

Day 8: July 24, 2010

We have lost track of days and time. Rick asked me the other day what day it was and I had no idea. Johnny wished me a happy anniversary on the 22nd and then everyone was shocked that it was not the 21st. We also looked at pictures of us starting out and wondered who are those people in coats and sweatshirts as since it is so hot here, we have been in shorts only for guys and shorts and bathing suit tops for girls.

I had a brief window of 3G service today so I made a quick call home and sent out my emails to all of you for the past few days. We are again cut off from the world.

Everyone is fine and making the best of day 7. Some are reading books and some are watching movies and some are playing games. But day 7 and probably day 8 are likely to be the hardest of the whole trip. Everyone is safe and sound though it's certainly been Mr. Toad's wild ride. By the time you read this note these days will be long over.

Let me be clear, at no time have I had any concern for anyone's safety during last night and today. I trust this boat as it has been around the world and it has been upgraded. I trust this Captain as he has circumnavigated the globe several times and perhaps more importantly his training started out as a boat engineer so he knows the mechanical systems very well and he has been with this boat for 20+ years. I also trust in Iain Kerr the CEO who maintains this vessel. Nevertheless, we have learned why the Atlantic is the angry ocean and why Cape Hatteras is such a difficult place to pass.

Our adventure begins last night when we learned of 25 mph headwinds and we entered the Gulf Stream current which pushes against us. At one point the current and the wind we stronger than the engine and the sail and so we went backwards for a bit and then moved to shallower waters to reduce the current. The winds became so strong that the boat began heeling. That means the wind was pushing it over to one side. Thus, I quickly learned that my bed was no longer my bed and instead I was sleeping on the starboard wall. Any attempt to get out of my bed would require me to climb up the bed and up the floor. Remarkably, very little in the lab stirred- a few things did though and I had to wake up and in this crazy configuration try to tie them down. I was quite pleased that the contraptions built by our engineering students continued to work and stabilize the cells. I was also glad I had decided to Velcro them to the incubators shelves. Johnny and Cathy certainly did a good job with that task- a tribute to their NASA experience no doubt.

Since I was up and it was 2 am, I ambled up to the pilothouse to see Captain Bob. Along the way, I found the salon littered with people. Matt had moved into the salon to sleep. Then in the pilot house were Kyle and Cathy. Only Johnny, Kellie and Rick remained in their bunks and perhaps not coincidentally they are the bottom bunk dwellers. We discussed the upcoming weather and it was clear it would be like this for a day or perhaps even two.

Thus, no watches as the wind and waves hammered incessantly at us. I look forward to

being out of this slop.

John