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From Sea to Space

The Radio Guys Try to Contact the Mother Ship

November Alpha One Sierra Sierra ... this is November Yankee Zero Victor Maritime Mobile, Region 3 aboard the Research Vessel *Mermaid Vigilance* calling..."

"Comm" Tom's plaintive calls reached over the airwaves, trying desperately to make contact with the space ship whizzing overhead. It was our only chance ... he just had to get a reply

"We must be on you, but can't hear you ... pretzels are running low ..."

But it was useless. The orbiting space station dropped over the horizon, leaving just a few meager "data packet bursts" to tantalize us.

Actually, this is not a science fiction story (though it may contain a few "alternative facts"). Inspired by our success during previous expeditions, the Radio Guys decided to see if they could get in touch with the Space Station. Turns out that two of the current residents, astronaut Commander Shane Kimbrough and Mission Specialist Thomas Pesquet are Hams, so they talk Rod, Tom, & Bryan's language. They crafted a special hand-held antenna that could be pointed at the Station as it flew overhead (Don't they have enough antennas already??), and with some help from *Mermaid's* Electrical Engineer Sergiy, they got it working. They are also keen to speak with Peggy Whitson from Iowa, and we imagine our Russian-speaking friends on *Vigilance* may want to speak to the three cosmonauts on ISS.

A few emails to NASA (Kenneth Ransome at JSC Houston) got them the orbital transit times for our part of the world, and they were ready.

Marika and Sue held the antenna, Dave marked the transit times and azimuths (armed with Bryan's green laser pointer), Tom manned the radio, and Rod-io supervised. Quite a crowd gathered for the

12:34 AM event, probably the largest congregation ever seen on the *Mermaid's* bridge after midnight. Doc Pam was available (i.e., asleep in her cabin) in the event of injury. The Media Team was on hand to record the event, and a crowd of rubber-neckers hovered. It was probably just like waiting for Amelia on the *Itasca!*

As the transit began, Tom started his calls. "NA1SS" is the U.S. Amateur Radio Call Sign for the International Space Station. "NYØV" is Tom's call sign.

"Maritime Mobile" identifies us as aboard a ship on the high seas. "Region 3" is the ITU (International Telecom Union) region of the world we are in, as agreed by international treaty.

continued...



NEWS FLASH! DARING RESCUE!

Ball overboard! Doc Pam shouted the alarm! The mate sprang into action and brought the vessel around for the rescue. The crew on deck grabbed the pink recovery basket and a long pole. In no time, Wilson was safely back on board and the basketball game resumed. There is probably no truth to the rumor that Captain Noe threw Wilson overboard to avoid having to play the HooleyKnots again on Sunday

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1000 Daily Progress Meeting: Ops Ctr.
1700 Halfway Day Bar-b-cue
1930 Est. REMUS recovery.

Christopher Griner is an Autonomous Vehicle Technician helping to keep REMUS running smoothly for us. He started studying business, but in his heart he wanted a more adventurous life. He knew he wanted to work on ships, so he switched gears. His time in the U.S. Coast Guard took him all over starting in Homer, Alaska. He also spent time in California and then Massachusetts where he transitioned from the Coast Guard to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. He's going on 21 years with WHOI now with a few breaks in between. In those breaks Christopher Worked on a NOAA



ship, at the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, and in heavy construction. He worked on the Big Dig in Boston and operated tower cranes (talk about a climb!).

With WHOI, Christopher worked on the research vessels *Knorr*, *Oceanus*, and *Atlantis 2* where he met Tom Dettweiler. More recently he has crewed on *Atlantis* and the new vessel *Neil Armstrong*. He also works on projects that involve deep sea coring for geologists and other scientists.

Christopher developed a strong appreciation for aviation thanks to his father who was in the Air Force

and then was a station manager in Key West for Pan Am and TWA. Now as a hobby, Christopher is part of an aviation photography group. He also loves travel and eclectic music.

— Marika Lorraine



...continued from page 1.

Sadly, Tom's calls were not answered, and we were all disappointed. Maybe the astronauts were asleep? Maybe they were afraid to be asked to teach a SEA School? Anyway, the Station will pass overhead regularly, and our Hams will try again.

HALFWAY DAY BAR-B-CUE!

Sunday is Day 23 at sea, which means we are halfway home! Time to celebrate! Of course, there will be a regular Sunday bar-b-cue, thanks to the *Vigilance* cooks and volunteers, to be held at regular dinner time (1700). Milestone merriment will include fun & games and a sunset-moonrise vigil. Unfortunately, the Rodeo was cancelled owing to high seas.

SEA School Update

Today's SEA School featured Practical Knots Part II led by Spence. We practiced bowlines, clove hitches, taut-line hitches, and butterfly loops, among other useful



line entanglements. If you need to secure a load or hitch up your gill-along, Cap'n Spence can help! He gave high marks to the WHOI team for their topological tethering talents, and special attention to Slipknot Sallie. All proceedings were conducted under the watchful eye of Cap'n Joe (the other eye doesn't focus so well).

FULL MOON FESTIVAL

Join us at midnight on the aft deck for a celebration of that "cold hearted orb." Contemplate meditatively as the flickering flames of the bonfire reflect hauntingly during a traditional blessing of the glass spheres*. Wax gibbously while dancing to the twiddling bars of a twalrag flute. Intoxicating beverages will not be served. Costumes encouraged (no nudity, please). No animals will be harmed. Don't venture too close to the stern while in a state of enlightenment.

Cold hearted orb that rules the night, removes the colours from our sight. Red is grey, and yellow, white, but we decide which is right, and which is an illusion.

— Graeme Edge

*Glass spheres courtesy Benthos.

Operations Update

REMUS continues to perform flawlessly, imaging close to 30 square-nautical miles of unexplored seafloor with each sortie. We have

looked at over 250 square-nm so far and are making great progress.

MERMAID CLASSIFIEDS

PERSONALS 100

You ladies are looking jaunty in your fashionable nautical attire. If you'd like me to show you a few of my own special knots, just stop by for a private lesson. You know where to reach me. Cap'n Joe.

WANTED 200

Small Stuff: Seems like ALL the small line is disappearing from this ship. Apparently there is someone who needs it more than the entire deck department. Spence 4051

STORIES for *Meridian Passages*. Keep 'em coming! Dave 4031.

FOR SALE 400

TROPICAL PARADISE: Beautiful undeveloped beachfront property, water view on four sides. 557 acres. Call 888-HOW-LAND.

LOST & FOUND 500

STILL LOST: TP roll dispenser. \$10 REWARD! Marika 4062

SOCKS STILL ADRIFT: Mismatched footies seeking matching pair. Sue 3344.

STILL LOST: Elgen's hat. Keep looking!

Place New Ads by Friday – ed.