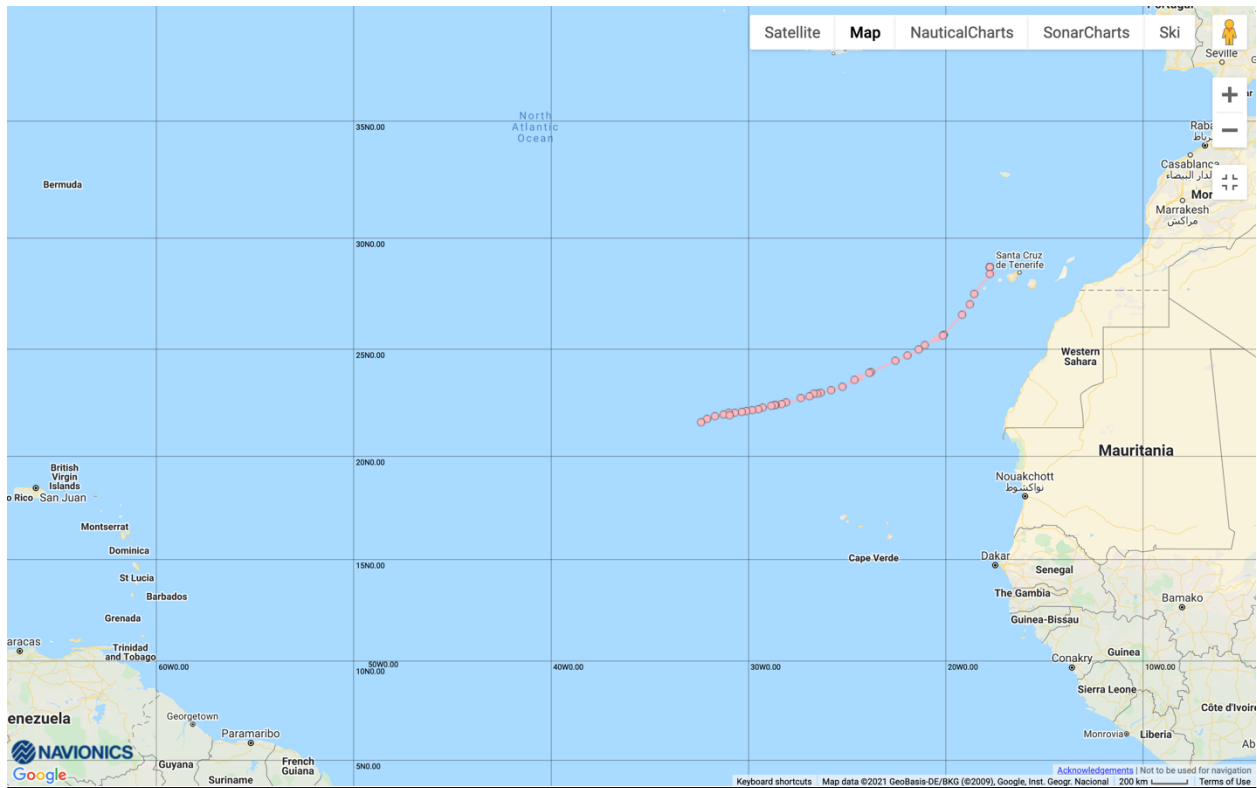


SHIP'S LOG: SV AT FIRST SIGHT TRANSATLANTIC PASSAGE SITREP #1, 22 April 2021

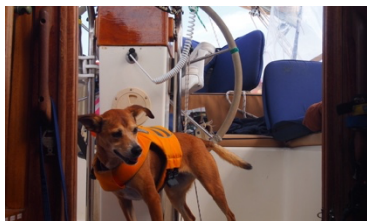


AT FIRST SIGHT's track from departure on April 14 to April 22, 2021. Generally speaking, when crossing the Atlantic Ocean under sail from Europe to the Americas, you have to sail south before sailing west in order to pick up reliable Trade Winds. We picked up steady Trades rather early, which allowed us to cut west sooner than we had anticipated, shaving at least a day off our estimated transit time. The downside is there is a point of no return and you're committed to making the entire Atlantic crossing, because you'll be too far downwind to make it back to Africa or even the Cape Verde Islands.

Ahoy family and friends. Greetings from Vicki, Ignacio, and David (and Saylor, too), from SV AT FIRST SIGHT, in the mid-Atlantic Ocean, roughly N21°/W34°, riding the Trade Winds from the Canary Islands to the Lesser Antilles. We're now on day 8 of this ~2,800nm passage, with ~1,150nm under the keel and ~1650nm to our destination, Rodney Bay, St. Lucia, where we expect to make landfall on the morning of May 3. Our "half-way there" celebration is just around the corner.



Setting sail from Santa Cruz de La Palma, April 14.



Saylor surfing/sliding across the cockpit. She seems to take it all in stride.

First of all, we are all doing well and in great spirits. We've had a great ride thus far, with favorable wind and seas, and with only a few periods of an annoying and uncomfortable cross swell that has led to a few things flying around, like a plate of pasta and sauce, a quiche in the oven, a pot of lentil soup, and a cup of coffee here and there. Perhaps Saylor likes the cross-swell least of all, and you can see the anxiety in her eyes as she slides helplessly athwartship in the cockpit, her nails and paws failing to gain traction with the nonskid deck material.



Setting up for downwind sailing.

AFS was built for ocean passages, and she's performed brilliantly on this one, despite her 33 years. Thus far, we've been under canvas for all but 3 hours of our journey, running almost dead downwind or on a deep broad reach most of the time, averaging 7kts SOG thus far, but seeing bursts of 8, 9, and, occasionally

even 10kts over the water. In fact, our favorite sail combination has been with 2 headsails, one poled out to either side and held out with the spinnaker pole on one side and the main boom on the other. This is called wing-on-wing (or sometimes a *twizzle rig*) in English, and the Spanish call it *orejas de burro* (donkey ears). And since we're a ketch rig, we've been using the mizzensail at times to fine tune our steerage way.



Two examples of a twizzle rig on *AFS*, using a spinnaker pole and the boom to pole out headsails.

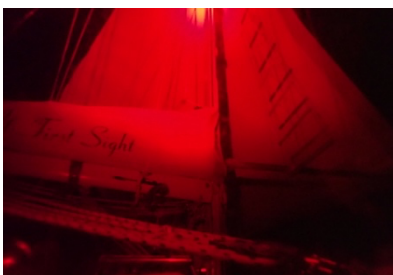
It wouldn't be a sailboat at sea without having to make a few expedient repairs. Thus far we've fixed the autopilot hydraulic ram, the boom vang gooseneck hinge pin, a freshwater plumbing leak, mended a sail, and hastily replaced a broken sheet that blew out during a wind gust. Actually, because of our robust set of spares on board, we think all these repairs may suffice as permanent.



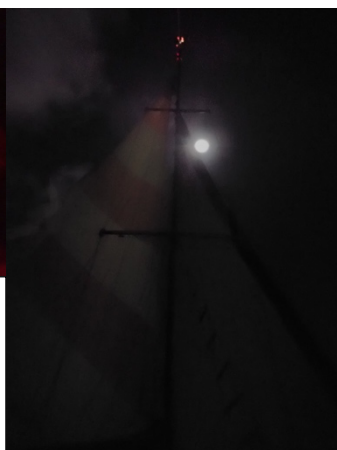
Morale is high, in large part, due to the great meals Vicki has prepared and served daily, which would be fine fare if even prepared in a well-equipped kitchen ashore. We're not sure how's she's done it *rockin' and rollin'* as it seems we've done – especially as mealtimes approach. For example, thus far we've had slab quiche, a gourmet beet and goat cheese salad, Salisbury style (vegan) steaks with *AFS*



house-made mushroom gravy, teriyaki tuna steaks, Canary Island style *patatas arrugadas*, fresh-baked bread and brownies, to name just a few of our daily culinary delights.



Dark. Lonely. Vigilant. Peaceful. Tense. Inspiring. These words all partially describe the experience of standing night watches alone. We appreciated having Ignacio aboard to share them with. More sleep!



Vicki and I appreciated having Ignacio Peñuelas aboard. First and foremost, he's fine company. But beyond that, he qualified as a watch stander on our third night underway, which means we get more sleep. In addition, a third set of hands makes sail changes faster and easier. His primary duty though, being a Peñuelas, is our subject matter expert on fishing. We've been trolling two lures almost every day, but we've been shut out to date.

However, we're entering warmer waters now (>75°F), where tuna and Mahi-mahi like to roam, so we are optimistic we'll soon be sampling sashimi on the fantail and having fresh fish for dinner.

In addition to a paucity of fish, we've seen relatively few other marine creatures, except for a few pods of hyper-energetic dolphin that joined us several days in a row, either to play in our bow waves, or to tease Saylor, we're not sure which. Perhaps both. We passed by one large sea turtle sunning itself on the surface, and we've seen a handful of seagulls and similar sea birds, some barely bigger than a common chickadee. How they get so far from shore is mind boggling.



This pod of dolphin joined us around sunset 3 nights in a row. Fast friends with Saylor, perhaps?

And to all of our amusement, Ignacio knows someone who knows someone who is an *influencer* on Instagram in the Philippines, and they have tagged Ignacio's account, making the *influencer's* followers followers of Ignacio, too. Ignacio's brother, Juanito, has been posting Ignacio's texts to Ignacio's Instagram, which according to reports from his brother is "smoking" with hits from around the world.

Well, that it for this update. We can only hope the second half of our passage goes as well as the first half. Stay tuned...



Even with too many clouds for a *green flash*, sunsets at sea are almost always spectacular.