



## The Cost of Freedom

by Neville J. Hockley

I've got five toes on each foot, so why is it always, and I'm not exaggerating here, ALWAYS the little fella on the end that gets the abuse? Just this morning I clipped him on a solid stainless steel deck cleat, mid-stride, during a full leg swing. Not wanting to disturb Catherine who was fast asleep down below, I was forced to weather the excruciating pain in complete silence - bowed over at the waist, clutching the lifelines with both hands, doing a little one-legged hop and enthusiastically mouthing profanities through clenched teeth.

As the last wave of pain diminished and after exhausting my pool of the most offensive phrases imaginable, I peered down at my toe, certain that the little guy would be jutting out at an unpleasant angle - broken, or at the very least dislocated. But there he was, in perfect shape, defiantly resilient.



Now either I have an incredibly low threshold for pain or bionic toes, whatever, but thankfully, after all the drama, there was not a single sign of trauma. Yesterday, however, Catherine wasn't as fortunate and after clipping her little piggy on the top of a winch, left a trail of blood leading from the cockpit, down the companionway steps and into the cabin where I found her wrapping the injury in about 10 sheets of kitchen towel. Luckily though, there was no damage to the winch (Catherine's toe will also survive).

Now I know that some readers, certainly of the nautical variety, are probably shaking their heads slowly, tutting and thinking, "that's why you should wear deck shoes on a sailboat." While wearing deck shoes is certainly a sensible idea and would spare the little guy from further assault, clothes and cruising don't really work for us. I'm not suggesting that we frolic around on the deck naked, although on special occasions..., but we do generally try and wear as little as possible.

I have two pairs of cruising shorts: "day surf shorts" and "soft evening shorts." Occasionally I like to mix things up and just wear a sarong - don't ask. Catherine has simply downsized her cruising wardrobe to two sets of pajamas, one for sleeping and the other for lounging around during daylight hours. As we don't have a washer/dryer on board, just a bucket, why complicate things with a pile of dirty laundry? After all, it's not like unexpected guests could suddenly show up unannounced; we haven't seen another boat out here for over four days. No, it's all about freedom, the absence of restriction. That's what makes this whole cruising experience so liberating.

Let me ask you this - have you ever been on a warm deserted beach, perhaps on vacation, and just had an uncontrollable urge to strip down to your birthday suit and run around as naked and free as the day you were born? It feels great right? (If you haven't tried this I strongly recommend that you do.) Well that's

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sort of how cruising feels to me and if my little toe has to occasionally take a beating for me to keep that feeling alive, than that's a small price I'm willing to pay. †



ocean to the sky I saw a shooting star. Can you believe I actually ran out of wishes?

We approached Coos Bay entrance an hour before sunrise and waited as patiently as possible for the sun to give us enough light to approach the bar. Gale force warnings were in effect for that afternoon so we were anxious to get into port before the seas picked up again. A smooth navigation through the bar showed us to a deserted, sea-worn dock which we gratefully tied ourselves to. After having a quick breakfast, we settled in for some much needed sleep. When we woke, we learned that our quiet dock came alive with families who passed their Sundays fishing and crabbing. Every inch of the dock was taken with children playing and parents instructed on how to release undersized crab. It was a sharp contrast to the desolate dock we had pulled along side of only hours before.

Having spent some time at sea and in ports I've come to learn a few things:

1. Instant coffee has several merits such as constancy, ease of preparation, and somehow just tastes better when miles from shore.

2. Even public showers seem private when you live on a boat with three other people.

3. My initial description of our room would have been 'cozy.' Now I have hit my head too many times for this to hold true.

4. No matter where I am on the map, waking up beside my love is home.

## Dreaming of California

by Clara Oakes

They talk about the 'art and science' of sailing. But when the sun comes out, the seas die down and the wind is at your back, it is nothing less than magic.

We had the true pleasure of sailing south for 85 nautical miles beginning with a sunrise that faded to starlit skies in a balanced northeast breeze. This was our first night sail with completely clear skies and the stars were brilliant. Every time my eyes passed from the

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