

The Telltale

Wind - Rudder Indicator & Tale Bearer of Sea|mester, S/Y Argo

Bali to Malaysia

Fall Edition 2008, Volume II

Word from the Editors:

Hello again! Since the last Telltale, your sons and daughters have been initiated by King Neptune, received celebrity treatment at a ten-star resort, and gotten up close and personal with orangutans deep in the jungles of Borneo. Over the last month, we truly have experienced the broadest range of adventures. We hope this Telltale will paint a picture of the variety of fortunes that have befallen us. This month was marked by many special occasions: we completed Argo's circumnavigation of the globe, crossed the equator, and celebrated a new president-elect, just to name a few highlights. The following tales should bring you aboard to experience the daily excitement that takes place on Argo.

Tor Low, Sam Higgins, and Molly Ashkenas

Bali Hai Calls You

Whenever I hear the name Bali, I think of a secluded land that has something which separates it from every other island paradise. During our stay in Bali, it became obvious that there is not just one thing you can pinpoint that makes Bali such an incredible place. As we approached Bali at the end of our four day passage from

Darwin, we were greeted by a "super-



pod" of dolphins. There must have been close to a hundred dolphins that were spread out over a half mile in front of Argo. Everyone gathered at the bow for the unparalleled display of playful dolphins swimming in our wake and leaping out of the water. Some were so close that we could hear them breathe, and one even hit the dolphin striker (aptly named in this case), which is a strut extending a metal stay below the bow to support the rig. All tasks on board ground to a halt as we watched the dolphins, and it was quite a sight itself to see everyone smiling and squirming with childlike glee. As quickly as the dolphins appeared, they were specks in the distance just as we started to enter the crazy port of Bena, Bali. It was a pretty stressful



change of pace from just the sounds of the engine and waves on passage, to planes flying overhead and all sorts of small boats speeding around us, a few of which nearly missed running into us. After searching for a place to drop anchor, we eventually settled in a tight dock spot. The following day we spent much of our time clearing through customs and immigrations, and then prepared ourselves for the show that was to come later that night. When Simon said that we were going to tour a temple, I was expecting a typical walk around tour, but instead we got a presentation that was unlike anything I've ever seen before. After arriving at



the temple, which was beautifully located on a cliff overlooking the ocean, some of us were given peanuts to feed the monkeys that frequently patrolled the area. Unfortunately for Garrett, one of the monkeys decided that his glasses looked more appetizing than a bag of peanuts. One

of the locals selling peanuts was able to get the glasses back, but Garrett had to tip him (the classic swindle with a monkey). Once we passed the monkeys, we realized that we were going to be watching a live demonstration that combined both traditional Balinese culture and comic relief. The presentation was a couple of hours long and was comprised of a group of men wearing red sarongs in the middle of an outdoor amphitheater chanting different tones, with people in crazy animal costumes coming on stage and acting out different stories. Brian got pulled on stage during the comical part of the show when all the people in costumes were doing funny



gestures and dances, so Brian showed off a little jig of his own. By the end of the show, I still wasn't really sure what traditions or religious aspects were being demonstrated, but overall the show was an incredible display of unique chants and dances that made all of us feel like we had just had a rare glimpse into an untouched culture. The next day, we got to try our luck in the pounding surf at one of the nearby beaches where the surf contest for the 1st Asian Games was being held! I've never seen everyone so excited to try something that could potentially end in a lot of pain and little success. After a short briefing and rash guard distribution, we hit the water with our rental surfboards just as high tide was beginning to peak. It didn't take very long before we were

out as far as the locals, paddling into some pretty massive sets. A number of us who haven't really surfed before were able to win the bragging rights of saying we caught our first wave in



Bali! Even though we were all over the map as far as skill levels, I didn't see one person without an ear-to-ear smile on their face. It is such an indescribable feeling to speed down the face of a wave, and I, for one, am definitely hooked. A bunch of us even went back in the afternoon to surf for another hour during our shore time! Unfortunately, our time here was short lived and we had to leave only a few days after getting in. However, I'm sure that Bali permanently left something unique in everyone's minds that will remain as vivid of a memory as if we were there yesterday!

Aaron Flaster

The Orangutan Adventure

After arriving in Borneo, Simon organized a two-day journey for us up



the Kumai River to a place called Camp Leakey, an orangutan reserve where the forests of Borneo are protected for the purpose of orangutan research and tourism. Although none of the crew had any idea what to expect on this tour, our briefing suggested that we would at least have some unprecedented opportunities to



view orangutans in the wild, that we would be traveling and living aboard a river boat, and that the boats would be picking us up from Argo. We were sitting around in the harbor of Kumai waiting for these tour boats to come in the early morning and pick us up. It turned out that these boats were a double decker bus on water and that each of the tour boats had a bathroom on the stern that had western style toilets, and in order to flush you would dump a pail of water into the toilet. We started out motoring up a creek that led into the jungles that contained the orangutans. That day we got to experience an afternoon feeding of the orangutans. There was a platform in the middle of the jungle where the orangutans were called using a big

“yooooooooo”; which is the calling for supertime. Then all the orangutans would come swinging on vines out of



the jungle in order to access these platforms. At the end of the feeding everybody got back into their tour boats. We then headed up the river to where we would anchor for the night. As a bonding activity the crewmates started playing charades. This is how the game went, everybody who plays writes down a bunch of names, places, and things and then they all get folded up and put into a hat. Each person has a partner and one of the partners has to act out the word and the other partner has to guess it. The partners have thirty seconds to guess as many of the words as they can. This game gets really funny because some words



get harder to act out. All of the meals that we had on this trip were excellent local meals. One night we had rice with this sweet soy sauce that is sold in Indonesia. We also had a snack the



first day that consisted of fried bananas. The next day everybody got to sleep in a little bit, which is nice because we always have to get up early on Argo. The next morning everybody got up for a morning orangutan feeding. It was really exciting because we got to see a huge male. The guides told us that they are 10 times stronger than humans. That afternoon we went and visited a local village on the creek connecting to the main river. After the village we went to one more orangutan feeding before heading back to Argo. This side trip was nice for everybody because we all got to have a break from the busy days aboard our ship. Also the afternoon tea was excellent on the tour boats.

Thomas Belk

Singapore

We were told that they don't play around here, that people get flogged for j-walking, arrested for spitting, and fined for chewing gum (not that you could find any gum anyways, since selling it is also illegal). Indeed it is a very clean city and there is no gum,



however now you will only get flogged for vandalism... phew. Even the harbor water was considerably cleaner than the other places we've been. We arrived in the marina on Sentosa Island and instantly saw mega-yachts. What kind of place had Sea|mester brought us to? None of the other



anchorage or piers were like this. Simon had described Sentosa as a resort island and it certainly did have that feel to it. They had maps much like an amusement park with different colored zones, there was a giant Merlion along with a gondola lift in the middle of the island, and the marina

itself was spectacular. Off in the distance on Singapore proper we could see a giant Ferris-wheel. Being tied up at the One 15 Marina Club was surely a highlight of the trip. It had a pool with a partially submerged dining area overlooking the mega-yachts. Usually bathrooms and shower facilities aren't part of a tour, but these could have been; roomy



showers with hot water and huge shower heads were a godsend after Borneo. Inside the "changing room" facilities there were cushioned benches in front of a big plasma screen TV. WiFi was free so long as you had the password, and you could get a good signal even from Argo. Speaking of technology, we quickly found out that the stereotypical Asian mall isn't really a stereotype. Computer stores, game stores, internet cafes, phone stores, and "any weird gizmo you would never need" stores made up about 60% of the mall space. Clothes shops were ridiculously abundant in the VivoCity mall, surrounding a movie theatre and a grocery store. This was only our first stop from Sentosa; we still had all of Singapore to explore. Chinatown was amazing, pure and simple. Stepping out of the MRT subway station at the Chinatown stop was like instantly going back in time. Our first sight was Chinese architecture with little shop stalls and criss-crossing paper lanterns alongside thousands of people. Anyone could find anything there, even backpacks

with spikes on them, or old, authentic



nautical navigation tools. Back on Sentosa, the Beach Front felt much more like a theme park. The most popular attraction there was the Sentosa Luge, a 650 meter downhill concrete track littered with Asian tourists. The challenge was not going fast or navigating around the track, it was avoiding the throngs of people. Even Simon and Kate raced, though they were beaten badly by Coulter and I. We will always remember our time in Singapore as being one of the best stops on the trip. Even though we were culture shocked at first, we got back into the groove of modern day technology, luxury, and just regular civilization outside of our micro-world. Good-bye Singapore, see you soon.

Blake Cannino

Happy Halloween

Halloween is usually thought of as a day for parents to dress their kids up



as ninjas, bumble bees, pirates, super heroes, and other creatures of the night to go around the neighborhood for some trick or treating. The rest of the night is spent by the parents trying to get their kids to fall asleep, which is nearly impossible because the little goblins just consumed their own body



weight in candy. When you get older, the costumes you wear become more humorous and creative, and the holiday becomes more about celebrating in crazy costumes. Through our travels, none of the countries we have stopped in celebrate Halloween so there was no purchasing



of costumes. Everyone had to be creative and make do with what we had. Argo's crew showed their



costume making skills in full force to celebrate this years' Halloween. The day of Halloween started like any normal day of passage. Watches went on as usual as we made our way from Borneo to Singapore. The night before, James McMahon bought a pumpkin, or what looked like a pumpkin, and carved it into a jack-o-lantern. All day long people were trying to think of ideas for their costumes. We decided to have a costume contest and the judging categories were ownership, creativity, originality and best in show. Our contest was held at 3:00pm and we all gathered in the cockpit in our costumes. The female members of the Argo staff were all dressed as the ruthless "Jungle Mafia" with camouflage shorts and large machetes. Aaron Flaster was dressed as a dirty backpacker that we have seen so much on our adventures. Beau Silver was dressed as a cardboard box man. Melissa Phillips

and Xander Stewart were dressed as a large tug boat, towing a short tow as seen by night as we learned in our PSCT class. Jack Pincus went tribal with a mask that he purchased in the Tiwi islands strutting his stuff around deck wearing only a loincloth and armed with a blow dart gun purchased in Borneo. Sam Higgins came up on deck looking like a lost tourist with his map, binoculars and a large back pack trying to find his way to the next gift shop and was given the creativity award. Court Noyes was dressed as our fellow shipmate James and wore lifeguard shorts, sleeveless surf shirt, and a pair of shiny blue sunglasses. Court was awarded the originality award. Kevin Johnsen was dressed as the bird trainer that we had met back in Australia who had almost lost his peregrine falcon demonstrating how they attack their prey. Coulter



Lenhart had to cut his long hair so that he would be allowed into the country of Singapore. He decided to have fun with it and for his Halloween costume he was a dirty fat mullet man with a handle bar moustache and was given the ownership award for staying in

character and talking like a hick the whole time. Molly Ashkenas was dressed as an over weight nun and Brian Gamble was one of the lady boys of Thailand with a coconut bra. Blake Cannino was dressed as a Ninja with a weapon on every inch of his body and Thomas Belk was dressed as some of the locals that we saw in Borneo. Tor Low was dressed to impress as a dirty old bum complete with her bottle of fake booze in hand, a cardboard sign and her not-so-fresh teeth. We had to pick a winner of the costume contest and there could only be one. The winner was Nick Herman who dressed up as Michel Jackson and talked, walked, looked, and danced like Michel. As a prize Nick was given a Sea|mester T-shirt and some candy. After the masquerade we all continued with our watches and the crew members that were not on watch would come into the cockpit and trick or treat for some candy from the watch team that was on at the time. The crew all had a great time on Halloween and I think they will all agree when I say it was one of the most memorable Halloween's that I have ever had.

Coulter Lenhart

Sailing over the Equator

Watch Team One eagerly awaited the



moment when Argo would cross 0 degrees on the GPS, and therefore cross the equator. All seven of us huddled around Jack as he held a

steady course at the helm. Sam and I were on bow watch right before crossing, and almost expected to see some guy in a row boat painting the line of the equator (it never happened). About 20 minutes before we crossed, our watch team excitedly hustled down the main companionway



to wake the rest of the crew. We used a very loud whistle and yelled at the top of our lungs: "EQUATOR, EQUATOR, EVERYONE ON DECK!" Although they knew they were going to be woken up in the middle of the night, some seemed slightly peeved to be woken up at 11:40pm. I don't know, but maybe it had something to do with the whistle and the yelling. Once everyone was awake, up on deck in their bathing suits, and carrying something to sacrifice to King Neptune (the ruler of the sea), our captain Simon, dressed as Neptune, inducted all 26 of us. This process included everyone sacrificing something personally significant by throwing it overboard. These items included some much-needed instant coffee, nail clippers, coins, keepsakes, and more. Then, on our hands and knees, we



crawled through a tarp tunnel as we got sprayed with the fire hose. To sailors, the shellback turtle symbolizes crossing the equator. That night, we all transformed from being mere pollywogs to proud shellbacks. When Argo finally crossed the equator, everyone screamed in excitement as we counted down the minutes – it felt like it was new years. Then, wet and excited, everyone except the next team on watch went back to bed. The next day we woke up thinking it was all a dream.

Hannah Hartley-Shepherd

The Lonely Planet Guide to Argo

Argo is a 30 meter staysail schooner built two years ago in Thailand. Her population of twenty six is divided between six government officials/deities or "staff", and 20 common citizens or "shipmates". Argo



has one of the highest population densities on earth. Her population can

often be found sleeping in beds stacked three deep in cabins that would hardly pass for a walk-in closet in the United States. However, her population is, for the most part, a highly content group.

Geographical location

Who knows? That's part of the fun of visiting a place like Argo: unlike many other destinations, she is always neighboring a new country. At the time of writing she is bordered by Malaysia to the East, but may well have a new neighbor by the time you read this. If you plan on trying to visit Argo, it is advised that you find out where she will be well in advance of your trip.



When to go?

The best time to visit is while she is anchored and not on passage. When Argo is on passage the locals tend to be quite work oriented, and when they aren't working on passage or "on watch" they tend to sleep quite a bit. When she is anchored is the best chance to see the locals at play. However, take note that if you time your visit poorly and happen to be present for a Boat Appreciation, you

will be put to work, regardless of the fact that you are not a citizen of Argo.

Local customs

Argo is a timely place. The locals (mostly the government officials) like to say that, on Argo, if you're not early, you're late. Meals occur exactly at 7:30 a.m., noon and again at 6:00 p.m. and it is *always* tea time. The population does like to celebrate just about any occasion, and you may well get to see and take part in one of these celebrations (see holidays).



Please note that although dinner is always scheduled for 6:00 p.m. it may well begin after that, as one of the daily rituals is "the squeeze," where every citizen who is not on their deathbed is required to gather and answer one question before they eat.

Currency

Your money is worthless on Argo, and there is nowhere to change it onboard to the most valuable commodity, which is chocolate. It is recommended that you change your money ahead of



time into chocolate form at a place known as "7-11" if you wish to barter on board. 7-11 can be found worldwide. Giving chocolate is an excellent way to spread goodwill, and is a highly recommended activity to any travelers. However, if the locals find out that you have chocolate, you will be pestered for it until you have given it all away. How much you have, and where it is hidden (do hide it) should be a closely guarded secret.

Food and drink

Food onboard Argo can vary in quality from gourmet to garbage, and if you don't like what is on your plate, you will have to wait until the next mealtime to fill your stomach. Cold water may or may not be available, and if you want anything else you better bring it with you.

Where to eat

Not below decks. Period. The government takes this rule seriously, and the fate that befalls those caught breaking it is worse than getting caught spitting in Singapore. Our recommendation is to follow the rules



and don't do it.

Holidays

The population of Argo likes to celebrate. They will celebrate just about anything. A typical celebration *will* involve one or more of the following: tribal chants, dancing on deck, a fire hose or a fake beard. A favorite form of celebration onboard Argo is the "night out". This typically involves invading a neighboring

country, as a whole crew, and infiltrating the town. This happens rarely (some might say too rarely) and is highly regulated by the government officials. If you can time your visit to happen on a night out, this is highly recommended.

Jack Pincus

The Luckiest

The odds are good that most people you meet are not of the particularly lucky variety. I, myself, am one of these luck-lacking individuals, not particularly *unlucky*, but simply *luckless*. In my memory, never have I



won a raffle, been picked out of a crowd for a magic show, or been the one to catch the t-shirt shot out of a canon at the half-time show. And yet, it is still to luck that I owe one of the most amazing experiences of my life. This is how it happened: In the strange land of Borneo, where canoes and barges share the same river and everyone's shower is also their sink, there are no clearly defined rules for visitors on how to get around and there are especially no directions on how to get to the nearest grocery store. So our provisioners left with the best plan available: to dock at the smartest looking dock and hope to land close to the city and thus close to a supermarket. Instead, they found themselves grounding at a local kindergarten—a pleasure nonetheless but not the intended goal. Providence would have it though that Hadijah, the

headmistress, is perhaps the kindest person in all of Borneo, if not the world, and she readily took pity on the lost Americans, not only driving them into town, but also walking them through each and every foreign aisle. To repay her kindness, it was decided that a small group of us would return the following day with gifts of thanks.



However, as everyone would understandably want to be a part of this gratitude mission, the only fair way to pick the participants was to leave it up to chance: picking names out of a hat. And for once in my life, *my* name was on one of the five slips of paper pulled from the depths. What that paper brought me was so much better than any t-shirt or toy the usual raffle imparts. Our small group left in two dinghies and while our arrival at the school's dock attracted attention, it in no way prepared us for the



magnitude of our attraction. Hadijah met us at the dock and brought us inside to introduce us to her Saturday morning class, who greeted us with

song and dance. We, in turn attempted to serenade them with the "Hokie-Pokie," "I'm a Little Tea Pot" and "Old McDonald," but definitely proved to be inferior to their melodic tunes—which included both piano accompaniment AND two little girls on a microphone! After classes were finished Hadijah invited us to have morning tea, where she proceeded to stuff us with the most delicious finger foods, including bite size donuts, shrimp tempura cakes and jam cookies. She indulged us further by answering every question we had about not only Borneo, but also the posters on the walls and what the children were learning. By the end of Tea, we were all full to the brim, and having exchanged gifts, expected to head back to Argo. But that was not the case. Hadijah's cousin was having a going away party for her mission to Mecca and she insisted that we join. When in Rome . . . So off we went to the center of the neighborhood, accumulating teeming bands of children in our wake. Most amazing was their initial timidity. They would trail behind us in a pack, but the second one of the shipmates turned

(all 30-40 of them) and we were given even more food and introduced to the



family. When we left the party, however, they were back on our heels and the photo sessions continued. It was like reverse paparazzi. All the way back to the boat they begged us to take their pictures and were ecstatic to see the digital playbacks. By the time we made our departure they had had us record possibly every combination the human face can make and we in turn had taught them the art of the "high 5" as well as the "secret handshake". Everyone left incredibly happy, incredibly overwhelmed, and incredibly bewildered by the whole experience. We had sung songs and danced with a room full of adorable kindergarteners, witnessed a multigenerational event in another country, tasted delicious homemade food, and been mobbed by children all the while. So, while she may have been absent for every bingo game I've ever played, and somehow mysteriously missing on the underside of every coke cap ever held in my possession, in Borneo, of all places, lady luck did not disappoint.

Samantha Englander



around they would flee screaming and laughing. By the time we reached Hadijah's cousin's house, however, they were begging to have their picture taken, making faces and just generally being crazy and loud. At her cousin's abode, the kids eventually had to be ejected from the premises