

Eight Bells

NEWS FROM BELOW DECKS

Le Pecheur D'Etoiles

Crew 361

July 2006

**Winner of the
Pirate
Competition**
Zach
Ginther-Hutt

**Winner of the
Bowline
Competition**
Steven Hellwig



Bugler
Russell Murnen

Engineer
Philip
Bebbington

Editor
Mike Williams

Captain
Philip
Bebbington

A word from the Skipper/Admiral

Sorry about no wind, but I hope you had fun. Great week, thanks.

And from Em's,
A great week. We want to keep in touch with you, please write..

When the boys arrived by taxi to the dock in Marsh Harbor where the *Le Pecheur D'Etoile* was anchored, most of the boys had no idea that they were looking at a boat that they would come to live in and love for the next week. Many of the boys had no idea which boat the *Pecheur* was. Once we had loaded our bags into the small dinghy which Capt. Del had driven out, we motored off to the *Pecheur*, an 85-foot Gaff-Rigged Ketch. The *Le Pecheur D'Etoile* was once an old ocean fishing boat from Quebec, Canada. And Capt. Del was just as hard as the boat itself, a true sailor, who was well weathered both in body and in patience for any kind of horseplay or fooling around on his ship. Once we had situated ourselves with the ship and stored our bags and gear below-decks, Capt. Del sat us down, like he would do every day afterwards, and begun to explain the history, rules, duties and expectations while we were guests aboard his ship. He explained to us that all work we had to do would be strictly monitored by him, Emsy, and the adults in the crew. Then, on a much lighter note, he explained what we would be doing during the week to enjoy ourselves, such as snorkeling, diving, visiting small towns around the Abacos, and getting our hands on the sails as we sailed ourselves to new islands. Once he was done and the ship was packed and ready to go, we started up the motor (due to the lack of wind) and headed off to the site where we would be taking the *Pecheur* Swim Tests. The swim tests were rather grueling, as every man on the boat buddied himself with a fellow scout and swam twice around the boat. It seemed easy, seeing as we had passed the first swim test in the pool. We were wrong. The water in the Caribbean is extremely salty, and the waves had grown to a large and formidable size due to the large amount of speedboats in the area. After an hour of heaving bodies and a very wet deck, we were done with the swim tests. After the tests, we hung out most of the day; until the Captain sat us down and instigated a new policy while onboard the ship. He stated that whistling onboard will call up storms, and that any scout caught whistling would walk the plank once the boat had stopped for the day. We also participated in a bowline tying competition, in which Paul Pittman won. The next day, early in the morning, we arrived at Mermaid Reef, a small protected reef in the Abacos Islands. We dropped anchor, lowered the ladder, strapped on our snorkel gear and began to Swim to the

Reef. Many of the boys had never even seen a reef before, and the sight of this small metropolis teeming with hundreds of different fish and other animals. We had the pleasure of swimming with fish, eels, and coral for an hour of mesmerizing beauty before we were towed back to the ship by holding on to the dinghy. Once we cleaned ourselves off from the reef, we listened to the Captain as he explained the history of pirates, their different forms, and how they got their names. Once we raised the anchor and started to depart, we got to experience first hand the strenuous work and communication that it takes to sail a large craft such as the *Pecheur*. In return, we were rewarded with a considerable amount of speed and shade for the tired crew. After sailing for some time, we arrived at our overnight campsite on Baker Bay, where we swam with the fishes in their artificial reef and had a beach barbeque of hot dogs and coconut. On the third day of our trip, we made the decision to hike to the reefs on the far side of the island, a tough 40 minute hike to the other side of the island. Because of the absence of other boats and the presence of cool waters, we strapped on our gear and started off for the reefs. Larger and more populous than the reefs the day before, the only bad part about it was the fierce undertow which disabled any hard swimming. However, we did get to see a pair of tuna, a large barracuda, and a long line of squid. Once we started up the boat and left Baker Bay, we sailed for a few hours on the motor until we reached the Great Guana Cay (pronounced Key), where we were dropped off shore and spent the rest of the day on the island, talking with the natives and eating at a large restaurant called Nippers, where we ate burgers and fries for the first time in days. After we stopped for some ice cream and bought some souvenirs, we headed back to the boat and spent the night of the shores of the Great Guana Cay singing and dancing until bedtime. At 6:00 AM the next day, we started off sailing, and for the first time in a few days we were able to use the sails, which we strenuously worked at for about three hours. With nothing to do for most of the day, we arrived around 2:00 at Water Cay, during which we snorkeled and explored the island, where we saw land crabs, giant eagle rays, a lionfish, and many kinds of lobsters, fish, and barracudas, as well as dolphins and sea turtles. We went back to the boat for a delicious lunch. After lunch, we went out again

And explored for a second time, in which the boys renamed the island "Zombie Island" due to the massive amount of horseflies, where many boys got bites. We left the next morning after breakfast and sailed, and again we were blessed with a strong wind to power the sails. Near lunch, we arrived at Man-O-War Cay, where we got off the boat and explored the island. Lizards and golf carts surrounded us as we walked to the town center, where we basked in the gloriousness of ice cream and our new favorite, a Bahamian soda called Junkanoo Punch. Once back at the ship, we raised the anchor and the sails in silence, as to see if we could catch a Galleon traveling on the waters, but were too late to catch it for our try at raising the sails was too slow. Before dinner, we surprised Capt. Del, Emsy, and Richard, our leader, by presenting them with our favorite Junkanoo punch drinks, which they really enjoyed. After dinner, the final round of the illustrious Bowline Tying Competition was held, which spiraled off into a heated and well paired match. Along the way, we got many good pictures of lines flying and split-second finishes, one of which required Emsy to capture and replay on her camera to decide the winner. At the end, Steven Hellwig won with Noah Eliason as his opponent, and both squared off in a heated best-of-3 match. After the bowline tying tourney, the boys presented some skits for the crew, and soon after went to bed. Early in the morning, we found out that a complication in the watch schedule had been caused by a sleeping watchman, and punishments were doled out accordingly. That day, we tried for the fastest time to bring up the sails, and unfortunately failed to beat the previous crew's time. After another try, we achieved the time of 8 minutes, but we have no idea what our ranking is amongst the crews. Dinner came, and we helped ourselves to salmagundi, a classical Pirate dinner. It consisted of chicken, carrots, potatoes, grape juice rum. Also that night was the Pirate competition, where all of the crew dressed in their pirate best and competed for a place amongst the pirate crew. Zach Ginther-Hutt won with a great performance, and everybody else was cast overboard for a swim. The next morning, the crew packed their gear which had been thrown around the below-decks and got them collected and packed in their wet and sandy bags and put them on a large sheet on the deck. We grabbed the conchs we so lovingly preserved for home, and stored them above deck. Many of the boys still do not want to leave the ship, even in the presence of Orlando and the rest of Florida. I think many of the crew will look back at the ship, and recollect on the experiences we had aboard the *Le Pecheur D'Etoiles*, and never forget them, ever.

