

Journal entry 1

Wow, How do I recap the past year? A great challenge. I tried once but the letter turned into a book, which I will type and make available. It is a good way for me to catch up people who have missed my newsletters as they have come. But let me see if I can be less dramatic and not go back to sea. A year ago I was returning from South America and the lee and windward islands, meeting my son for 10 days. I had just gotten back into a routine working with Aqua Action. My goodness. The whole refit, delamination, day after day of revealing deeper damage and more rebuilding of the hull. Relationships. All the incredible investment of people there to help me get through the project. My brother and Scot, Lynn and Jack my saviors and gurus to follow. Brad and all at budget, then the crew and us at bottoms up and friends. Morgan. Phil. Amazing. Peter's stepping in at the end and giving such needed hands, insisting and providing the SSB. The final straw came when I found at the very last minute that no insurance company handles solo sailors. You are always sailing essentially illegally without proper watches. So I was devastated but regrouped and figured I would just buckle down and work in New England, get the money up to buy Inspired Insanity off and then go. But a visionary who saw my vision, lent me the money with loose strings to allow me to keep on target timing.. Amazing. Off I go into the wild blue yonder. 15 days to Newport. 2 major gales, one a fierce lightning storm I thought was to take me home. I lost the SSB early, the last transmission I heard being a warning from Dave. A huge front was before me and at my boat's hull speed, I would have to sail through it. No running would avail. So I did. Wild night. Torrents of rain. Songs erupted. I lost the prop. It somehow spun off the shaft. I tried 3 times to replace it with the old one, going overboard, tethering everything, but could not situate the keyway in the movement of the sea. Only a lone shark visited me and a few petrels over this trip. The final night of my trip was this massive front and lightning storm system. Fronts of lightning passed over me, lightning dancing across them and striking and dancing more. I truly thought I would die. The gale lasted in total the next day. It calmed for the early afternoon to pick up again around 3pm. I was approaching my first foreign shore with no engine in a gale. The CG were marvelous and guided me in. The next day I headed north in the Narragansett bay only to be caught again in a wild gale, making the harbor in Bristol a nightmare and great challenge. I had to pick up a mooring or anchor without the engine, in squalling shifting winds, screaming at 25 kn +. I had the mooring in my hands 2 times only to break the flag and have to drop it. Finally I tried anchoring. Exhausted and angry at circumstance, mother nature god and whoever else I could think of. I could be basking in my little secret harbor, working and enjoying weekend sails. Why was I doing this? Finally I anchored way out where the winds were steady and just put out 250' of rhode. **MIRACULOUS MEETINGS. PHIL ROBINSONS BROTHER JUST HAPPENED TO LIVE AROUND THE CORNER SO I WAS ESCORTED TO A BATH AND WARM BED FOR THE NIGHT. MIRACLES CONTINUED AS I CANVASED THE TOWN WITH RABBI'S GOOD NAME AND CD'S IN HAND.** Folk sessions arose, gigs consistently. Great friends, beyond my understanding. Repairs begun, I headed home for my daughter's wedding party. Wonderful time. Ptarmigan had actually been married over a month before and was having a party when I could be there. We had received the news that she was due with child while I was visiting. Amazing. I adjusted to the idea of being Noni. Ptarmigan did lose her child in the fourth month but she recovered well. I had only to promise I would come home for a visit. Keel and I had great jams. We all played together at Cafe Lenas and grand times. Back to Bristol. Frustrated attempts to get repairs done, but after a false start, I finally left Bristol RI on July 18th for Ireland. 4

days of fog and no winds left me only 200 miles out. The radio propagation never improved and I had to face that it was not working. It had not been fixed. But I would not turn back again though I had no way to get accurate weather or report my progress without it. The lack of accurate weather would play a huge role in the challenges of my trip and in the end, the fantastic gifts I gained. I was to hit my first 9 force gale 250 miles off new foundland. 2 days of gales culminating in 25 ft sea + and 45 kn. steady winds. In the night, I was to lose the rudder and trim tab to the steering vane, which was the other backhanded gift I was to receive. I decided that I could somehow make myself steer the boat for the next 2100 miles. If prisoners can survive weeks of trains, heading to certain torture and Death, I could sit and endure 3 weeks of sitting in one place steering to come to experience my dreams. But it was to be an endurance challenge beyond my imagination that would teach me the meaning of true mediation. All life where time had to stop being relevant. Time was my enemy. I would panic as the next storm would appear on the horizon. At one point 10 straight days of gale force winds rolled over me, enduring 1 8 force and 1 9 force in that 10 days. The last one, only 300 miles from Ireland, 3 1/2 weeks out, 2 weeks without sleep. The storm was to track more ~NE and at the last moment it turned due east driving directly over me. But that was to be the last gale of this journey. The sun finally came out after 10 days of gale and 2 1/2 weeks without sunshine. I had only had 2 days of sun except on sunny galeing day. But as it would be, once the sun came out, the wind died and stayed died. Ireland would enjoy 1 1/2 weeks of sunshine and no rain. but it meant for me that I just couldn't get to land. finally i started running the engine. i had to find fuel off shore which in turn clogged my small engine systems. But after hours of cleaning the systems, i managed to get off Cape Clear on the SW coast of Ireland before i was thwarted and finally rescued and brought the last 5 miles into harbor in Baltimore. Teh dolphins and seagulls, petrels, saved my psyche. I had learned to meditate inadvertently, not realizing it, and that is how i managed not to sleep. But the dynamic moment when i first smelled earth. i smelled ireland longbefore i would step on her ground. The visions from movies and such came alive in the rich earthy smells. Teh enchanting harbor of Baltimore welcomed me. so did her poepl. they fed me, gave me showers and even did a few interviews on radio and such. having come in on the lifeboat.. i would recover there for 1 week, miracles happening everyday. a chance meeting and first hug in ireland from ~liam Niesen. gorgeous drives through the country for my birthday from a new firiend. great music and poets. poetry written for me. Off to Kinsale, my oariginal point of call. Gorgeous. i arrived during the national dragon boat raes. specatcular racing. moare new friends. an opportunity to sail to portugal from spain. an introduction to the male single population, charming beyond words. teh magic of a leprechaun on their tongue to sway a lonesome, vulnerable sailor. but all to learning and growing. Once returned from `Portugal, i buckled down to repairs and to get ready to go around Ireland but i was thwarted again by the engine work. sthe seawater pump had been installed wroong and was ruined, needing rebuild again. it would be a month and 500\$ to sort it out. I had lost my window to sail ireland, and i was not ready to leave her music and people. so now to settle in for the winter, gigs are starting to fall into place. band players arrising. reapiers at a hult til march. news papers and radio keep an eye on me and i continue to meet the most amazing beautiful people . i continue to grow in mediationa dn joy, heath every day. even my hands are miraculously healed. Great opportunitises are in the air. life is grand. i just returned on tues from donegal. What an amazing time in Donegal. i had met Brandan while he was preapring to be in

a flotilla for greenpeace regarding nuclear waste transported in the irish sea. he offered a respite and finally i was to go. Brendan was a perfect host. We shared deep meditation and such dynamic walks and countryside, splendid verses and stories, I also saw the other side of his world. Begrudgery, politics, doing business and having so many material attachments and their energy draw. i was driven around in a 1960 mercedes 190SL convertible through the hills of donegal. sunsets over hills reflected in stillest of still lakes and harbors. The last morning i was there he took me to Trumour Beach. oh my god, Sand shore stretching the visible shore, mountains at the south, sand dunes covered in grass to north. it had been a heavy frost and the sun was melting the frost on the tall grasses. as i look to the sun, the glistening of the droplets hanging off the tall grass stalks with sheep wandering through, the mist rising off the old river bed behind, covered with grasses. A high pitched winnie breaks the silence and on the distant hill came barreling a horse throwing its head prancing through the gully down the bed to the fence. the cattle running away from the fence. the horse in glory prancing about. to settle down eating the grasses, a rich green. the grass stays rich dark green all year. only the trees lose their leaves. the earth doesn't freeze. The sun was warm and the effort to walk the dunes down to the sea made us strip off layers of coats and scarves. Ahead of me the shore line. sand for 100yards to the sea at this lower tide. gentle waves gently rolling onto the sand. the stones as i step onto the beach are smooth and round worn by the sea at high tide, red, black green and white stones. i collected a few. Mesmerized by the sea, the islands in the distance, the gentle sounds of her lapping to the shore drew me out. i could have stripped my clothes and walked right out to bath in her, touch the water if i were alone. i would have, i know. i was lost at the calling, the energy drawing me farther out out out to step slower and slower. finally i stopped aware of Brendan on the shore and caught him with camera in hand. But not even that could break the magic. i long for the peace there, but truly had it in that moment and it was deep the peace and sense of presence. the world all was naught. just that moment and it was calling me on to it. Stay, stay here she says, Stay here donna. don't leave. I knew that i didn't have to leave that space in my being, but i did have to leave the beach to make my bus. Brendan took a few more really nice photos of our shadows in the sand. the sun though it had risen only at 10am, by 12 noon, it was low, so low that our shadows stretched long before us on the sand. I would return. We gathered the stones and were in a trot back to the car. The time was magic. Though Brendan commented on how rarely he treats himself to this walk, i felt so easy there. no pressure. no expectation. just pleasure and joy welling up. pure joy welling up. As we retreated to the car, the sun continued to dance on the meadows and in the glistening grasses. the horse prancing about across the field. The entire weekend had been filled with these walks through forests, along the sea and through the countryside. long walks. He was working through his present relationship and past ones. I was just pondering and storing up for myself a sense of what really gives me joy. What is possible in relating to another person. We had ate together, i cooked meals and entwined our lives for those days i was there. He had just received a quarter of a deer as a gift and miraculously i showed up very able and pleased to prepare it in so many ways. stew, jerky, steaks, roasts. great to be in the kitchen. plus i was selling myself to a job if i want it. The sessions were incredible and i have found a soul mate in a flute player, Danielle. she is amazing and i hope i can include her in gigs to come. glory. the trip back even held gorgeous sunset and views of the mountains of donegal and sligo. not to be missed in Ireland. then i returned, dropped gear at a pub for tonight and

had trouble meeting up with a friend for a lift home. but he was kind enough to drive back to cork a second time to collect me. marvelous friends. like i have never known. i can easily ask them to be a part of my life.

They did a full 2 page piece on me in the newspaper on monday. I was mortified as I saw they took the photo in the CD cover of me in the sarong and blew it up to 6"., i am almost naked. the article was suppose to be about food i thought. When Noel and i had interviewed he asked me about everything, but i had expected the article to be about my cheffing on the tall ship and in the islands and my food prep for my trip and holiday, but they did the whole story again. i just took the opportunity in my face and went with it. i am beginning to think i need a press manager. someone to help me write press releases and such so they end up saying what i want them to say, not what they want them to say for their benefit. It was a lovely article just more than i thought. I am off to busk. Then the gig at Charlies. home. shuffle gear around for a gig tomorrow. there is so much more going on then what i see. Today, i came into cork after hitching in, and ran into a young man who wrote the most incredible piece of poetry about me. he was the 2nd person i spoke to on shore in ireland. He was just standing in the bus station as i walked by today. Incredible embrace. he is fine. then i open my email and there is a letter from a young woman i also met in Baltimore. she has excema, like i get it but worse and i felt her pain so deeply. i have been having such great results from my diet change and spiritual change that my hand are normal and my guitar playing is starting to come around. anyway, i had stopped her one day before i left baltimore and told her about my experiences with the excema and the pain and torture emotionally from it and she cried and we cried together. i told her of the diet and lifestyle changes i had made and she just emailed me to tell me she tried the diet changes. it is improving and she is so excited. Wow. what a letter. amazing. i have purpose. i just don't know where it will be and what it is about. i have to be able to trust my senses in the moment. It is separating my self being from the influences of energy around and old responses. watching i think. So there is this year in a nut. big nut but a big year. i am heading back to the states on Sunday for a visit. Grand Grand. gotta go, talk to you soon. love is in the air. love donna