

Will marine diesels go serpentine? ▶ Power voyagers' first time through the locks

OCEAN NAVIGATOR

September 2011
Issue No. 196
\$4.99 U.S. \$4.99 Canada

MARINE NAVIGATION AND OCEAN VOYAGING

Special Section
GREEN VOYAGING

Last leg of circumnavigation:
South Atlantic lengthwise

How to replace a jib track

NIGEL CALDER ON POWER WINCH SAFETY

www.OceanNavigator.com



read stories about the horrors of this ancient ceremony during which those who have already received the honours get to dish them up for the newbies. In our case, I was the only shell-back on board, a dubious honor but one which comes with a heap of responsibility. What could I possibly do that will make this a truly memorable moment for my shipmates?

In the end I summoned the sea gods, Neptune and Poseidon, dressed myself in next-to-no garb topped with a frightening bat mask from the jungles of Panama. I blindfolded the crew and warned them, in my most threatening undersea voice, that they should also "dress-down" for the occasion since, "Who knows what can happen out here!?" I ordered them to sit close to each other on the aft deck box and then pressed a length of battered line into each of their quivering hands and, at the exact moment of crossing, as the GPS showed 00.00, "Neptune" spoke: "Turn and give your pitiful pollywog neighbor a proper lashing!" They managed to roughly follow orders collapsing in tears of pain and laughter on the deck after less than a minute of manual torture. "Neptune" then dumped several buckets of salty equatorial water over their unsuspecting heads followed by some cheap Indian rum, all the while proclaiming them "shellbacks extraordinaire" and demanding

their allegiance. Needless to say they cooperated!

Swim call

After the ceremony was complete, and because there was no wind (nada!), we stopped the Yanmar "d-sail" cold, leaped over the side, (trailing a couple of long safety lines just in case *Bubari* decided to sail off by herself), and swam in more than 16,000 feet of water, just to say we've done it! The theme from "Jaws" was sung lustily as we splashed around in the warm, deep blue waters.

We were always sure that at least one person was on deck keeping an eye peeled for Man o' War jellyfish (plentiful on this passage) and other denizens of the deep. A delicious Atlantic ocean bath right smack on the equator. The water tasted saltier and sweeter than we remembered...home again! (Actually, more than 3,000 nm to go before we will finally cross the Gulf Stream again and find ourselves truly back in the North Atlantic!)

Later that evening, as the sun set blood red ahead of us, my initiates, San Francisco and Maine-based textile artists, Susan Hoff (www.susanhoff.com) and Sarah Haskell (www.sarahhaskell.com), and my engineer and inventive "fix-it-all" guy, Weston Haskell, Sarah's younger brother, prepared and served a magnificent formal dress-up and sit-down cockpit dinner. They presented Capt.

Biscuits (I received the nickname "Capt. Biscuits" from my Pacific crossing crew who quickly discovered that no matter how many biscuits/cookies were dished-up at the beginning of the evening watch, they'd be gone by dawn!) with a beautiful, artisanal, and now-treasured necklace commemorating the high points of the 45 days spent at sea since leaving South Africa.

Tracking the weather en

Susan Hoff coiling line at the mast as the sun rises in the South Atlantic.

