

good fresh water in every port as part of the marina fees (except Gibraltar). We've used chemicals from time to time to sterilize the tanks, but water has never been an issue and bottled water is really inexpensive. We anticipate things to be different when we get to Greece.

ON: How much repair and maintenance work do you do yourself?

B&C: Other than complicated mechanical or electrical problems, we do most of the work ourselves. The biggest issues we face are understanding how the various systems work and interact with each other. It's also learning how to get access to the various locations where problems occur. For instance, we've been experiencing recurring problems with our hot water hoses splitting at the connection points. Finding the actual location of the split is a challenge, then gaining access, at least in one instance, meant cutting through the floor under the stove. Complicated problems such as failing battery chargers has required us to hire experts in that field.

We've shopped around for quotes for annual maintenance, cleaning, waxing, polishing, antifouling, replacing zincs, etc. So far, we've managed to find affordable prices, and the prices sure vary from place to place.

ON: What are the most important skills you have learned while voyaging?

B&C: Well, for Barb, it was finding ways to cope with homesickness — being away from my family and friends, handling adverse conditions at sea, and

even how to drive *Big Sky* in and out of a marina during rough weather. For Con, it was learning to handle a boat bigger than he'd ever sailed in his life, and the complex mechanical, electrical and electronic equipment on the boat. We have learned to overcome language difficulties and can now communicate in every language with a smile and a gesture. We've gained a wonderful skill "listening." So often people think they don't know the language so they close their ears and don't hear the words. We're not intimidated by language and respond to whomever sometimes using five or six different languages in one sentence! But most importantly, we communicate.

ON: What are your future voyaging plans?

B&C: We plan to continue sailing for as long as we're having fun doing it. If we wake up one day and feel like it's over, then we make a new plan. We'll leave Tunisia for Malta in a few weeks. I'll fly home from there for a month to be with our youngest daughter and her husband for the arrival of their first baby. Con will carry on to Corfu with his brother and sister-in-law, then our daughter and her eight-month old grandson will join Con in Corfu for a few weeks. For the summer and fall, we'll explore the Adriatic Sea (Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, east coast of Italy) then look for a warm spot for the winter, like maybe Crete or Marmaris, Turkey. In 2010, we're thinking about exploring the Black Sea, then transiting the Suez Canal and heading into the Indian Ocean. In general, we'll see where the wind blows us. ■

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