

## **TEAM BLOG July 13 – July 30**

### **Whale Correction**

Written by OAR Crew

Thursday, 13 July 2006 06:50

Thank you to all that have responded via text to our posting on the whales. These moments are not a daily occurrence, but we continue to be amazed by what the ocean presents us with on a daily basis. I'm sure the fast approaching weather system will have it's own set of lessons for us to experience. As several of you have observed, the wales that surrounded our boat were not Right Wales. Rather they were Pilot Whales, which I am told are in the same family as Orcas. Anyway, thank you all for the correction and we look forward to sharing the footage of the Pilot Whales with all of you. Some of you have asked about a book or some sort of record of our journey. We are currently working with Flying Spot to produce a documentary of the race. They are amazing to work with and have been some of our biggest text supporters. So, a thank you to everyone at Flying Spot and if you see them at the Atlantic Crossing 1/2 way party tonight, say hello for us. Also, a thanks for organizing the party and designing the 3rd generation of OARNW t-shirt should be in order.

Take care everyone and enjoy the party.

ROOH,

Brad V and Crew

### **Party Reminder and Brief History**

Written by OAR Crew

Thursday, 13 July 2006 15:00

Reminder:

We're more than half way to England, and they're throwin' us a party!

If you are anywhere near Seattle tonight (Thursday), make sure to visit The Atlantic Crossing, a pub on 65th & Roosevelt. There's a party going down to benefit OAR Northwest and the American Lung Association of Washington. Great people, great brew, and the debut of our new tees – specially designed by the creative gurus at Flying Spot Entertainment. They've received a high "badassitude" mark from our shore manager... How could you pass that up?

What: 1/2 way party

Where: Atlantic Crossing, 65th & Roosevelt

When: 6pm-close

**\*\*A band will be playing\*\***

Brief History:

Since we embarked on this adventure, we've been amazed at the amount of support we've

gotten. Our website gets over 60,000 hits per day, we have received texts and emails from half the states, 6 different countries, and two oceans, and we feel our story is spreading by the minute. We realize that, for some of you, we are just four faceless guys rowing thousands of miles away. We'd like to give you a brief history of what OAR Northwest is, how it came to be, and the path we have taken to half-way across the ocean.

All four of us met on the rowing team at University of Puget Sound, a small liberal arts college in Tacoma, WA. After graduating, our unstoppable captain saw a poster at Lake Washington Rowing Club in Seattle for this race. After a little convincing and a lot of coercion, Brad, Greg and I signed on and OAR Northwest was born in January, 2005. One year ago, we moved into a house in Seattle together. In that year, we have purchased the boat, started the non-profit, outfitted the J.R. Hanssen, set an indoor rowing record, completed two major training rows out of Seattle, and made it to New Jersey ready to race.

Our journey over the last year will always in some way eclipse the row itself. Our commitment to OAR Northwest has been indescribable in its intensity, and would have been for nothing if not for the help that we received from all the amazing people in the Northwest community. Tonight, you have the opportunity to meet some of those astounding people!

Now, review the above primer on OAR Northwest, get yourself to the Atlantic Crossing, and have yourself a blast!

### Thoughts

Written by OAR Crew

Friday, 14 July 2006 15:38

A storm is coming in the next twenty-four hours and while it will be no Alberto the thought of being wet for an indeterminate amount of time began to wear on me last night. It made for a rough start to the next shift as Dylan and I were greeted with rain, wind and instantly cold and clammy extremities. These conditions make it easy to miss home.

The current had shifted against us and what was had rewarded us with over three knots just hours earlier was giving us less than one. I had two choices: To view the sea as a fickle mistress and approach her with anger and frustration. Or, I could accept that the sea only ever allows ships to pass. Our little sliver of fiberglass civilization is blessed to be this far along. We do not have the strength to fight the sea so we submit to it instead. Record or not, win or not, both of which we want dearly do not matter to the ocean. Ultimately she decides when we cross. Beyond that our speed rests in what we can control. Hope for a fair wind. Faith that it will come and the compassion that keeps us together against fear and doubt.

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers."

-Henry V

J

### **ADITL: Communications**

Written by OAR Crew

Saturday, 15 July 2006 11:35

Currents, currents everywhere... Harbo & Samuelson are making sure we're worthy... Great progress today so far, thanks for cheering us on!

A Day in the Life (ADITL) continues... today's topic of conversation - how we keep in touch.

Here's a list of ingredients to staying in touch with the real world back home:

- Laptop
- Satellite Phone

That's it!

The highlight of our days are text messages we receive from YOU every day. We must get about 50-60 per day (sometimes more) wishing fair winds, following seas, offering jokes clean and not that much, and position reports on the other boats in the fleet. Chances are, you already know how to text us (visit the contact section, I think). Keep it up. It's free.

Using email, we are in daily contact with Shore Manager Kyle as she keeps us posted on your bigger messages sent to the [info@oarnorthwest.com](mailto:info@oarnorthwest.com) account. Families and girlfriends email direct to us out here, and now and then we get weather reports... like the one mentioning 40knot winds by Friday.

The satellite phone is a handy tool used every once in a while to talk with family back home and the race organizer in the UK. At about \$2.00 per minute, we use it sparingly. Reception is quite clear, and there is generally little - if any - delay.

Pretty basic system, but it keeps us rowing hard, and it keeps you informed.

Greggo

P.S. - HELLO SEATTLE! (& Ed)

### **A moment**

Written by OAR Crew

Monday, 17 July 2006 14:43

Good miles mean good days. Period. however, this does not mean they come easy. There are times between getting thrown off your seat by irate waves and listening to the rain patter on the cabin just before your shift starts that you think that it might be nice for some warm weather and calmer waves. Yet, the desire for speed is a strong one and it

serves as good motivation to combat misery. Changing weather can't be stepped, good or bad. And this morning the clouds broke, with bright blue patches promising sun and warmth. For the first time in 36 hours I was warm and drying out. There, surrounded by dark clouds threatening my respite I cradled this moment. My moment in the sun.

j

### **Gabbermouth**

Written by OAR Crew

Tuesday, 18 July 2006 11:35

We now take this opportunity to introduce our readers to the third installment of OARNW super heroes.

Name: Gabbermouth

OARNW Cover: Greg Spooner

AKA: the Chin, Jaw Line, and Spoon Man

Height: lofty

Build: those shoulders, oh-my...and that chin...

Allies: Cell Bot, Fearless Footnote, Dr. Disclaimer

Enemies: Captain Concise, The Mumbler and just about any long distance phone operator

Abilities: The Gabber is the team mouth piece. He handles most communications for the OARNW boys. On one occasion he actually talked the ear off of a potential attacker. No easy task, but the spoon has proved this possible with only 3 speaking points. Impressive to say the least, or most... The Spoon has also developed an ability to decipher VHF chatter, which comes in handy on the crossing of the North Atlantic. Some rumor he has been able to turn VHF into HF in order to reach a wider audience.

Last seen: we're not sure, but we heard him gabbing in the stern...on the sat phone maybe? We need to set a time limit, or the sat phone may draw our entire battery charge...

Well, there's only Capt. Momentum left to introduce...stay tuned for our next installment...

### **Reason and Motivation**

Written by OAR Crew

Wednesday, 19 July 2006 01:00

Hopes and dreams:

It may appear to some we strive for much. Perhaps, but perhaps not enough. Lets err on the side of caution and go those extra miles. Perhaps we may ask for your help to do it.

Our goal at the start of this adventure, in addition to becoming the first Americans to row the North Atlantic, was to raise \$300,000 for the American Lung Association of Washington. Like rowing the Atlantic, we feel like this is a large, yet realistic goal. All that must be done is to break it down, stroke by stroke. What is \$300,000? Three hundred people giving a thousand, three thousand people giving \$100, Six thousand people giving \$50.

Of course we would love to make it all on our this trip, and realistic or not, we would love to see a push. A grand thousand mile push to the finish. We are told our website gets over 60000 hits a day, and while we are aware we have some dedicated family, friends, and fans we are pretty sure we are getting quite a few independent hits each day. If only one thousand of you dedicated five cents to our last one thousand miles it would come to \$50,000. That would be a grand push.

If we have impressed you, amazed you, all we ask in return is to be amazed in return by your generosity to this worthy charity.

We might not stop asthma, but we can fight it and control it. We need your help. Below and over the next few days will be facts about this disease and how it affects us all.

Thank you for your support.

The Men of Oar Northwest.

Fact 1: In 2001, an estimated 6.3 million children under 18 had asthma. Four million of those had an asthma attack in that year. More than 43% of asthma hospitalizations in 2000 were in those under age 15.

### **ADITL: Hygiene**

Written by OAR Crew

Friday, 21 July 2006 10:24

Too tired to brush your teeth today? Wash your hands? Shave? We are sometimes, too; but out here it's all about establishing a routine. Today's ADITL is all about hygiene... given some of the potential subject matter, we'll do our best to keep it clean... hahaha... get it? Clean?

Rowing fast became the easy part of this grand adventure across the Atlantic Ocean. And still with just under 1,000 miles to go, a 2-hour row followed by some food and a short nap (and visions of dry land) is plenty motivation to keep bending the oars. Yet it's the in-between stuff that, for one reason or another, is the more difficult part of living in cramped quarters with 3 other dudes. Bathing, laundry, tooth brushing, and facilities (i.e. - the bucket) take on a whole new significance.

The constant reminder though is that your body begins to break down, or fall apart really, without keeping up on the basics. Your teeth will ache, your jock will itch, your clothes will smell, and the cramp of all intestinal cramps will never leave you be. So if you want

to be comfortable (comfort?), find a way.

Though little of these mini daily adventures is ever completely 'daily,' as long as you take a few small steps each day, it will mean happy rowers, and happier rowing partners who have to share a cramped cabin with you.

So, wash the undercarriage, appreciate the morning constitution, give those knickers a good scrub, and shine those pearly whites and you just may see pictures from land of a smiling ocean rower in the next few weeks.

Greg

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FACT 2: Asthma is the second leading cause of hospitalization for children ages 5-9.

### **Titans in the sky.**

Written by OAR Crew

Friday, 21 July 2006 12:43

At dawn the clouds rearranging themselves like an army of titans readying for battle. Frothy clouds moved hundreds of feet above our heads, eager messengers between the fronts. The sun, behind us to the east lit up lapis lazuli waves covering them with a heaving, breathing golden filigree. It was a clash that never came. Rising still the sun marched upward, taking with it pinks and oranges of a ferocious sunrise.

J

### **Congratulations!**

Written by OAR Crew

Saturday, 22 July 2006 11:39

The OAR Northwest boys would like to extend a hearty and heartfelt congratulations to Jim and Vicki O'Connor, who were married today. Jim, commodore of the Liberty Yacht Club in New Jersey, Vicki, and the rest of the LYC relentlessly worked to ensure our departure from New Jersey was a success. They made what could have been a stressful experience fun for us, our families, and our friends. They embody the amazing heart that we have found in so many people along our journey. If you are celebrating tonight, raise a toast to a wonderful couple, and take heart in hearing that there are still people surrounding us willing to go to great lengths simply to help others.

Dylan

### **South Winds & Sea Anchor**

Written by OAR Crew

Saturday, 22 July 2006 04:12

The weather is certainly not un-rowable right now, but there's no sense beating our heads against the wall to progress only south or west. Thus, if you see our course looking not so

much in the direction of England, that's because we're on sea anchor today. We use the sea anchor to drift at a slow rate, in a generally more favorable direction than if we simply let the boat drift, or even try to row against the weather.

We love and hate the sea anchor as it means less rowing, and potentially more days on the water. The bonus though is the extra rest our bodies need after 43 days of limited sleep and good, hard racing.

Have a great Saturday!

Greg

### **Back in Motion**

Written by OAR Crew

Sunday, 23 July 2006 12:11

We're back in action!

The winds have shifted to the north, and the seas have died down enough for us to make some sort of progress toward England. The feeling of getting back into the groove is indescribable. While being on sea anchor gives us the time to catch up on some small things on deck, the wet makes the cabin an uncomfortable environment, and sleep with all four of us in there isn't. Even the rough rowing, with the butt sores, the splashing, and the shin-knockers is better than waiting. Send good luck thoughts this direction in hopes conditions stay good, but for now: Onward to England!

Dylan

### **900 Miles**

Written by OAR Crew

Monday, 24 July 2006 07:53

With 900 miles left in our journey, we would like to remind you of our push to raise our goal of \$300,000 for the American Lung Association of Washington. Over the next 900 miles, we'll highlight a few good reasons for helping us accomplish this achievement.

The first is a personal one for our team. While the American Lung Association of Washington works to fight asthma in the state, it also has a strong hand in the community. When we started OAR Northwest, and targeted ALAW as our chosen charity, we were years (literally) away from the adventure. We were four guys out of college, with no money or endorsements, and nothing to claim but rowing experience and a big idea.

ALAW was the first organization to believe in us. The faith they placed in our team was astounding, and gave us a boost that helped carry us over the next year and a half, out of New Jersey, and hopefully into Falmouth. To think that these wonderful people, who have committed their lives to charity work, could envision our dream gave us the strength to share our story with others. Even if only because they could relate to long hours, hard work, and low wages, they were as much a part of our success as anyone.

If you enjoy reading about our adventure, take a moment to think about the 1 in 9 adults and 1 in 10 children in our home state who suffer from asthma. Remember, if only one thousand of you dedicated five cents to our last one thousand miles it would come to \$50,000. Our goal is to raise \$300,000 over our last 1000 miles. While this is ambitious, so is our adventure; we hope that we've entertained and inspired you enough to dream big with us, and help us reach our goal.

Thank you.

Dylan

### **Thinking Good Thoughts...**

Written by OAR Crew

Wednesday, 26 July 2006 05:03

Hello OAR Northwest Friends, Family, & Faithful:

Tragic news to report from back home. This morning we received word that one of our own, fellow University of Puget Sound Logger and former rower, Chris Pate ('98?), was killed in action in Iraq this week.

Since there is not much we can do out here but row, we're dedicating our next 100 miles to Chris and his dedication to our country and our fellow oarsmen and women at UPS. Our thoughts and prayers are with his many friends and family.

Best,

Greg & Crew

### **800 Miles**

Written by OAR Crew

Wednesday, 26 July 2006 10:32

As we pass the 800 mile mark, we return again to our 1000 mile push for the American Lung Association of Washington. Charities such as ALAW work tirelessly for a common good. Their work benefits indiscriminately.

Unfortunately, they constantly fight a battle for funding, knowing that the energy being expended raising dollars is energy diverted from their charitable goal. They lose staff, because all of them are underpaid and unappreciated; one can find the same job description for twice the money if not working for a charity.

Without private support of these organizations, they can accomplish nothing. Surprisingly, most of that support comes from small donors. Larger donors are out there, and are vital to the survival of a charity. But, as we found out in our project, waiting for that 'Angel Sponsor' will leave you at home, while other team row across the ocean.



It's the individuals who write the \$10, \$20, \$50 checks that allow organizations to survive. Ultimately, it comes down to the people who don't normally donate, who hear the pledge drives and funding requests and assume that someone else is calling in. Today, we ask you to be the person who takes that extra time out of your day, that extra \$10 out of your wallet, and donate it to an organization that will use it for the benefit of the community we all live in.

### **No Regretts**

Written by OAR Crew

Wednesday, 26 July 2006 13:15

As I grow closer to England it is easy to get caught up in the miles we have left and forget about our surroundings. The dynamic fourty shades of blue, phosphorescence that trails the boat and stars for light years that I have never seen and will not see on land.

It is hard because we are tired. It is hard because we miss those we love. It is hard because being on a boat with four guys can at times grow difficult. Yet I must remember the camaraderie, cherish it while I can and most importantly enjoy the company that only comes through working toward a single goal. It is easy to get caught up in home, what you will eat and cotton sheets, yet we must feast instead upon our present case, and with all our hearts remember each dolphin we see jump, each man of war that floats idly by. Happenings that by now on day forty-seven seem common place. We must remember to attack each day with fresh eyes and an open mind because soon we will be on land. Happy with our loved ones and satisfied with what the ocean has given us.

-J

### **What We See as the Miles Shrink**

Written by OAR Crew

Thursday, 27 July 2006 02:54

We're crossing the 750mi to go mark today, and with that comes a new ration of cream cheese, and a 700-mile celebration meal just around the corner. (We're eating fancy every 100 miles until the finish)

But that's what's happening on the boat. Outside the confines of our trusty 'yacht' however, there is much more to see these days. From the end of the gulf stream until now, our selection of birds and wildlife dwindled to a few select species that, while still amazing and fun to watch, provided only so many new observational cues about their kind. We'll be seeing more land birds in the next few hundred miles, and our selection of whales is also picking up... two new kinds over the last couple days!

Human life is also picking up around us. Airplanes that blinked their red and white strobe so far in the distance now appear to fly low over us, initiating descent into their respective airports on the east side of the Atlantic. Shipping traffic is on the rise with various ships passing near and far, day and night. Just this morning, vessel Melbourne Highway, shlepped its full shipment of cars just past us (about 1 mile) on its way from

Rhode Island to Emden, Germany. Interesting to note that despite its name, the ship is out of Japan!

Life is no longer just the crew of the JRH and the Atlantic Ocean's amazing creatures. It's like spring time on the ocean as life appears around us once again, and we re-familiarize ourselves with tastes and aromas long forgotten. There still may be up to 3 weeks left on our epic journey (especially given the finicky currents of the last several weeks), but you can taste it and you can feel it - civilization, once again.

Now back to the oars!

Greg

### **Mountains**

Written by OAR Crew

Thursday, 27 July 2006 11:20

Just before dawn dark mountains appeared on the horizon. Despite their watery make up they reminded me of the mountain ranges I knew from growing up in New Mexico. They had jagged peaks and for all the sun's rays shining behind them they looked as solid as the Sandia's or Oregon's mountains of my home state. Yet these apparitions went on unbroken for a full horizon. As striking and permanent so they seemed, it was nothing but a half hour of wind and sun that made quick work of them- turning mountains back into clouds once again.

J

### **700 miles to be a part of OARNW & ALAW**

Written by OAR Crew

Friday, 28 July 2006 15:01

Hey Everyone,

Marvelous day on the North Atlantic with excellent progress to report for the last 24 hours! The wind is picking up considerably, and most often, it is in our favor and giving us a HUGE push toward Falmouth. Gorgeous sunset tonight, and being Friday, gumbo.

Being a hundred-mile milestone, there is business to attend to... please see below:

Thank you for all of your support and words of encouragement you have given us over the course of the journey. As we have 700 miles to go, these words will fuel us on to the finish line. All of you have truly are a part of our project. This includes the adventure, racing, wind, waves and escape from daily life that all of us on board (and from what we hear, those of you at home) have come to enjoy. In addition, it is our dedicated commitment to raise funds for the American Lung Association of Washington.

This has become a very important aspect to every member of the team and we hope that as you follow our journey, you can relate to our desire to raise funds for this very

worthwhile organization. As you have become a member of our support team through reading our blog and sending words of encouragement, we ask that you complete that membership by making a contribution to the American Lung Association of Washington.

All of you have contributed to our goal of rowing to England. Now we ask that you contribute to our goal of raising funds for our charitable partner. Do it online at <http://www.OARNorthwest.com>, or send your check.

We hope to have an updated donation tally on the 1000 Mile Push by the 500-mile marker.

Thank You

### **OARNW Pic Update**

Written by OAR Crew

Saturday, 29 July 2006 09:28

Getting pictures to the website is more of a job than we imagined before the trip started. Thus, the lack of visuals for you all to enjoy. Take a peek though at a few select shots taken from onboard the JRH recently. Hope you enjoy.

Here's what you'll see:

- Daily life... brush the teeth, dry the laundry, row thy oars
- Checking through our inventory (mostly tuna)
- Brad & his huge guns
- Dylan exhibiting perfect sea anchor behavior
- An Atlantic sunset
- Jordan & Dylan on a pleasant evening shift

Gregorio

### **Rex on the Loose!**

Written by OAR Crew

Saturday, 29 July 2006 09:04

Dearest Jurassic Park Enthusiasts,

I think all the fan mail has been going to his head... these days the satellite phone brings in a ton of text messages, but as the race wears on and winds down, the mascot seems to be getting all the attention. Yup, Rex. He's (or she?) a star now. Just after leaving New York, we thought it best to take Rex down from the usual perch on the bow cabin so we wouldn't lose our trusty and watchful guard lizard. Now that we're learning of Rex's desires for attention, we've seen him around the deck lately, sure to strike a pose when the camera is hot... and you know, guarding our stuff and looking tough. Take a look...

Greg

### **Midnight visitors and a change in phosphorescence**

Written by OAR Crew  
Saturday, 29 July 2006 14:32

Last night I noticed that the nature of the phosphorescence had changed. Instead of a brilliant glow they existed as a million speckles in the water, visible at different depths. Later that night glowing apparitions appeared beneath the surface of the water trailed by thick streaks of neon. Splashes followed with gasps of air betrayed the dolphins identity.

**Less than 600 miles to go!!!**

Written by OAR Crew  
Sunday, 30 July 2006 13:29

Hello all,

WOW! What an incredible few days OARNW and the JRH have had on the ocean. Great winds, following seas, and a little extra grit and determination (probably because we know land is oh-so-close) propelled us well ahead of the other crews, over the mid-Atlantic ridge, and onto the Eurasian Plate, en route to Falmouth and a new American record!

For us, it's not just about the adventure and the challenge of the Atlantic. It's about how we can use the attention and publicity (and very long hours at the oars) to do more for a necessary and important cause - the American Lung Association of Washington.

You have less than 600 miles - about 10 more days - to help us make a difference and help eradicate lung disease. Please pledge your support by donating online [here](#).

Thank you for support!

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Attached to this blog is a photo of my grandparents that we all get to stare at each time we take a seat for our shift. The Italian phrase "Andatevi Ragazzi! Buon Tempo Si Spera!" translates roughly to "Way to go guys!" and the "Pink skies at night, sailors' delight..." expression. My grandfather was Italian, and he and my grandma taught me a great lesson that was passed from them, through my parents, and on to me and my sister... generosity and goodwill at any cost. If you have it, and can afford it, there is no sense in just hanging on to it. Do good for those around you, and for those that inspire you each day to lead a better and more productive and inspired life.