



July 12, Ruden Island, Germany

Cruiser Richard Bost of course celebrated our Mid-Summer Boating Fest, and in style. He cruised to the small island off Germany's coast with a group of other cruisers bound for Poland.

BY DANIEL HARDING JR.

# ELECTRONICS

## The Principal and the Crossing Guard

A FORMER EDUCATOR USED CAREFUL PLANNING TO FIND A HELM SETUP WITHIN HIS BUDGET FOR A TRANSATLANTIC CRUISE TO THE BALTICS AND BEYOND ON HIS **KADEY-KROGEN 42**.



Richard Bost dreamed of cruising far and wide; careful electronics planning lets him do that safely.

In life, most people fall into two categories. On one side you have dreamers, those who spend decades wondering what it would be like to sail off into the sunset. Then there are the doers, those that leave excuses on the dock and seek out their next adventure. Richard Bost falls smack dab in the center of life's Venn diagram. For decades he devoured magazines and books about long-distance cruising, waiting for his chance to chase the sunset.

Those dreams sustained him as he toiled and saved, working as a meteorologist, then a teacher and principal in a rough-and-tumble school in the Bronx. After dealing with what he calls, "year after year of the same recurring issues," he decided it was time to go to sea. But he wasn't looking to do the standard Caribbean voyage. No, Bost's sights were set on Northern Europe.

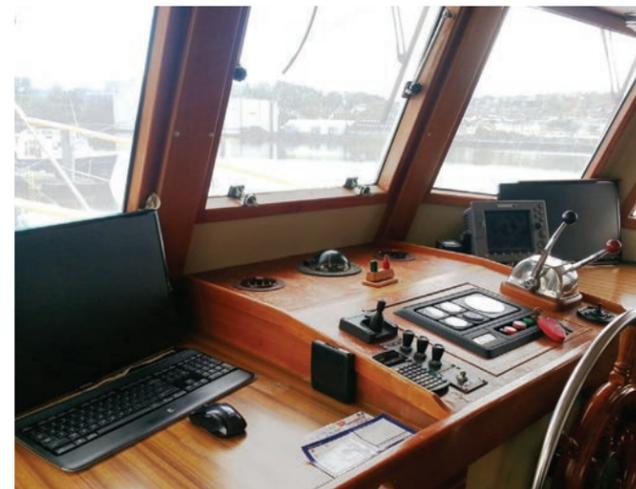
It took him seven years of searching for the right boat, one that would allow him to live aboard and handle large seas in comfort; he ultimately chose a 1980 Kadey-Krogen 42. After a couple years of coastal cruising, Bost was ready to head for Europe. His helm was not.

A voracious reader and thorough researcher, he knew early that his budget wouldn't allow him to purchase the latest multi-

function displays used by many of his fellow Kadey-Krogen owners.

"I made the decision to go with a dedicated computer system with a solid-state drive that ran almost all the boat's electronics. This would allow me to use Coastal Explorer for my charts, which had great reviews and ratings and it would integrate my AIS and other electronics into the one navigation program," Bost says. "I got my computer from Island Time PC in Florida, who custom-built a machine for me. Then I got 24-inch Samsung LCD monitors that would run on 12-volt DC; they've been wonderful. My computer is 12-volt DC, too. I wanted to migrate everything I could to a 12-volt system."

To further mitigate costs, Bost installed the computer monitors into the helm himself, something in which he takes considerable pride—and rightfully so. "I was in 20-plus-foot seas at one point



In order to avoid distractions and information overload while cruising, Bost opted for a minimalist setup, leaving plenty of space for paper charts.

and they didn't move around inside the helm at all."

Another reason for choosing Coastal Explorer was that it accepts C-MAP charts from Jeppesen, which Bost claims were the most affordable way to get worldwide coverage. "I got charts of all of Western Europe for \$200. Other providers might only give you Ireland for \$200 or England for \$200."

Bost achieved redundancy via a Navionics app on his tablet. Besides verifying that what he was seeing on C-MAP was correct, he found the brighter colors employed by Navionics to be especially helpful as fatigue and sleep deprivation took their toll during his ocean crossing.

Bost realized that he would need more than charts to cross the Atlantic in comfort, so he purchased and registered an EPIRB from ACR Electronics and invested in a Digital Yacht AIS transponder. He thought, briefly, about just getting the receiver to save some money but hindsight proved that the transceiver was worth its weight in gold on his ocean crossing.

"The number-one thing I think people should have is a transceiver," he says. "The fact is that most people who only get a receiver to save money really get a false sense of security because the bigger issue isn't you seeing another boat, it's another boat seeing you and not running you down."

Bost went on to explain that prior to his cruise to Europe, during overnight shifts when he only had a receiver he felt as if most boats he came across were on a collision course with him. After installing a transceiver he noticed, "I wasn't always the one who had to change course anymore; nearly every vessel I came across said 'I'd rather not mess with this little boat,' and their course changed before they got within 5 miles of me." Of course, having AIS is no excuse for negligent navigating; Bost (like all boaters should) was always prepared to yield to the larger vessels he encountered.

This became especially important after Bost reached the Azores, which is where his wife—his only crew member—hopped on a plane for home in order to return to work. On subsequent night shifts he knew his AIS would pick up nearby ships and alert them to his presence. It continued to be useful while cruising off the coast of Ireland, because the European Union requires all fishing and commercial vessels to be equipped with AIS. "When I got to Ireland and started

Follow Richard Bost's journey on his blog [dauntlessatsea.wordpress.com](http://dauntlessatsea.wordpress.com)

to talk to the fisherman there, they almost all agreed that the transceiver had changed their lives for the better too," he says.

Another piece of equipment that gave Bost the boost of confidence needed to make the crossing from the Azores to Ireland solo was his 2006 Raymarine radar. It wasn't just because his radar was reliable that gave him peace of mind, but because he was intimately familiar with that system thanks to persistent practice.

"I'm a big believer, and maybe this is because of my weather background, but to understand your instruments you have to use them all the time. So, whenever my engines turn on, my radar goes on," says Bost. "When the weather is perfect and I can see everything, I want to see how things show up on my radar. This way when it's foggy or nighttime I'll have a sense of, 'Oh that's a wave, and that's a small boat.'"

This practice also allowed him to fine-tune his radar alarm to his particular liking. During a calm start to his crossing he ran with his alarm on and it was giving off nearly ten false alarms a day. He made the conscious decision that every time he spotted a ship he would turn the gain way down until the disturbance disappeared and all that was left was the ship. This practice paid off; during the much rougher passage from the Azores he only had only one false alarm.

While radar and AIS gave him peace of mind, it was his handheld DeLorme InReach SE that Bost says saved his sanity. Forgoing on-board satellite communications, again to cut costs, it was the InReach that kept him in touch with the real world, and only at a time of his choosing. After spending decades preparing for this trip Bost didn't want to spoil his time at sea by talking to those he purposely left back on land. "When everything goes to hell I don't want people calling me to ask if I'm OK. I'd rather lick my wounds in privacy like a cat," says Bost laughing. "If we really needed advice on something I had the \$60 unlimited texting plan so we could connect with a few people."

Among those people were meteorologist friends that would send him the lat/lon of high- and low-pressure systems and the system's pressure. From there he could draw a map and know what was coming his way. He also signed up for OCENS SpotCAST on his InReach. That system sends a prewritten text with your position to a service that returns a basic forecast with wind, wave, and precipitation predictions.

At the time of this writing, Bost has returned to Ireland—where he'll leave *Dauntless* for the winter—after cruising the Baltics. This near-arctic adventure would be enough to satisfy most people's wanderlust, but not so for Bost. His saloon bookshelf and nightstand are filled with dog-eared books with pictures of the South Pacific on the covers. "Who knows, maybe I'll teach English to kids in Korea when I get there," says Bost with a casual and sincere emphasis on the word *when*. One thing is certain, with enough planning and the right electronics, nothing will keep this dreamer from becoming a doer. □

### Sky's the Limit

We asked Bost a pointed question: *If money were no object, what piece of electronics gear would you spring for?*

After a long, uncharacteristic pause, Bost replied: "I don't mean to sound egotistical but I think what I have now works for me. I mean, a year ago I definitely would have added full satellite-communications capability, but the middle of the ocean can be a peaceful place without e-mail. I guess I'd get new radar. Though mine is reliable, I'd probably replace my nine-year-old model with a high-definition version."

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