

Joe
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- A few weeks ago, Susan Funk asked me to speak about what it means to be a crew member on the Charles W Morgan.
Without really considering the magnitude of this task, I said "Sure".
- of course, my first hurdle in ^{addressing} considering this question is that sailors do not ^{generally} like to talk, or even think about feelings.
- When we are sailing, we are thinking about the next tack, or the next cup of coffee. When we talk, we are talking about rigging projects, or industry gossip, *or other topics, not fit for polite company.
- To us, this is a job, and to ask "what does it mean" is akin to asking "what does it mean to get out of bed and go to work everyday?"
- This is something we do by instinct. It may be spectacular to the observer, but in many ways, for us, it is simply another day of dealing with the task at hand.
- That paradox, however, is what connects us to the sailors who preceded us on the decks of this ~~ship~~ much-celebrated whale ship.

- Like those who came before us, many of us are misfits ashore, who feel more at home on a ship than anywhere else.
- To us, this place of hard work and long days, exposure to the elements, ^{*} and each other / this life which seems extraordinary to the visitor, is the only thing that fits and feels right.
- This is not to say that the greater meaning is wholly lost on us, but it comes in small moments, often when no one is looking. It is in the face of someone really seeing the ship for the first time, or in a late night conversation with a shipmate about the simple beauty of sailing a sweetheart of a ^{vessel} ~~ship~~, or when witnessing an "ah-ha" moment in someone new to sailing, and acknowledging it with a pat on the back, ^{*} or a sarcastic remark, which is sometimes a substitute.
- The meaning is there, but it is quiet, and closely held.
- I think that, if asked, all of us would say that we signed on to this voyage because it is a once in a life-time experience, which is true, but meaning is harder to pin down.

For me, the meaning of it all has emerged in our final days aboard the Morgan.

As my shipmates and I have quickly ~~deconstructed~~^{dismantled} the thing that has been our lives and our livelihood for the past 3 months,

while we have packed sea bags and made arrangements to get to the next job, the next Boat, the next Country, or to spend precious time at home with loved ones,

and as I have listened to the sound of Boxes being sealed with packing tape to be sent off to who-knows-where

As ~~all~~ of these ~~the~~ things were happening, I began to realize that all of us will remember the Charles W. Morgan as a Ship that was once our home, and her crew ~~that~~ was once our family, and in this small way, we are living the lives of all sailors past and ~~present~~ future, and in doing so we ~~will~~ ~~begin~~ ~~to~~ ~~live~~ ~~the~~ ~~ship~~ continue the legacy of this old Ship

Thank You