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Bryan McCoy

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Central Pacific Edition

M/V Mermaid Vigilance

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## Dateline, South Pacific

*Life on Board Ship, When Everything is New*

I am what the seamen call a flat lander. I grew up in Iowa where the land is rich and perfect for growing tall corn. It is also flat and doesn't move. I joined the Eustace Earhart Discovery Expedition to help outfit the ship and participate in the locating of Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan's airplane lost at sea. I, however, have never been to sea. I have sailed on Iowa lakes, canoed rivers and large bodies of water, swam and dove below, so I have some knowledge of water, but these are some things I have learned since going to sea.

First there are terminologies not heard in Iowa. Many words are familiar but are used in other ways. Bridge, mess, deck, ladder, stores, splice, monkey fist, fathom, and painter are a few.

Other terms are used only at sea. Gunnel, bulwark, scupper, davit, sextant, clove hitch, belay, and rising glass, for example. And the acronyms: FRC, DP, AIS, GPS. We have sea state, swell, chop, and white caps. We have hard hats (not for your head, but for transponder floats). When we say "port," we are not talking wine. (We had wine onboard for a few days, a gift from *SauVage*, but we traded it with the *Machias* for chocolate. It's a "dry" ship, after all.)

There are lessons to learn every day. My official duties are to help out wherever possible, mostly by assisting the videographer Bill. The first day Bill was filming at the stern, had finished and was returning to the cabin with his gear. I gathered up two arms full, but Dave

stopped me with the phrase, "one hand for the ship." I put down half the load and continued to the ladder. I had heard the phrase from those who had been to sea, but assumed that it was really only when there were heavy seas. Regardless of the sea state the boat is always moving. You cannot climb a stair, gangway or ladder or even walk down the passageway without using the railing.

I will expand a little. The wheelhouse, or bridge is fifty four steps up the ladder from the main deck, or forty six feet above the sea. As we left port the ship would roll in the sea more than twenty degrees. If you were on the bridge the arc length could be twenty feet. You can prance a little on your toes while moving across the deck. When your weight comes down you are on the other side of the bridge. Fun. If you hop in the middle of the bridge the wall (I mean, "bulkhead") will come over and slap you before

you come down. Lesson relearned. One hand for the ship. Use the railing when crossing the room. (I mean, the "compartment.")

We are seven days transit from Honolulu, moving at ten knots (11.5 mph) in the middle of nowhere. If you fall overboard and no one notices, you're not swimming home. Lesson: Always have a spotter near. If you are working at the side or back of the vessel, have a life jacket on. The sea appears endless. You can watch it near, you can watch it far. And it is blue. Not just blue, but blue BLUE blue. At home you occasionally see a nice sunset. At sea there are no objects between you and the horizon, and every sunset and sunrise is perfectly visible and awesome, declaring the Glory of the God.



### Plan of the Day *March 25, 2017*

**0900** SEA School TBD

**1000** Daily Progress Meeting: Ops Ctr.

**2400** Est. REMUS Recovery

*continued...*

## Meet our Oilers!

Oilers assist the Engineer by maintaining, cleaning and operating ship engine equipment, including blowers, compressors, motors, gears, ejectors and other apparatus. They are responsible for operating the lubricant filtering and purifying equipment as well as keeping maintenance and oiling logs.



**Kasman Sonne** is from South Sulawesi. Indonesia and has been

working on ships for the past six years. As an oiler, he spends most of his time in the engine room. But watch out for him on the basketball court! When he's home he likes to rest and enjoys video games, particularly Playstation.

**Kasmawir** was dubbed Mahi-mahi early on by Cap'n Joe and the name stuck for this trip, which he says is ok with him. He's from Jakarta. At home he likes to rest and spend time with family. He has two wives and one daughter. He says, "I am so happy



**Kasmawir & Kasman**

working with American people." He says everyone on board is like family.

... continued from page 1

The night sky has no physical distractions. At the equator night comes early. The skies are generally clear and the stars fill the entire space. The heavenly bodies are a clockwork in space, displaying time and position in a physical way. We have been at sea long enough to view a complete cycle of moon phases. Lessons: Stars whose names are vaguely familiar, constellations traced with a green laser. Sextants, lines of position, and intersects on a chart.

There are no ropes on ships as they are called lines, as in "anchor line." The line at the bow of a dingy is a painter, the back, a stern line, to the boom on a sail, the sheet. Everything needs to be secured against motion. Often with line. A good knot is not just a pile of tangles. Lesson: different knots for different purposes. Pretty knots for decorative purposes, like gracing a fancy gift bottle of wine or a plain coffee cup handle, or improving grip on the body of binoculars.

Distances are deceiving. Another ship can be seen twelve miles

away. An hour later it still looks nearly as far but is half the distance.

There are lessons to be learned everywhere. Open your eyes, be observant. Watch out for your fellow sailor. Like a dry sea sponge, soak up the new environment and be changed, growing fuller and more useful with every drop.

— Bryan McCoy

## MERMAID MARCH MADNESS

Exclusive Passages Updates!

**CURRENT STANDINGS:** The audit firm of Dewey, Cheatum, & Howe was engaged to review Greg's tallies and found an error. A win was deducted from Dave's score, knocking him down a couple of notches. A petition for recount is circulating. Meanwhile Regional Semi-final scores are in, and still manning the wheel house are:

1: Alan	68
3: Spence	62
2: Marika	60



We're down to just eight teams now and the field is stretching out. With three more rounds to go, (almost) anything can happen!

Sue	57	Mark	50
Bryan	55	Pam	46
Dave	55	Greg	42
Jeff	54	Bill	39
TomV	50	Neil	39

Cap'n Joe remains in the bilge with 31 points.

Regional Finals are next! Breaking news when it happens.

## MERMAID CLASSIFIEDS

### PERSONALS 100

**NURSE** or Physician's Assistant position available to reduce workload on ship's doctor. Specialty in head knocks, suturing, and/or mental illness desired. Send resumé to Doc Pam, Sick Bay.

### WANTED 200

**PHOTOS!** Dump your photos on NAS for sharing and backup. Pick a few select shots and save them aside so we can all admire them!

**STORIES** for *Meridian Passages*. Sea, land, or air stories welcome. No more radios, please. Dave 4031.

**LESSONS LEARNED.** For *EEDE Final Report*. First one in today, yay, Bryan! See Spence 4051.

### FOR SALE 400

**Glass Hemispheres,** slightly used. Great for popcorn bowls or lampshades. Also make great birdbaths. Use coupon code BENTHOS for discount. Greg 3051.

**BRACELETS!** Yes, I am obsessed. Please make me stop. Any blue paracord left?? Marika 4062.

### LOST & FOUND 500

**STILL LOST:** Mostly clean blue, yellow, & white sock with logo "<d" sock. Free to a good home. Still hanging in Ops. See Bill 3071.

**FOUND:** iPhone power cube. Somebody DOES read these Classifieds! Thanks! Dave

**Place New Ads by Friday – ed.**

## ★★SAFETY NEWS FLASH★★

Websites caution about many feral dogs on Majuro island that bite runners and recommend carrying a stick if you run or walk.

