

Johnny Wise's Reflections for Leg 5

Day 64-70 – Saturday, September 18-Friday, September 24, 2010 – Docked in Biloxi, MS

I wasn't too thrilled when we docked in Biloxi. I quickly found out that the only things around were casinos – everything else was too far away to walk. Not that it mattered since I'm still broke from the summer. First thing we did when we docked was went to the buffet for lunch – and boy did we get our money's worth. There was nothing special about the buffet – in fact it was pretty bad – but the unlimited supply of food and the bottomless drinks were what we were mostly after. Dr. Wise and Sandy checked into a hotel/casino down the street, where there was a better buffet and a nice pool/hot tub. I never made it into the pool or the hot tub, but I did check them out.

One thing I couldn't help but noticing was how the casinos seemed to be full of old people. I don't mean this to be rude, but my best guess is that they are beyond retirement and are looking for some excitement in their lives – I guess slot machines and poker games do that for them. After we walked through a casino floor once to get to the buffet, I told Dr. Wise and Matt that it was more time than I ever intended to spend on a casino floor – gambling and slots are just not for me.

Early on in the week, Dr. Wise sent Matt and I a list of tasks to complete by the end of the week. This, on top of our school work, would be enough to keep us thoroughly busy.

A couple of our monkey brethren left us this week – Carolyne and Rick. We will very much miss them both. Carolyne for her cheery attitude, even seconds before and after puking. Rick for his humor and grandpa-like presence among us (I mean this in the most sincere way, I do regard him as the grandpa I never had). We have enjoyed their time with us and will miss their determination to work hard and smiles through everything.

On Monday, the “new kids” joined us – Dr. Bob Keuch (another professor from USM), Tania Li Chen (a graduate student from our lab), Monique Lefebvre (another USM undergrad, also a personal friend), and Kait ____ (a graduate student from Scripps). Kait will be helping us to track Bryde's whales acoustically. These whales have never been recorded before, so no one knows what they sound like, but Kait says Scripps has an idea. Our plan is to toss a sonobuoy when we spot a whale to get a recording. On Wednesday, Steve ____ joined us – he is a writer for the Chicago Tribune, a car magazine, and just published his first book. Steve likes to write about environmental related subjects; his step-mom knows Dr. Wise, and he jumped at the chance to get on board with us. Also, Jeremiah Bailey (aka Bailey) met us when we docked. He has replaced Rick as boat crew, coming from working on schooners in Michigan(?).

While we were docked, we also met some scientists from the University of Southern Mississippi (the other USM). We were given a tour of their facilities one Tuesday, and Dr. Wise gave his first seminar about the voyage. I was very impressed with the

audience that showed up on such a short notice – there were probably close to 50 people packed into the lecture hall. We will be collaborating with them in the future. One thing in particular we will be doing for them is collecting dolphin blows.

Yes, dolphin blows. I know this sounds crazy, and, well, it kind of is. We had discussed this previously – collecting both dolphin and whale blows. Both have been collected in the past, but mostly from trained animals. One technique to collect whale blows in the field is using a remote controlled helicopter. We do not have one of these (yet), but I'm sure Iain Kerr (CEO of Ocean Alliance) will figure out how to get us one and join us for a leg to demonstrate how to use it. To collect dolphin blows, we will have two people hanging off the bowsprit with petri dishes. Not sure who this will be yet – more than likely Matt and I will be the first guinea pigs, as Dr. Wise feels most comfortable using us in such a way (not that we don't want to try it).

I also spent some early mornings and evenings fishing from the dock. I caught two catfish and a sea trout. Very tasty. I was able to convince Dr. Wise to purchase a cast net for the boat so that we can catch baitfish and fish for samples much easier. First mate Ian showed me how to cast the net after laughing at my struggle a couple of times. His first demonstration brought up 30 small fish, trumping my one small fish and a shrimp. After he showed me how to do it, I trumped his cast and brought up close to a hundred small fish. I imagine my eyes got very wide with excitement. Monique got the whole thing on video and Ian quickly made sure I tossed all the fish back – I definitely didn't need that many and definitely couldn't keep that many.

With the fish that Ian brought in, Monique and I set out to do some last minute fishing as the boat was getting prepped for departure. I have come to prefer using live bait, and hooked one of the small fish on each of our poles. Within minutes, I had my first bite and reeled in my second catfish at this dock. The first one was far more docile and I was able to handle it very easily. This one, not so much. Just as I was reaching to grab it to remove the hook, it flailed and stabbed my hand with the spine on its side fin. Ian had warned me about this, but I had ignored it after my last encounter with catfish (I was able to pick it up and handle it without any problems). I instantly felt a surge of pain shoot up my arm as blood started gushing out of the hole in my hand – although the hole was more of a pinprick than anything. I left the fish for someone else, with more experience, to deal with and went to go wash off and tend to my very painful hand. Now, one thing I didn't mention is catfish have a mild poison in their spines. It's nothing that can kill you, but it sure does let you know you've been struck by one. The next ten minutes were brutal for me as I felt the poison spread throughout my body. As I was rinsing my hand under the sink, Dr. Wise told me to suck it up and show Steve and Kait how to climb up to the mid-level platform. I simply told him that was not going to happen this minute. Ian stepped in and saved me some pain – he would show them. I was in the head, cleaning my hand and applying some bandages to it when I started to feel very lightheaded and sick to my stomach. I was sure I was going to puke – started breathing slowly and get myself under control. I was not panicking, but I knew I was about to if I didn't catch myself in time. This was the first time I had been poisoned by an animal, it was nothing that could kill me or make me very sick (so I was told), and the

pain and sick feeling would be over soon enough. Not sure if I was going to puke or pass out, I decided to cool off and get some fresh air. I decided to help Ian instruct Kait and Steve how to climb (because he wasn't exactly showing them). As soon as I felt I could walk without worrying about making a mess, I grabbed a couple of freeze pops and went outside. I grabbed one to eat right away, and one to hold onto to ice my hand. By the time I was through the first freeze pop I was feeling much better, and felt back to my normal self after I finished the second. Monique and I returned to fishing – she had also caught a sea trout while I was mending myself (which don't have poisonous spines). After a few more minutes, we gave up and returned to the boat. I decided I had had enough of the catfish and threw it back (I also didn't want to have to deal with all the bones when I was eating it). With the sea trout I showed Tania and Monique how to process a fish for sampling and saved the filets for lunch.

Then we set out to sea. We will head towards St. Petersburg, FL from here looking for sperm whales and Bryde's whales. I know Dr. Wise wants to reach a total of 50 sperm whales (we are currently at 42), but he wants more to find those 15-20 Bryde's whales that are resident to the area. We have a lot of people that will be doing whale watches, which is great! Monique, Kait, Steve, Tania, Dr. Bob, Matt and myself will be rotating from sunrise to sunset. Time to start those 4am helm watches again!

Day 71 – Saturday, September 25, 2010 – Tumultuous Day

Early start to the day – the first people to go on watch were part of the new kids, so I had to be sure they knew what they were doing and had everything they needed. I had an hour in between my helm watch and the first whale watch, so I decided to take a quick nap. When the first couple showed up, I also realized that Matt had gotten up to help them out, so I decided to sleep a little longer (Matt apparently didn't see me stir, otherwise he would've returned to bed). With that the day had begun. We have six people rotating through the mid-level platform, so my first shift didn't come until noon! I used the time to finish up some studying and start putting my notes together.

By the time my watch came up, all the new kids had been through their first shifts on the mid-level (except Tania, who is uncomfortable with heights and is only doing watches on the pilot house). Just about everyone who went on the pilot house got sick. Not too much of a surprise since it was their first day, and the seas were not super calm. This caused Dr. Wise and I to reflect – what would we think of these conditions if it was July or early August? The seas seemed calm to us, but we have also been through much worse and have grown our sea legs.

During my first shift, we began our third approach of the voyage to the Deepwater Horizon site. Since the leak was capped, Capt Bob wanted to see how close he could get to the site. We came within 2 miles and decided that was close enough. Matt and Tania took water samples, and I tried to get some fish samples with our new cast net – no fish. We did see some flying fish and some birds, but no other living organisms.

An hour after my watch was done, Dr. Wise called in everyone from watch – a storm was coming our way. As the storm approached, I found myself standing on the bow deck with Dr. Wise and Matt, awaiting our shower for the day. And boy did we get a shower. Towards the end of it, Monique, Kait, and Steve came out to join us but were a little too late. I went back to the pilot house and asked Capt Bob if we could do a quick 180. Everyone laughed. Capt Bob turned the boat around, and we prepared ourselves for our second shower. Bailey and Tania also joined us – bringing us to a total of 8 of our crew showering on deck together.

We did not resume watches for the remainder of the day. Most of the new kids seemed relieved, and spent the afternoon asleep in the salon. I resumed studying, but found it incredibly difficult to focus with so many sleeping bodies around me. Eventually I succumbed to the atmosphere and took a nap in the galley.

I learned later in the afternoon that the shipment of our samples had gone awry. Sandy and Matt arrived a couple minutes too late to ship them on Friday afternoon, and left them with someone to be shipped first thing on Saturday. The person they left them with forgot to write down the importance of shipping them and when they were supposed to be shipped, so they didn't get shipped until Saturday afternoon. Then they arrived in Memphis, but there was no indication as to where they had gone after that – did they go to Maine? Did they stay in Memphis? Did they go somewhere else? Hours passed and there was no news.

Fortunately for us, the task of finding and picking up the samples fell into James's lap. One very good quality of James's (and sometimes humorous) is his tenacity to complete a task he feels or knows is crucial. We knew in response to this that James would stop at nothing to find those packages and bring them back to the USM lab. He had already been on and off the phone with FedEx all day trying to figure out where the packages were and where they were headed. The time had come to 10:30 eastern time, and James still had no idea where the packages were.

A few hours earlier, James and Dr. Wise had arranged plans with friends, family, and collaborators to pick up the packages at every airport on the eastern seaboard. The plan became they would pick them up from the airport, and James would drive to Boston, New York, or New Jersey to meet them. True dedication.

James continued his search for the entire day and night for these samples. Last I heard he had tracked them down to Logan airport in Boston, and was on his way there to pick them up. It was 10:00pm our time, meaning James would return to the USM lab with the samples around 1am or 2am eastern time. Amie, a graduate student at our lab, was standing by waiting for James to return with the samples. She would help him get everything stored properly.

Meanwhile, we also had a benefit event at Binga's Stadium set up, which Cathy was taking charge of. James was supposed to be working on this with her, but obviously had to leave – the samples are FAR more important than a benefit event. I tried talking

to Cathy to see if I could help at all, but there wasn't much I could do. She said she REALLY wanted a banner, but wasn't going to be able to get one. Then I called a friend of mine who was part of the band that was performing for us – everything was cool with him, so I felt a little more relieved. Finally, I called a good friend of mine – Maggie – to see if she could help me out get a banner to Cathy. She said she would, and got right to it (by the time I talked to Maggie, the event was already 30 minutes into it). A little while later, Maggie called back to tell me she was in the emergency room with her sister – her sister had an anxiety attack, and Maggie was having a trick getting the poster done while trying to calm her sister down. But the poster was done!

So the end of a tumultuous day at home ended on a downhill slope – all the problems that seemed to arise were coming to their end (I hoped). Thanks to the dedication and determination of family and friends, I feel like things worked out. I have not heard from Cathy or Maggie about the event, but I hope the poster brought a little bit of relief to Cathy.

I'm writing this at 5am, during my helm watch. We didn't see or hear any whales yesterday, but there are about 5 whales clicking right now!

Day 72 – Sunday, September 26, 2010 – Christmas Day?

The day started at 4am on helm watch for me. There was nothing on the array at first, but by 5am there was one whale – by 5:30 there were about 10 whales showing up on the hydrophone array. Hearing that many whales, I was getting really excited. I felt like a little kid on Christmas morning. I was also first to be on watch, so the idea of being on helm watch when we found the whales acoustically and then finding them visually on whale watch seemed pretty cool to me. At first light, I woke Matt up and told him to get some arrows ready. Meanwhile I prepped myself and gathered everything I would need for whale watch – if only to make the minutes pass by more quickly. The trick worked. By the time I had everything and was climbing up to the mid-level platform, there was enough light to see (even though the sun wasn't up). I did not spot the first whales, though – Kait did. They were about half a mile in front of us. Within minutes everyone except Dr. Wise and Sandy was on deck, in position for our first biopsy. The sun still hadn't risen above the horizon. I climbed down and got into position on the bowsprit, with Bailey behind me – trying to explain to Bailey everything he would need to know about biopsying whales in the minute or two we had before the whale was within range. Tania and Dr. Bob were behind us with a camera for photo id. Monique next to them with a video camera in hand. Ian was climbing up to the mid-level. Kait and Steve were on the pilot house platform. Matt was prepping the lab and more arrows. Capt Bob was on the helm. Dr. Wise and Sandy were still no where to be seen – no one had given them the call. Just as we were lining up for our first biopsy, I heard Sandy yell out for our arrow numbers, and Dr. Wise asking us where the call for whales was. Story goes, Dr. Wise heard the boat slow down, saw the time was 6:45am and was wondering what

was going on. Sandy came on deck and went back to tell Dr. Wise we were approaching our first whale. We did not get a biopsy on that whale.

The conditions were less than ideal for biopsying. A little too much waves, a little too much wind. I was alert and ready to biopsy, but the whales were not. Oddly, the whales would only stay at the surface for a minute or two before shallow diving and then disappearing. It went on like this all day – making it very difficult to get a whale within range. A few hours after our first whale, the wind picked up even more and it started to rain. A few people went back inside, to avoid getting their cameras wet – but Bailey and I remained on the bowsprit until I realized the wind was too strong for the arrows and we weren't going to be able to biopsy. By this time the rain was really picking up – and was pouring huge drops of rain by the time we got back into the pilot house. Dr. Wise had passed around freeze pops, then was out on deck taking the opportunity to shower. As soon as I set my crossbow down, I was on deck next to him. We went to the aft deck and found Ian, Dr. Bob and Monique doing the same thing – Ian with a bottle of biodegradable shampoo. We all sudsied up and rinsed off in the storm. Matt joined us shortly after. At some point I realized Monique was standing at the edge of the awning under a huge reservoir of water in the awning. So, I decided to help her rinse off a little bit. This led to everyone dumping water in the awning on each other and on themselves, with a lot of laughter.

Everyone went back inside for breakfast – except myself and Dr. Wise. We remained on the aft deck to discuss the “FedEx fiasco” as James so properly described it and to discuss a few other details about the voyage. After a little while we realized the rain and wind had died down enough that we could biopsy again. We discussed the idea with Capt Bob who was still on the helm – he agreed, so Dr. Wise resumed watches.

I returned to my room to dry off and put on some dry clothes to settle in to studying, thinking it would be awhile before we would see whales again. I had changed into pajama pants and had just opened up some documents on my computer when the call for whales came again – 200 yards! I thought about changing really quick, but decided it wasn't worth it – I would just have to get my only pair of pajama pants wet, I did not want to miss this whale. I rushed on deck (we don't run on deck, we rush), Matt passed me an arrow as I was headed out the door, and Capt Bob put me in position next to a pod of ten whales seconds after I was ready. Tania had just enough time to get on deck with me and snap some photos before I had biopsied a whale and before they all dove. No one else had made it on deck to see the biopsy. Matt tossed out a ring (he was just inside the pilot house), and we turned around to retrieve the arrow. We had our first successful biopsy of the day.

Then we waited again for the pod of ten whales to show up again. They did, but did a shallow dive before they were in range. Then the rain came again. This time, no one went back inside. The cameramen had put plastic grocery bags on their cameras, and we kept searching for whales. The remainder of the day was a pattern of spotting whales, and watching them do a shallow dive out of range. For a couple of hours we were going back and forth between two pairs of whales that were about 400 yards apart

from each other, but with no luck. We did manage to line up for two more biopsies, but they were unsuccessful attempts.

In the early afternoon, the weather cleared up, and we stopped to put the whale boom out, collect a water sample, and to collect some fish samples. We got 5 fish samples, using the same technique I used on the last leg – Matt dangles a piece of bait, and I scoop them up with the net. There were also some large mahi mahi circling us. Matt tried and tried to catch one. He managed to hook one, but the fishing line got tangled in the pole, so he lost it when it was two feet away from being in the boat!

We resumed watches and saw nothing else for the remainder of the day. Matt and I were pretty exhausted, as it had been a long day for us without much of a break. As soon as we finished processing the fish samples (around 5:30pm) we settled in for some last minute studying before doing our quizzes. Each week we have assignments and quizzes that are due on Sunday – one that's due by noon (EST) and I have a quiz that's due by 10 (EST). Meeting these deadlines can sometimes be a challenge, as we are very busy and very tired every day of the voyage.

Day 73 – Monday, September 27, 2010 – Krill Day

No whales today, none heard and none seen. That is, none except for the whale shark we saw this morning (technically not a whale, but very impressive to say the least). It was the first watch of the morning – Monique and I were on the mid-level, Tania and Dr. Bob were on the pilot house – we decided to head over to a HUGE school of tuna that were having a feeding frenzy on the surface. Partly we were jealous we weren't invited to the party, partly we wanted to catch some food. As we were approaching, Kait waited on the bowsprit. I climbed down to grab a rod and some bait (it was too early for Matt to be awake), and as I was headed up to the bowsprit Kait said, "Hey! A whale shark!" The way she said it made me think, "Yea right, you're not fooling me," as I had tricked her with the "hey, what's this on your shirt" trick a couple times already. I glanced over, and sure enough there was a whale shark right off the starboard bow! Not as magnificent as I thought it would be, but then again all the photos I've seen of them have been from underwater... Still, very cool to see one.

After Monique and I came down from watch, Dr. Bob announced that there was a large patch of Sargasso weed ahead of us. We are interested in checking these large patches out for several reasons; (1) to pick up macro-garbage, (2) to pick up funny items (like an orange bowling pin), (3) to collect fish samples, and (4) to catch larger fish for dinner. As we got closer, Capt Bob told me there were a bunch of small fish on the bow camera, but he hadn't seen any large ones. I tossed the cast net in a couple times, but no luck. Capt Bob turned the boat around for another go, still no luck. He turned the boat around once more (partly to get us back on track), a little annoyed with myself I thought, "maybe if I toss it on top of the Sargasso weed, it will catch the fish off guard..." So, like an idiot, I tried it – if I had really thought about it, I would have realized that the

weights would not sink the net below the Sargasso weed – instead it would just float on top. And that’s exactly what happened. And I caught a LOT of Sargasso weed, no fish. With the help of Capt Bob, I hauled in the net and we dumped the contents on the deck – just in case. No fish. But Capt Bob exclaimed that there were a bunch of krill!

Let me back up for a second here. You may or may not remember that krill were something we were interested in sampling at the beginning of the voyage, but we abandoned that idea. We tried twice, but pulled in a total of 10 krill between both attempts. Dr. Wise asked a colleague that studies baleen whales what we were doing wrong. His colleague simply pointed out that NO ONE can catch krill, and that’s what we were doing wrong. Yet, there is a certain value for collecting the prey species for the whales we are sampling. When we analyze our whale tissue samples for petroleum products, chemical dispersants, and heavy metals, and important question that follows is – where did it come from? The primary suspects are air, water, and prey. We are collecting water samples every time we biopsy whales, and air samples 24 hours a day when we are at the right depth for whales. We are collecting what fish we can to sort of represent the prey species for toothed whales (i.e. sperm whales and orcas), but krill have been elusive for baleen whales (i.e. Bryde’s and humpback whales).

So back to the krill that Capt Bob noticed. With the krill all over the deck (it looked like someone had spilled a bunch of brown rice on deck), Capt Bob, Sandy, Tania, and I started picking up the krill and putting them into buckets. Some of us used our fingertips, others used a couple spoons. Shortly after we started, Kait came over to join us. Matt and Steve were on the mid-level, Ian was napping between his helm watches, Monique was working on a paper for her class. More time passed, and Bailey and Monique joined us. Then it came time to switch shifts in the mid-level – Matt and Steve swapped with Monique and Kait. After about 2-3 hours we had collected all the krill we could find on deck, and I had to somehow get the krill out of the buckets of water and into something that I could collect them individually. Seems like a difficult task at first, but we have a couple of plankton tow nets on board which are perfect for this job! I grabbed the smaller of the two, tried to rinse it off by dragging it in the water, but dropped it! So we had to turn around and retrieve it (luckily it didn’t have any weights on it and was floating at the surface). When we retrieved it, I figured it was rinsed enough and dumped the buckets of krill, crabs, a little bit of Sargasso weed, and water into the net. The net was a small collection bottle at the bottom (about the size of a soda can). This made the separation of the krill from everything else more manageable, but still very tedious.

I dumped the bottle into a pyrex baking dish and started picking up the krill with a pair of tweezers one by one and putting them into sample vials. Now, if you don’t know what krill are, they are very small, shrimp-like creatures. If you’ve ever walked along the beach at low tide and lifted up a rock or something, krill are those little things that hop all over the place. Each krill is about the size of a grain of rice – we had enough krill to fill three sample vials (which are about the size of those 5-hour energy drinks). So we had several hundred, if not a thousand, krill. I spent the next 3 hours picking up the krill and putting them into the collection jar. Matt readily volunteered to cover my shift on the

mid-level (he clearly did not want to take over the krill for me). But after those three hours I needed a break. Thankfully, Sandy volunteered to take over. Tania said she would, but had to go back on watch right when I asked her to (figures, right?). Physically aching and worn out, I laid down in the salon and fell asleep for the next hour. Picking out the krill doesn't sound like a difficult task, but remember we're on a boat that is rocking quite a bit (stuff was falling off shelves a couple of times) and there's no chair, so I was standing up the whole time. It wasn't any easier for Sandy, there was just less krill to collect. When I woke up, Sandy was just about done, and we had our first successful krill sample – 6 hours later.

The rest of the day was quiet. I returned to the watch schedule on time, and took over Matt's and Kait's last watch. Thus the only watches I did today were the first two hours and the last two hours. We had a beautiful sunset with several layers of clouds. The sun would peek out from between two layers, giving us a brilliant spotlight, then disappear behind the next layer – probably 5 times. When it was behind a layer of clouds, there was a forest of sun rays ahead of us. Very peaceful. Zen.

We ate dinner on the aft table as a group, exchanged jokes, and reflected on a few aspects of the day. Capt Bob and I also installed the air sampler (but forgot to put in the filter paper), so Bailey had to climb up and put the filter paper in. A bit of a difficult task, but he mastered it, and we are now collecting our first air samples.

Day 74 – Tuesday, September 28, 2010 – Heeling Day

Engine's down, sails are up, we are sideways. Today was miserable, but last night was worse. Late at night yesterday Capt Bob had to go down to the engine room to figure out what was wrong – it was overheating, but with no obvious cause. Thus, we were drifting for the majority of the night. I hate drifting at night, it makes it much more difficult to sleep. When we are sailing, the waves are constantly moving in one direction – when we are drifting, the waves toss the boat around in every direction, no matter how small or big the waves are. On top of that, the AC in my room busted early in the morning. Something fell off and was making a very loud clicking noise above my head. It woke both myself and Dr. Bob up. Dr. Bob tried to fix it, but the fix ended up making the room 60 degrees. Doesn't sound bad if you've got a comforter, but all we have are sheets for covers. Even I was freezing. Then the thing fell off again and made more loud clicking. We decided to just turn it off and leave it at that – which means the room heated upwards of 80 degrees, again making it very uncomfortable to sleep in. An hour or so later I had to get up for my helm watch. I tried – I made it to the pilot house, but simply fell asleep when I sat down. Oh well, Ian would have to steer by himself.

Monique woke me up for our morning watch, but we were still dead in the water. Capt Bob was back in the engine room trying to figure out the problem. I asked Bailey, who was on the helm, what our status was. "We're dead in the water – can't move." With that news I made the decision to hold off on watches. There would be no point

searching if we couldn't move to biopsy them – unless we could entice them with some beautiful song and dance...

Later in the morning, we put up the jib sail. We were headed into port to work on the engine, and we were going to have to sail there. Of course Murphy's law would have to kick in now, as the wind was coming out of the port we were headed to, Port Fuchon, LA. Dr. Wise conferred with Iain Kerr on the phone, to give him a status update. Iain said Capt Bob shouldn't be in the engine room for so long by himself. Once Dr. Wise got off the phone, he sent me down. I went without a second thought. I didn't think I could do much (as I know nothing about engines, except that they are loud, hot, and need gas), but Capt Bob seemed relieved to have some assistance and directed me how to help with various hand signals. The generators are still on, and very loud, so we were both wear ear protectors and couldn't hear anything. There is nothing exciting about going to the engine room – it's very small, hardly enough room for me to sit down; very loud; and very hot with stagnant air. When I got down there I could hardly believe how hot it was. Capt Bob had rigged a fan to blow the air around while he worked down there, but it was only blowing really hot air. Capt Bob pointed to a problem, which was a substance coming out of the engine that looked like watery clay – "That's not supposed to look like that." I had no idea what we were doing, other than taking parts of the engine off, removing something from a tube, and putting pieces back on. I just loosened and tightened screws where Capt Bob directed me. By the time we were done (for the time being), I noticed that the air from the fan seemed cooler. The temperature hadn't dropped at all, I just felt like it was cooler because of how hot I was.

The rest of the day I spent studying, working on abstracts, and catching up on emails. First we were heeling 20-30 degrees starboard, then we switched to port. Regrettably, we switched to port for the night, which means I was being dumped out of my bed all night. I did manage to find an escape from the heeling – a lightweight hammock I brought with me. I set up the hammock on the aft deck, and was hanging straight down in it – allowing me to really see how much we were heeling. We ended the day watching the new Robin Hood movie starring Russell Crowe. Just before the movie started, I put a splitter into my headphones and Monique and I danced to "I Wanna Be Like You" (King Louie's song in the Jungle Book) in the salon. Nobody else could hear the music, but everyone thought the sight of us dancing like fools was hilarious.

Day 75 – Wednesday, September 29, 2010 – Limping Day

We are now within 40 mi of shore. We get engine power for about 5-10 min every now and then, but still moving very slowly. I spent most of the day studying.

At one point Dr. Wise was talking to Tania about staying on the boat. Sandy, Matt and I also happened to be in the room for much of the conversation. The point Dr. Wise was making to Tania was that if she wants to be a whale researcher, she is living her dream by staying on the boat. He pointed out that if she left when she could've stayed she

would very much regret it later in life. That was the gist of the conversation. He left the decision up to her, pointing out bluntly (not rudely) that she wasn't needed on the voyage – if she left, we would still be able to do all of our work. I mention this not to pick on Tania, but because it gave Matt and I a refresher on how important this voyage is to us. We made the decision to put everything else back at home on hold – sometimes this is tough to deal with, sometimes we're too distracted to think about it. Yes, I believe Matt and I are living our dream (at least one of them). I have been fortunate enough to be raised in a family that has pushed me and enabled me to live many dreams – playing soccer in 3 foreign countries, flying in zero gravity, earning my SCUBA license, spending countless hours on the rocky coast of Maine and in the woods and mountains of the northeast, and many many others. When I graduated from high school, my family all went out to dinner. A moment of reflection came up and my dad asked us how we would describe our childhood. I merely looked at him and gave him my signature smile – nothing else needed to be said in my opinion.

Johnny