night so i ended up carrying my drifter way too long and the boat was over powered and i was hand steering for quite a while thinking it was one big squall that would pass anytime. i finally had to drive down after midnight so i could drop the drifter and pull it all back aboard and then put up the staysail with a reefed main to balance things out to get some sleep. we were were still chugging along at 6 knots and the autopilot could handle it with the bigger seas and then i could get some naps in through the night. i woke this morning to see our speed had dropped quite a bit so i put back up the drifter right away and shook out the reef. none too soon as i looked around i saw another boat gaining on me quickly. it was harrier! once i got some speed back we were able to keep him at bay but i thought what a patriotic way to spend the 4th of July being tailed by the general! (for those who don't know,ken on harrier is an ex general in his 80's and this is his 11th single handed transpac!) no sunshine yet and the wind is still just forward of the beam to beam reachy. heard from others at radio check in this morning of unsuccessful kite flying so i'm holding off for a bit as well. i caught my first fish today. (you'd be proud ed!)ok, it was a flying fish that landed in the cockpit and i tossed him back in,but hey tortuga caught one! :) just spoke to the cargo vessel moku paku headed for crockett. they are carrying sugar from the islands and knew about the race and some of the people in it. saw him on my AIS about 75 miles out and hailed him when he was about 8 miles from me. got to love technology. there is a lot more shipping traffic than i would have thought still this far out. hope team tortuga can keep up the pace!
xoxo tortuga

Day 6 (July 5, 2012)

LL 32.03/135.41 - course:none speed:drifting in circles <1knt -

i thought earlier today was a challenge with light air. i couldn't keep the spinnaker flying at all with the light and variable wind so i used the drifter most of the day. at least i was doing 2-3 knots throughout the day. i finally just enjoyed the sunny conditions and made the best of the slow speed. i would trade that now for sure. i am going nowhere fast now as there is literally ZERO wind for the last few hours. i sure hope this doesn't continue into the night and tomorrow. this is beyond frustrating. pretty tired right now and just need some sleep so dropping the main down to keep it from slamming back and forth to take a nap. (oh of course there is a just enough of a sea running to make for an uncomfortable motion) good times on the high seas...team

tortuga ps, day seven - AM update -the little to no wind continued throughout the night and most of the morning till about 1000. sounds like there are some of the boats in the fleet caught in the same conditions as me. looking at the grib files (wind forecasts) the light air was supposed to be in the 8-10knt range not the zero i had all night. back to moving along the rhumb line with the wind on the complete opposite tack now (port) i'll take it!!!more later
xoxo team tortuga

Day 7 (July 6,2012)

after the long night of trying to find wind (i lost at least 6-7 hours going absolutely nowhere.)the morning got a little better, enough to keep the boat moving albeit very slowly. i didn't think the sailing part of this trip was going to be so frustrating. at least the first few days heading off shore the wind started to get consistent. nothing is more trying that working to keep the boat moving will no air and a swell running. as soon as you get a slight breath of wind it spills out with the next swell. my sail mail program stopped working. there is something wring with the modem and it connecting to my com port on my laptop. the other guys in the fleet have been really great trying to help me trouble shoot it and have spent time walking me through things to try to no avail yet. the 0900 & 2100 radio check ins are great to talk to the other guys so you know you're not completely losing your mind out here with not making any progress. the boats that went far south right away are doing much better. i stuck with the rhumb line thinking i wouldn't be able to make up the more time with distance sailed. oh well. i've picked my bed now. made cookies (specialties mix! which helps the mood aboard)
xoxo team tortuga

Day 8 (July 7, 2012)

and the wind has been somewhat consistent although light on and off today. trying to make up as much time as possible. i've got the spinnaker up again. i can't sail very deep downwind with the asymmetrical spinnaker so i'm trying to make wide jibes back and forth and keep the boat speed up as much as possible on each new tack. the seas are somewhat lumpy too so running dead down wind would be pretty miserable as well as very slow for me. still getting lots of "squalls" basically rain clouds that have some mist in them and a burst of wind and the front end and back end. it's been pretty grey with the sun coming out at the end of the day. i kept the spinnaker up all night trying to make up some good distance/speed. i didn't get much sleep minding the helm. when one of the squalls passes the wind speed picks up and the boat wants to round up and the auto pilot can't handle so i jump on to hand steer again. the last of the fresh blueberries are gone :(thanks for them doug! more later
xoxo team tortuga

Day 9 (July 8, 2012)

greetings from the briny deep. not seeing lots of sea life out here. have seen a few large birds. not sure if they are large enough to be albatross or not but nice to see some other life. surprising (and depressing) how much styrofoam & plastic i've seem in the water. they other boats have noted some other floating debris like 55 gal drums etc. i haven't seen anything large like that. hard to believe that i've been out here over a week now. doesn't seem possible. idefix has a wilson on his boat too. doesn't sound like he was having any issues with his wilson, although mine is keeping to himself now and reading some hemingway. not seeing strong winds again today so making the best of it with the spinnaker again. the distance to finish is not uplifting knowing that finishing in

17/18 days is most likely, possibly longer. there is a tropical storm brewing off MX so likely that we'll see some results from that with bigger seas and possible stronger winds. tortuga & i are doing our best out here...
xo team tortuga"

Day 10 (July 9, 2012)

LL 29.45N 141.58W - 6.1kn -231deg - asymmetrical spinnaker and main (1st reef)
just after 2100 ssb check in last night the wind started to veer a little more behind me allowing me to sail in parallel to the rhumb line now all night and all day today. finally! so bummed out knowing that i'm not doing very well in the race and all the light wind and working out the best angle with the spinnaker has cost me lots of time and distance. the last few days have not been great attitude wise. with the slow pace. grey skies and light wind its all very frustrating. i think i would be enjoying this more if it was not an actual race and not be so hard on myself. still cannot get the sailmail program to work with the pactor modem. another source of frustration. the errors had gone away but they are back now stating that one of the com ports is needed (it is installed and verified) and that one of the usb devices is not recognized and has malfunctioned. ready to throw this whole thing overboard at this point. the ssb is nice to chat on with the other racers but this sailmail is way too temperamental and working on windows is so not intuitive trying to figure out why it won't work. i'm guessing now that either the cable that goes from the modem to the laptop is bad, the modem is faulty or this laptop sucks. anyone's guess! the real bummer is i can't get weather info. so i'm my own weather man right now....looks like sun today with 10-15knts...along with a beautiful sunny day on the positive side, i've passed the half way mark and celebrated with the chocolates that dave & ruth gave me from portland. yum! finishing in 17/18 days is most likely, possibly longer. there is a tropical storm brewing off MX so likely that we'll see some results from that with bigger seas and possible stronger winds. tortuga & i are doing our best out here.
xoxo team tortuga

Random notes mid way through the trip:

eating: been eating very well. pretty much full meals at breakfast, lunch & dinner with lots of snacks in between. almost out of all the fresh veggies and fruit. could have brought some more of the fresh things that would have kept longer but have plenty of food. finishing up the tangerines quickly as they are starting to mold from the inside out. bizarre. i've been making theme dinners to keep things interesting - mediteranian night (grilled eggplant & hummus), south of the border night (burrito w/black beans avocado & mango) midwest tv dinner night (mashed potatoes, canned corn and "chicken" patty. (only missing the apple sauce on that one!) we were joking on the radio check in that someone should do a reality TV cooking show with celebrity chefs trying to cook on a moving sailboat well heeled over - "meals at 35 degrees" - or something like that. would be entertaining! **sleeping:** i've been taking longer naps now that we are well clear of any shipping lanes etc. i haven't seen a ship on the AIS in 3 days. it's still on



but just not seeing anything. staying up a lot of the night and sleeping more in the day since the conditions seem more consistent during the day. looking forward to a complete 8 hour uninterrupted stretch in hanalei!

attitude: the first few days of the race were some what rough conditions but i have to say that that was easier mentally because the boat was moving fast, i was staying somewhat with the fleet etc and felt like i was doing a good job keeping up. once off shore the weather really started to lighten up and there is way more light wind sailing conditions than i would have ever thought out here. there have been multiple days now with less than 10 knots on and off and these are the most difficult because it's much harder to keep the boat sailing fast and the much lighter boats really started making better time/distance. trying to keep up a good attitude but i've been putting too much pressure on myself to sail better so haven't been having as much fun as i should and just enjoying the experience. going to make an effort to still do the best i can but know that i won't place that well at the finish and just really not let that get me so down as it has been.

Day 11 (July 10,2012) Noon PST

LL 29.02N 143.22W - 3kn 225deg Wind = light and variable
guess what? more light air today! if there is less than 10 knots of breeze, leave it up to me to sail into it or find it. sounds like from the radio check in this morning that the other boats are in much better wind with 10-15knts and making much better speed, so the boats in front of me just keep getting farther ahead. i had the spinnaker up all night again and around 0600 this morning got the first really intense squall and luckily i had just come up again on deck to check things out and was able to get the spinnaker socked and down before it hit so i got lucky. both taz and moon shadow have torn up spinnakers with squalls already. still no luck with sail mail so i can't get any weather information and haven't had any in the last 5 days. (would have been helpful to try to avoid with these wind holes i keep sailing into) there is a tropical storm off mexico and odds are that we won't get much impact other than some larger waves in the next few days as we all get closer to HI. lets hope so. more later.
xoxo team tortuga

Day 12 (July 11, 2012)

LL 27.57N 145.45W 6.5kn 233deg sails- reefed main and spinnaker
feels like i finally got in the consistent trade winds today. around 1100 the wind starting to pick up steadily and we were cooking along at 7 knots + for a few hours. the winds are strong enough that the boat was rounding up and even hand steering was near impossible so i have to reef down the main to keep control. i hated to do that because our speed was so good but we didn't loose much speed and both the autopilot and i could handle it. i'm sleeping a lot during the day since things seem more consistent with the winds (albeit the squalls still roll by) it was nice to see the GPS only show 130 hours left when we were surfing +7 knots. oh well at least we are moving now and i'm just hoping all the light air is over with! today is the first day with sunshine almost the entire day and it's warm down inside the cabin so that is another good sign i think that we are getting close! had to take the spinnaker down tonight around 1am. just too windy and squally so the wind direction was changing constantly and it would collapse, fill and POP! not good so got it all down before i tore it up although we lost some speed.
xoxo team tortuga

Day 13 (July 12, 2012)

LL 26.54N 148.27W 233deg 5.8kn distance to finish = 664nm - sail config: drifter poled out and main most of the day -

had a good sailing day today with sunshine after 1000 or so and that lasted through the day. there was some lighter wind in the afternoon slowing things down but we generally made some good miles today. still pretty roly with the bigger swells rolling under the boat rocking us back and forth 25 deg. makes for interesting napping and trying to cook anything. the weather pattern so far i'm seeing is squalls around dawn and cloudy until 10/11 and then clear and sunny until just before sunset with more squall lines setting up for the night. there was one tonight that looked like a thermo nuclear explosion in the distance that i got some pictures of, it passed ahead of me whew! some of the lead boats only have a few hundred miles left. the open 50 already finished and set a new elapsed time record i believe. i've still got about 4-5 days left to make it to the finish.

xoxo team tortuga

Day 14 (July13, 2012)

LL 25.59N 150.47W -236deg -5.5kn - distance to finish 527nm - sail config main

had quite the wake up call in the morning around 0530 with the front part of a beefy squall passing over. it clocked the wind around in circles and i had the drifter poled out, so with a couple of slap, slap, pops! of a jibe it tore up the sail nicely. i got it down quickly and it looks like a repair i wont be able to do on the boat. luckily i have a second drifter that i was able to put up later in the morning. that squall lasted for a while with some heavy rains. i got that sail used from mark on W32 bella and it saw some good use this race! hopefully i can get it fixed as i like the cut of that one better than the other sail. the sun did come out today after about 1100 for the day so it make for some nice trade winds sailing. it's all down hill from here to hanalei! i caught wilson using the sat phone today. he was talking to his agent/lawyer in LA. he found the book robinson crusoe aboard and was going on about copyright infringement on his own story etc etc, i tried to explain that it was written hundreds of years ago by daniel defoe but he wouldn't have any of it and wants to file suit against willem defoe, again he wouldn't listen to me. can't teach an old ball new tricks... ended the night with more squalls. they seemed to get much more intense the farther south we get. there was another giant one that almost took out the second drifter with erratic bursts of heavy winds but i was lucky enough to get that one down before the winds gods claimed that sail too. i hate to reduce sail because i was doing 6.5/7 but i'm still making in the 5's with just the main and these squalls just don't seem to stop tonight. its too much of a liability to keep any head sail up right now running down wind so i'm not pressing my luck tonight putting them up repeatedly just to keep taking it down. there is a big swell running so being on the foredeck at night with the pole swinging around and trying to hold on is not my idea of a good time, race or no race.

xoxo team Tortuga

Day 15 (July 14, 2012)

LL 24.53N 152.46W – 237deg -
6.7kn - distance to finish 403nm
sail config: main and drifter -
had a rough night which was
basically one giant squall and
rode it out with just the main up.
about 0300 i was getting ready
to put the drifter back up and
glad i didn't because a few more
pretty intense wind increases
continued throughout the am. it
got pretty roly on board with
just the main up and the boat
slowing down to about 4knts in
between the mayhem but just as
i would gear up to go put sail
back up i was glad i didn't. the
rest of the morning was cloudy
but i was making great boat
speed after about 0900. the sun
came out and it was a really
beautiful day today. tortuga and
i are rolling along to the finish



line and with any luck we'll be there sometime on tuesday. lots of boats are going to finish today and tomorrow so there will only be a couple of us out here after that. i dropped a message in a bottle overboard today. had meant to do it mid way on the trip. i wish i had a cool bottle to put it into but i could only find an empty vitamin water bottle. sealed it up with some 4200. will be interesting if anyone ever finds it. i would probably have better luck if it was a glass bottle but we shall see. not seeing anything ominous looming on the horizon at sundown so we'll see if i can keep full sail going through the night. don't need to lose this drifter too.
xo team tortuga

Day 16 (July 15, 2012)

LL 23.55N 155.14W -
6.5kn 237deg distance
to finish 256nm - sail
config: reefed main.
had a somber start to
the day with news that
derk on bella bartok got
picked up by a freighter
bound for oakland and
had to abandon his boat
about 0300. i don't have
more detail on what
exactly his condition
is/was but i can only
imagine how hard a
decision that was to get
off his boat. he lives
aboard as well so he



was walking off his house. i think he was planning to go to the south pacific after the race too. there is a chance that the boat will continue to drift towards HI and then someone can get the boat once it is closer. it will probably be none worse for the wear if it can be found before it goes aground anywhere. i imagine the yellow brick tracker is still giving its position. let's just hope he is OK. another day of sunshine and the weather is definitely getting HOT. as of the radio check in tonight there are only 8 boats left to finish. i'll be the last boat to finish and be DFL by default now. ironic how that happened. saw some spooky looking squalls coming before sundown and got the main reefed in and took down the drifter. none too soon as just as i lashed the drifter down it hit the fan. i've been doing 6ish knots under reefed main for the last couple hours. it actually makes the night easier if it continues to blow because i'll be making decent progress and i don't have to worry about sail changes with squalls. we shall see. the only bummer is the crazy rolling motion of the boat with just the main and big swells. good thing don't get seasick!
xo team tortuga

Day 17 (July 16, 2012)

LL 22.49N 157.49W - 6.3kn 239deg - distance to finish 99 miles! sail config: reefed main and super yankee.

well just had the last sunset of the trip. it was a nice one. with an actual sunset color change and not just straight to ominous grey squalls. (although they are looming too) saw what i think was a whale of some sort pass the boat around sundown. it was the shape of a dolphin but it was the size of tortuga so i'm guessing it was some type whale. very cool! had good winds on and off today. i found what works for a good sail combo that doesn't get over powered with the squalls and that is my super yankee jib poled out and the main with one reef. seems to work ok. hard to believe that this will be my last night on the race. it's a funny feeling like when you are a kid and all you want to be is an adult in that this race there is so much planning and excitement leading up to it, and then at a certain point once it starts, you are looking toward the finish line and the last few days seem to last a long time. :) i tried to find a way to really just take in and be in the moment and not wish for the ending the last few days. seeing more ships on the AIS as we are getting closer to the island. i passed a large buoy that was lighted yellow and some of the other racers had mentioned on our radio checks. Frolic had given us all the coordinates and i had been keeping an eye out for it. it didn't show up on my chart plotter but was on the laptop chart program i have. good thing as i passed fairly close to it and the last thing i needed was a yellow racing stripe! more later for the last day!
xo team Tortug



Day 18 (July 17, 2012)

the finish! - it's been pretty windy all day with lots of squalls. i had actually contemplated trying to get the spinnaker back up and had this fantasy of crossing the finish line with it up and the sun out and a nice breeze. well that didn't quite pan out. the squalls continued through the morning

and i sighted the island first about 20 miles offshore. man, that was a sight to behold! as i got closer to the finish line the intensity of the squall increased and i contemplated reefing down farther but keep the super yankee and reefed main up. i was steadily surfing at 8-10 knots and one of the bigger waves picked us up and we hit 13.3 knots on the gps barreling down and surfing that one!! the boat makes quite a rumbling noise at that speed and it's pretty amazing. you can really feel the excelleration of riding the wave when the wind gusts even more. the coast was pretty obscure as we got closer in the driving rain. the race committee didn't have a visual on me until we were about 3 miles from the finish. i've never been in the bay via boat so wasn't sure what exactly it looked like so tried to stay away far enough off the shore line and somewhat of a breaking surf. it was such a great feeling to hear the race committee tell me that i had finished!! i got into the bay and got the sails down and waited for a little for the rc to bring out dani in the dinghy and my finishers drink of choice. :) (pineapple smoothie) it was still pouring as they helped me drop anchor and get settled in.





Reflections:

i was really lucky in that i didn't have any major gear failures. all the preparations paid off 10 fold. the only casualties were my drifter ripping up, my bow navigation lights stopped working and i need to figure out how to stop the leak on the starboard scupper drain area. other than that my autopilot did perform well although i had to epoxy in a piece of the bracket to make it stronger and i think i'll need to get it refurbished as it makes some interesting clicking noises now when extending all the way in our out. the additional solar panels were awesome to have. i only ran my engine for a total of 2 1/2 hours the entire trip. that was using the autopilot, GPS, AIS, SSB (for check ins etc) and fridge the entire time. i would have had more of a constant charge if it wasn't so cloudy most of the time. all the days of the race start to blur together looking back over the last few weeks. there were definitely some frustrating moments when i knew i wasn't making progress and there was little wind. it really was mentally draining trying to keep a good attitude knowing i was falling so far behind everyone else stuck in the wind holes. i was really being way too hard on myself. without the sail mail working i had no weather information either so that added to the frustrations.



i did find solace in the beauty of the ocean and solitude, out away from all the normal things of everyday life it really does help bring things into perspective into what is most important in life. to think that the wind and waves exist everyday like that without much change makes you see that we create our own reality/perspective each day of what is important to us and how we interpret it all to make our own world around us, good or bad. we can, as the saying goes, adjust our sails to make lives better and can control at least that much to make ourselves happy.

Randy Leasure
s/v Tortuga W32 #207

Formatting and editing by Jay Bietz August 3, 2012, Images by Randy Leasure, Daniella Machado.

Note: "Wilson" is the volleyball that his friend David Levin gave to him. It is references to the movie "Cast Away" with Tom Hanks.

