

Ocean Challenge Live!—The Vendée Globe
Solo, non-stop, around-the-world race

WEEK

2 Marine Transportation

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**By Rich Wilson, Skipper
Aboard *Great American III***

Looking at our chart explains the parade of ships that I saw last night by their lights, and heard the night before on our radar alarm. The Vendée Globe fleet intersected, and then joined, the sea route from the northwest corner of France (the entrance to the English Channel) to the northwest corner of Spain.

This sea route connects ports in northern Europe with ports in the Mediterranean Sea (via the Straits of Gibraltar), Africa, and South America. The sea's commerce is the unseen commerce of the world. A large containership may hold 3,000 containers, each container the size of a tractor-trailer on a land

highway. A modern tanker may hold 250,000 tons of oil. Smaller, older, general cargo ships are out here too, carrying a wide variety of goods and resources.

I spoke to the *SEAROSE G*, an 80,000-ton-capacity OBO (oil/bulk/ore) ship, in ballast (no cargo), with 26 Philipinos in her crew. She crossed my stern, bound from Gijón, Spain to Gibraltar for bunkers (fuel) then on to Turkey for dry dock for a month. She appeared on our radar detector first, then on AIS (automatic identification system), then visually.

The Captain was pleasant and I informed him that there were 20 sailboats in his path. I can only imagine the amazing places and peoples that he and his crew have seen in their lives. These tankers and cargo ships connect the nations of the world.



Proper Preparation is Everything

**By Dr. Brien Barnewolt,
Chief, Emergency Medicine,
Tufts Medical Center**

Proper preparation is everything. On board *Great American III* Rich has an extensive first aid kit, and he knows how to use it. We added to the kit medications that Rich might need if he gets sick or injured: medications for infections, seasickness and his asthma. We can communicate by email or even satellite phone, so if something happens I know exactly what he has on board and can best advise him on his situation.

Rich also took an advanced first aid course, which is a great idea for everyone. He learned how to

take care of wounds and burns, splint broken bones, and how to recognize and treat hypothermia. We also practiced many of these techniques, because you would not want to attempt them for the very first time in the middle of the Southern Ocean on a cold, wet, tossing boat.

Lastly, Rich is a big promoter of preventive medicine. He is in excellent physical condition, watches his nutrition, and has a great plan to get the proper amount of sleep during the race. When conditions are rough, he will wear protective clothing and pads, much like a BMX motocross rider. He even has a helmet! With prevention strategies like these, Rich should rarely need to make a trip to the "virtual" ER.

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