

Every Sailor is a story teller...

Here's a couple, that always makes me smile.

The Captain is always in command:

We were heading down the Potomac River to the Chesapeake Bay and beyond. We were off Currioman Island on a beam reach, "Nicely for making way" (... Crosby, Stills & Nash). It's one of those weird morning weather days: hot, heavily overcast, but with a steady 5-knot wind. It's almost spooky and quiet. My sons (able-bodied sailors) were lounging on the foredeck chattering about whatever.

Now, there are acoustic situations where sound travels and focuses on a single point. If you visit the US Capital Dome, there is a spot where you can whisper and someone all the way on the other side of the dome can hear you clearly. Sometimes these acoustic anomalies can occur on a boat, especially when the sails are full and the wind is quiet.

So, as I steered the boat, I heard every word the boys were saying on the foredeck.

Jeff says, "Gee, Mark, *CAPRICA* is in perfect balance; we are heeled over, sails are full, there is no sound of clanking or fluffing. This is perfect sailing!"

Marks sighs, "Yeah..... I guess Dad fell asleep at the helm again. I'll go back and wake him up."



Navigation is knowing where you are and where we're you are going:

We are somewhere about 150 miles off the coast of Carolinas. It's been five days of sailing, from Marsh Harbour, heading due north to Diamond Shoals light.

Other than a few squalls, the weather has been kind. But the seas haven't. Short crested waves over 6-feet made life aboard difficult. Standing upright for more than 30 seconds was a challenge.

Our watch schedule was a joke. Whoever stayed up late and got sleepy, meant the other guy got woken to man the watch. You can imagine, we're tired and cranky.

So, the Captain (that's me) made a command decision, and announced to his crew:

"I found an jar of spaghetti sauce, some noodles, and some green stuff and an onion we can call a salad. We will eat, we will drop the sails and heave-to, we will light up *CAPRICA* with every nav-light, we will fly the radar reflectors, and you my crew, will find a nook somewhere in *CAPRICA*, and you will sleep soundly. We all need a rest!"

The Captain (that's still me) woke up before dawn and stumbled out on deck to check the compass. All was well; the course still holds! I turned on our GPS and it confirmed that we are heading north at 2.2 knots. Thank you, Gulf Stream.

But..... as I sat in the cockpit in a brain-dead stupor, I noticed, "Why is it getting brighter on the port side of the boat?" I know we had just sailed through the Bermuda Triangle, but "What the hell, doesn't the sun rise in the east?"

A point of interest: our compass is a bulkhead glass globe that shows the full compass card. You see the full 360-degrees. For five days, we looked at the compass card, and it always showed a N-S on the lubber line.

This called for another trip down the cabin to find the back-up GPS that resides in a metal ammo can, and after an arduous boot-up sequence, it confirmed that we were heading north, and making good time!

And then, two brain cells finally rubbed together, and I realized that, during the night, *CAPRICA* had turned herself around, and we were being pushed by the Gulf Stream stern first!! I was so easy for me to see the compass card as N-S instead of S-N.

To borrow a line from Jimmy Buffett, "**Good golly Miss Molly, which way do I steer?**"

