

Asthma



By Rich Wilson
aboard *Great American II*

Date: April 2, 2003
Position:
17° 08'S / 092° 57'E
Boat Speed: 9.8 knots
Boat Course: 240°

I've had asthma since I was a 1-year-old boy. No asthma drugs existed then. I didn't want to be left out of the games with my friends, so I had to try incredibly hard. Leaves, grass, trees, flowers, my sister's cat, all dogs, winter house dust, wool blankets, smoke—it seemed like everything was an asthma trigger. I was even allergic to eggs, grapes, peas and chocolate! And peanut butter? That could have killed me.

Sometimes, when people with asthma grow older, they grow out of it, but I didn't. I realized that if I was going to be stuck with this, I had to be smart about it. I had to be a scientist about my own body, learn what triggered my asth-

ma, and avoid those things. As drugs became available, I had to be disciplined and take them on schedule. I now take four daily. And I had to get physically fit to help my asthma, and stay that way. If I did these things, then I could also do the things that I wanted to do.

Several days ago, *Great American II* burst through the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra and into the vast Indian Ocean. Two thousand challenging, confined, shoal water miles of the South China Sea were behind us. Despite 12,000 rigorous ocean miles yet to sail, this is exactly where I want to be. It's my dream.

If you have asthma, you can

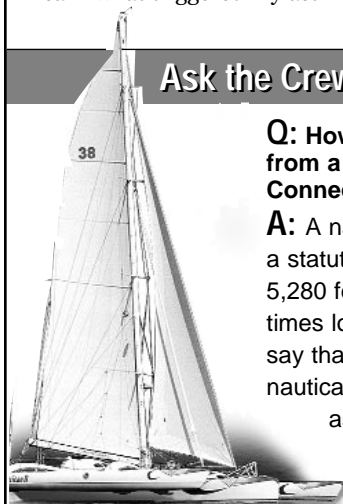
follow your dreams, too. Pay attention to your triggers, take your medications on time, and one day it can be for you as it is for me. You yourself will be managing your asthma, you'll get a chance to tackle those dreams, and your asthma will not get in your way.



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1. What things trigger Rich's asthma?
2. How does Rich keep his asthma under control?
3. One nautical mile equals how many feet?

Ask the Crew of *Great American II*



Q: How does a nautical mile differ from a regular mile? From John, Connecticut, USA

A: A nautical mile is 6,080 feet, whereas a statute mile (a regular land mile) is 5,280 feet. Thus, a nautical mile is 1.15 times longer than a statute mile. If you say that you are sailing at a speed of one nautical mile per hour, it is the same thing as saying that you are sailing at a speed of one knot.

—answered by Rich Wilson



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