



Marion Bermuda— *Spirit of Bermuda* Day 5

Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club, Paget BERMUDA—, June 18, 2013:
DAY 5 on *Spirit of Bermuda* – TUESDAY JUNE 18, 2013

No wind.

Fantastic weather - no wind.

Beautiful sunrise, gorgeous clouds, lovely calm seas, but no wind.

Spirit of Bermuda weighs 120 tons. She is a champion in heavy weather. She is the yacht you want when the seas are rough or the wind is high.

But for the last 2 days, the high-pressure system over the mid-Atlantic has produced very little wind to drive us home.

So we keep sailing – slowly; averaging about 3 to 5 knots.

We are now 65 nautical miles from the finish line. Our current navigation tracking software models calculate that we will reach Kitchen Shoals at around 10:00 PM tonight, assuming current weather projections. Of course, much sooner if the wind increases.

Many of the crew have family and friends waiting anxiously on the shores of Bermuda, ready to welcome us home. We know this, and it makes our torturous pace difficult. So be patient with us, loved ones. We are sailing as fast as we can.

Sailing this yacht in light air is quite difficult. Bermuda is directly into the wind, and even though this Bermuda rig was designed to go to windward, she does not perform this task as well as modern yachts. The helmsman must carefully balance a course that keeps the boat headed as close to the wind as possible without stalling out. It requires concentration and a group effort: we constantly track boat speed, sail trim, the direction of the apparent wind created by our forward progress, and compass heading.

Meanwhile, the crew has grown quite familiar. We know each other's tastes in music, the books each is reading, our various sleeping habits, and who keeps a

messy bunk. We know who loses his gear and who loses his temper. We have become like a small family.

We come from all over the globe: Hong Kong, Dallas, Blackpool, Boston, County Cork, Paris, Lancashire, and of course, Bermuda. This diversity is enriching. We enjoy stimulating conversations and struggle with various accents and senses of humor.

Spirit is in this race because Preston walked the plank. Spirit pays for its programs by hosting fundraisers, one of which is a “Walk the Plank” dinner, in which our skipper, Preston Hutchings raised lots of money for Spirit by walking the plank. Together with his friend Patrick McGee from Dallas, who spends much of his summer in Bermuda, they donated the necessary funds to charter Spirit for this Marion to Bermuda Race.

Preston and Patrick also established a new class of yachts for the race: sail training yachts. This class of contestants includes tall ships and all classic yachts used for instructional purposes. We are competing for the “Captain Ed Williams Trophy,” named for the late professional captain from Bermuda who used sailing as a means of teaching. We are delighted that Captain Williams’ son Ed is a member of our crew.

We are deeply grateful to Preston Hutchings and Patrick McGee for making this race possible through their generous support of Spirit of Bermuda.

DAY 5 UPDATE

Amen and Alleluia!

Wind and Fish!

2 great things just happened at the same time.

First, the wind just burst open, gusting up to 22 knots. We heal over. We accelerate. We are back in business! Maybe we will make the finish before nightfall. Great!

And, to top it off, that fishing pole that we have dragged without any luck for 4 days through the doldrums suddenly starts to scream. It’s the telltale sound: FISH ON!

But, we are now moving so fast, we cannot catch the fish. It simply cannot be dragged in. It’s too heavy. We don’t know what it is, but it must be big. And to catch the fish, we have to stop moving.

Stop moving!?! What? Now? After praying for wind for 3 days?

Thus began the classic conflict: fish or sail? For the first time in days, we are sailing over 8 knots. Fantastic.

But we cannot just cut the line. So what to do: fish or sail?

Some say sail on. One crew offers to buy everyone fresh sushi as soon as we land in Bermuda if we can cut the line. Others say we have to stop the boat so we can land the beast.

After spirited debate, we head into the wind and luff the sails.

For 20 minutes we intentionally stall our sailboat so we can land the fish. But this is no ordinary catch. This beast is huge. A shark? A dolphin?

Finally, amid much reeling and running, shouting, and amid ample cameras and free advice, we gaff the beast and pull onto the aft deck a 60-pound tuna!

Whew!

We bear off, trim the sails, and celebrate.

The sailing contingent replots our course and resets the sails.

The fishing crew begins to fillet the tuna and hose down the deck.

And now, we dream of fresh fish for lunch and a fine finish this evening.

Amen and Alleluia.

Stewart Thomas

Spirit of Bermuda

Eating fresh tuna