



R Hallberg-Rassy

NEWSLETTER

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- English edition -

First impressions of the new HR 54
Hallberg-Rassy Fun Cup 17-19 August 2006
Open House weekend 25-27 August 2006
Improvements 2007

Blue Water Sailing with HR40 Regina

In the previous issue of the Hallberg-Rassy Newsletter, Leon Schulz told us about how the family's dreams of long distance cruising had developed. Following is the latest report, written en route between the Caribbean and Bermuda on their way back to Europe.

No signs of any vessel for several days. The contrast between this and all the colourful and joyous encounters in the Caribbean with yachting people from all over the world couldn't be bigger. The only things embracing us now are the darkness and the sound of the sea, barely lit by a star studded sky -the scenery is beyond words. The Southern Cross can be seen in our wake and our steady course takes us towards Polaris. The water temperature has dropped notably from a pleasant 27 degrees Celsius to an unsettling 23°. For the first time in six months I'm wearing a sweater on the night watch, which feels restricting and heavy.

After seventy-two hours of sailing, everything is back on track onboard. The seasickness, that usually haunts us during the first twenty-four hours, has passed. Even the never ending sleepiness, when our eyelids feel lead heavy and the brain is in slow motion mode, usually appearing on day two, has passed, and is now replaced by watches, meals, reading, sleep, or as now writing.

The passage from British Virgin Islands (BVI) to Bermuda takes approximately one week. A year ago such a time period at sea seemed astronomical, referring to the struggle we had trying to figure out how to cross the North Sea to Scotland, not to mention the Bay of Biscay with it's dreaded storms. Now, a week feels just right. It's easy to bunker fresh food for the whole distance and we have time to adjust and enjoy the leg before we reach our destination. Especially on these latitudes, where the steady trade winds turn weather forecasts into joyful reading and night watches become delightful moments of reading, astrology sessions, peaceful thinking or even catching a movie on DVD.

After 12.000 nautical miles, we have met many like-minded sailors, we have become better seamen and we have gained a slower pace of life.

It hasn't always been like this. I recall that grey and rainy day in June almost a year ago, just

after school was out for the summer - when we left our homeport in Sweden with butterflies in our stomach, heading west. We had sailed this first leg so many times earlier during our vacations, but how different it felt this time! Yet, the last year consisted of nothing more than individual legs, varying in length and content and we have found that if you keep on moving and don't turn back, you will actually get quite far!

At home in Sweden, people thought of us as different, daring and maybe a little irresponsible taking children with us on a trip like this. But the further we got, the more like-minded people we met, until we reached the Caribbean, where we met a whole crowd of blue water families with children between the ages 2 and 19 years old. We soon found that our lives were very much alike. We had all felt the agony concerning money, schools, boat, time schedules, family, responsibility and safety. We had all once started sailing in a small homeport, with a small boat and short vacations but with a big dream, and had finally found the courage and strength to realize the vision. Courage is something you really need to let go of everything well-known, your friends, your work and your every day life and invest most of your savings in a suitable boat. But then the great transformation starts, when security gets a new definition, when the kingdom of Sweden somehow seems far, far away up north and is replaced by courtesy flags from exciting new countries. We have sought medical care on a couple of small islands and found an impressive service, along with low fees and no waiting. Access to internet is found in most anchorages in the Caribbean and spare parts have been sent from Europe arriving within two days by courier to the small island of Tortola.

Feeling secure is something you can learn to do in many ways. Knowing you are present, having time on your hands, being able to reflect and associate, being confident with your own company and happy with your family. Take responsibility for how you spend your day, responsibility for school-work, which takes most of the day, by the way. Taking care of repairs and maintenance on your boat with its' endless to-do list, far away from the nearest workshop, yard or chandlery. Luckily, we have a great boat, an outstanding service through HR Parts and Accessories and many friends now, lending each other tools, advice and spare parts.



Karolina, Leon, Jessica and Jonathan Schulz on their bluewater cruise with their HR 40 "Regina"

What about the kids, how are they coping with all this? Well, they don't want to stop cruising at all - they could easily go on for another year. They are now fluent in English and have made new friends from all over the world, as we have made friends for life.

Trond from Norway, sailing with his wife Lesley and two children Camilla (10 years) and Colin (8 years) has during their time onboard flown home a couple of times in work matters. He tells us with laughter holding a rum-punch in his hand at an outdoor bar in Antigua, that every time he gets off the plane in Oslo, it feels like a whiplash. The chaos of land life hits him with tremendous force, everything is so stressed out. Everybody is rushing to and from; yet still don't seem satisfied with all they manage to achieve. They complain about what they miss and still have left to do. Trond continues: "If you ask somebody at home how they are doing, the reply is - 'Yes, well ok, I'm on a new project at work which takes all my time and attention and I have to pick up my kid from soccer practice and take him to a party

and the other one is waiting at a friends house ready to be picked up for her dance class, my wife's at the gym, so sorry can't talk, got to go - see you later!' "

Trond sips his drink and wonders if the nutmeg used to spice his red-orange coloured rum-punch is from Grenada or not. Then he says: "It's so nice to come back to the boat here in the Caribbean, the slow down is so refreshing and I have, nevertheless, all the necessary time to do whatever I need to onboard. When you ask people around here how they are doing, you get the answer: " 'Hey, I'm fine - I'm taking it eeeasy man!' "

The greatest benefit from this trip will be the ability to switch to something called "Island Time". You don't get annoyed if the bus is late or if the customs have closed the office for the day.

We have also experienced that you can achieve much more than you could ever imagine. Even huge obstacles such as an ocean, can be overcome by taking one step at a time and using common sense. We've become less frightened when it comes to changes and will therefore, after

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completing this cruise, not hesitate when new exiting challenges come our way, whatever they might be.

Secure in knowing all is changeable...

Greetings from 25 10.4N 64 46.4W
S/Y Regina

www.reginasailing.com



The author of this story, Leon Schulz, on his HR 40 in the Caribbean



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