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## Grit & Determination

continued from page 69.

fires on the beach at night and great cookouts of octopus, conch and lobster made life a paradise.

He related the events this way: "Last night I was in bed dreaming about a boat going aground onto a reef in a bad squall. At the same time a squall actually hit...Moonshine was thrown aground during a big gust...I woke up, (sic) for a minute I wasn't sure if I was still dreaming. The boat was healed over (sic) and the depth sounder showed 3 feet under us. A flash light...revealed all the vibrant colors of the reef. The rain was cold and stung, (sic) it was pitch black. I had to wait for the massive lightning strikes to show me the islands and the other boats [to] get my bearings... [I felt like] I had to be dreaming... [but] ...I wasn't."

He continued by saying, "I gunned the engine (sic) and Moonshine crawled off the reef. Alone in the pitch black and rain, surrounded by reefs...I had to re-anchor. I ran the forty foot length of the boat in a second flat several times to accomplish this. Then I used the dinghy to deploy a second anchor as a back up. I didn't go to [sic] asleep again 'till the next day."

As he continued to wander around the islands Chris reported "retracing some of my old steps" and spending "more time around the Kunas...learning how to represent myself to people from a completely different culture and background". He told of helping a Kuna family that was desperate to get to another island a mere seven miles away so they could get to work on time. He was amazed that the mother who is the principal of the school on the isle of Carti was refused a ride by the locals because they could make more money shuttling tourists.

This was how he told it. "I woke up at 5:30, day break, shuttled them all by dinghy and ulu (a local craft) onto Moonshine: a mother and her three children, an uncle, a cook, a neighbor and me. It was their first time on a sailboat, but we didn't sail. We motored directly into the wind as the sun rose over Kuna Yala. I don't mean to make it sound epic, but it was. Passing by these tiny tropical islands and watching the clouds sweep down the huge mountains of Panama. A gringo and what seemed like a village of Kunas, some in full traditional dress."

It's a testament to Chris's personal jour-

ney that he also added, "They gave me permission to take pictures, but instead I just blinked a lot. I didn't want a trophy of sorts. I got them there five minutes late. If I was a kid in that school, I would have cursed me, 'the Denounced Saint Christopher that made school happen that day'."

Respect, dignity, and humility, surely are things we need more of in this life.

As of last report Chris was "off Panama" after "comfortably scooting along at an average of 7.2 knots." He did not sleep all night because, as he said, "these are some of the densest shipping lanes in the world (sic) and I have to keep an eye out. We are going fast, but the ride is smooth. Nice. There is a sliver of moon out tonight, giving me a nice amount of light. I baked some chocolate chip cookies for this trip, mmmmm. I'll have French onion soup and Kuna bread for dinner. I'm rocking out to techno music my buddy Rob Foster made me. I'll be at

Shelter Bay Marina [at the entrance to the Panama Canal] by early morning at this speed, sweet."

All I can add, from all of us at Boating on the Hudson & Beyond and, I trust, from all the loyal readers of this column is: "Sail-on Sailor."

Before closing, I would like to acknowledge the help of my friends Todd Traver and Steve Perry for their firsthand information as well as the efforts of Chris's number one cheerleader, Diana Connolly, for her assistance in obtaining the photos.

By the way, if you like, you can follow Captain Chris Connolly's voyage around the world directly through his blog @ [www.sailblogs.com/member/moonshineblogs](http://www.sailblogs.com/member/moonshineblogs). When signing on, please note that the word "moonshine" is spelled in the French style with an "s".

"Quick's the word and sharp's the action." See you next time from wherever the winds blow us!

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Chris at the helm.

...continued from page 71

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