

Headlines

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Pop Quiz at Sea

For N62 Lone Wolf, the correct choice is easier said than done

By Jeff Merrill

Continuing with my schooling analogy regarding last month's report on the preparations of Nordhavn 62 *Lone Wolf's* [Pacific passage](#), I have an update to share.

On Saturday, April 3rd the crew of *Lone Wolf* set sail from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico to cross the Pacific.

We all remember that school day feeling of alarm when we showed up in class and the teacher surprised us with a Pop Quiz...sometimes when you are at sea you get a similar sensation when something doesn't seem right or actually goes wrong...

Easter Sunday I got a call from the owner, Ned, who dialed my cell phone from the on board satellite phone. Ned related that the sea chest was slowly filling up with air and that there was some concern aboard as this had never happened before. I told him that it is actually not completely uncommon and speculated that frothy seas were injecting churned up air bubbles into the sea chest.



The sea chest draws from two intake through hulls and then feeds raw water cooling to several key systems including the air conditioning, generator, wing engine, water maker, etc. The take off valves mounted on the sides of the sea chest are purposely positioned low in case air does enter, but ideally it remains full of water to keep the systems cool. Ned put me in touch with his captain, Mike, and we discussed how they could loosen the lid of the sea chest to "burp" out the air.

The thought of turning around to Mexico was discussed, but I encouraged them to press on and offered some solutions to make it easier to release trapped air once they were safely in port and could more easily effect a retrofit.

The next day I called *Lone Wolf* to see how things were going. All was well on board and they were cruising smoothly in calm seas. Here they were trekking westward and I had passed them in the air (on vacation in Kauai with family for spring break) and was offering encouragement and advice from the comfort of my beach chair with my toes in the sand.

Two days later I got a call from Ned's original captain, Oleg Korbyn (who could not make the Pacific trip) and Oleg informed me that the generator had "smoked" and both inverters were down. I called former Nordhavn 62 project manager Trever Smith and gave him *Lone*

Wolf's Iridium sat phone number. Trever talked to the crew, now roughly 400 miles from Mexico and the consensus was that though they could keep batteries up using the engine alternators by paralleling the battery banks it would probably be wiser to turn around for Mexico than to continue for 2,000 or so more miles with no AC (alternating current). Additional calls to Melt Emms from Raven Marine Services in BC and Bob Senter (aka Lugger Bob) from Alaska Diesel in Seattle confirmed that an at sea fix was not reasonable.

The school of hard knocks had sprung a Pop Quiz on *Lone Wolf* and the correct answer was to prudently retreat and return to civilization in Mexico to fix the generator. I spoke to Ned a couple of days later and *Lone Wolf* made it back safely to Puerto Vallarta and promised to set sail again with equal enthusiasm once they figured out the problem.



It is always a bit discouraging to alter your plans, but it is often times the best decision. Just chalk it up to staying after school to get your homework done in study hall. The only “casualty” in this whole experience was some fresh salmon and other food products that were not longer cooled as the refrigeration went down without AC power.

The crew had the generator fixed and set back out to sea on Wednesday April 14th. The whole first attempt and redoubled second effort are captured in Ned’s *Lone Wolf* [blog](#) in more detail, please click on this link to see how they are doing (updated when communications are playing nicely).

As this article is being finished we have just heard that the Nordhavn 64 *Oso Blanco* has safely arrived in the Marquesas. I’m sure we will soon also learn of the progress from two other [Nordhavns doing the Pacific Puddle Jump](#), Nordhavn 46 *Emily Grace* and Nordhavn 64 *Mystery Ship*.

You can track *Lone Wolf's* position by clicking [here](#).

Ned has taken this minor set back with grace and humor, the crew is singing to the birds, and my favorite inspirational blog quote comes from Robert the Bruce: “If at first you don’t succeed, try try again.”

Photos courtesy of Ned Lambton



Jeff Merrill is passionate about the Nordhavn 62 and loves riding in her aft pilothouse while underway. Jeff has sold several new and used Nordhavn 62s and has hundreds of miles at sea aboard them.

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