

## Day 71.5: September 25, 2010

So today you'll get two updates from me. One, now on the samples, and one tonight on the day. We are at a lull at the moment so it works. But the bottom line is that I am blessed with an USM President who is closely engaged in our work and she has let me know I need to fill you all in on the resolution. I would have done so earlier, but it's been another busy day. So here is how the sample story ends...

After I wrote to all of you, I called Iain. Samples were at Logan Airport somewhere with FedEx. James was going to get them, but I was concerned something could still go awry. So I suggested to Iain that, being in Massachusetts, he might be able to get them faster and then have James meet him. Either way I gave him James's number and left it to them to sort out.

About a half an hour later, Iain emailed me to say that since he was 2 hours away and he was 1 hour away, they decided that James should just go directly there and get them. Matt and I were on helm watch by this time and worried that still we did not have the samples in hand. The minutes by now had turned to days and we watched and waited for James to call.

Finally, I couldn't wait anymore. I called James. He was on an unfamiliar road looking for the FedEx facility. He shook his head (yes you can hear that on a phone) and told me I had a knack for calling when he was lost on unfamiliar roads. We agreed he would call as soon as he had the samples.

More minutes turned into days. I paced the pilothouse rather nervously. The phone rang. It was James. He was FURIOUS. FedEx was closed. No one would take his calls anymore and no one was in sight. He appeared to have been a little too late. I calmed him down and had him focus on the options. There had to be a door somewhere to pound on. Something. Somewhere. By now it was well past midnight his time. He was somewhere in the middle of a FedEx facility in the middle of the night. We agreed he would call again when he had the samples.

Now, the minutes were years. One can only wonder and worry about what was or was not transpiring. Helm watch ended. I woke our relief and prepared to settle in to wait for James's call.

The phone rang. It was James. He could not find a door, or a person or anything. But this was James and you remember what I said about his tenacity... Well, the only thing he found was a security camera (that and a cat). So James ensconces himself in front of that camera, jumping up and down, waving his hands for thirty minutes. Finally, someone notices and comes out to ask him what in the world he is doing in the middle of the night jumping up and down in front of a security camera. James explains. Amazingly enough, THEY GAVE HIM ALL FIVE BOXES OF SAMPLES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Samples in hand. James heads for home. Calls me. Calls Amie. Texts Iain. Phew! Of course, I am not totally relieved yet as I have not heard of the status of the samples. That would have to wait until this morning after all the samples had been logged, sorted and taken care of.

James delivered the samples to our USM laboratory at about 3 am this morning. What an odyssey (no pun intended). He spent his day from 7 am to 3 am the next day trying to get these samples. Great Job James!

Amie met him at the lab. Had him bring in the samples and then sent him home to bed. An excellent decision and a selfless one because Amie then had to face several hours of work by herself (see told you she was a key person in our group). Amie logged, stored and prepared all of them. The cell cultures alone would have been 65 flasks each needing 3-5 minutes of processing. Thanks Amie!!!

At the end of this trial, all samples are safe and sound in the laboratory. We only lost one water bottle that broke. Amie put them all away and then Hong double checked them this morning. It was noon here when I finally took a breath and immediately became overwhelmed with exhaustion. As you might imagine I didn't sleep much last night at all. Once all was known to be well, I quickly fell asleep into a short nap. Woke up. Saw our President's inquiry and realized it was time to fill you all in.

Oh and James also kept me updated on Cathy's USM soccer game. They won 5-0. Cathy scored twice. James was there talking with FedEx!

Wow! What a crazy time getting those samples home. Someone joked that maybe BP owns FedEx....

James wrote a reflection on the whole thing from his point of view. It is a good read and attached. Johnny also wrote a log of yesterday too - also attached. You will see there was a whole other kaffuffle about a fund raising event we had going on too. Cathy was doing her best to handle that one. We certainly were busy...

John

Attached Links:

[James Fed-Ex Reflection](#)

[Johnny's Day 71 Reflection](#)