

Invisible Places



By Rich Wilson
aboard *Great American II*



Date: April 10, 2003
Position:
25° 12'S / 062° 10'E
Boat Speed: 10.5 knots
Boat Course: 271°

April 7—Our position lies in the center of the Indian Ocean. Equidistant, at 2,000 miles, lies Madagascar and Africa to the west, Sri Lanka and India to the north, Indonesia to the northeast, Australia to the east. We are in the middle of a fascinating collection of nations, cultures and religions.

This centrality forces the curious mind to imagine these peoples and places, their similarities and differences. On our three voyages, our mission has been to go non-stop to our destination, to challenge history, and to learn from that challenge. We realize and regret that we are passing many opportunities to learn directly.

Australia is the least densely populated nation on earth with only 20 million people in a land nearly the size of the U.S. Their people clawed a nation out of desperately thin resources. Indonesia, the archipelago nation with thousands of islands, is the largest Muslim nation on earth—200 million people. India, a spiritual nation where cows are sacred, is the most densely populated nation on earth, with a billion people. Africa is the land of the huge animals and dramatic leaders, some globally inspiring such as Nelson Mandela.

Our planet is small, and since we from wealthy nations have the chance to travel, we should do so. We

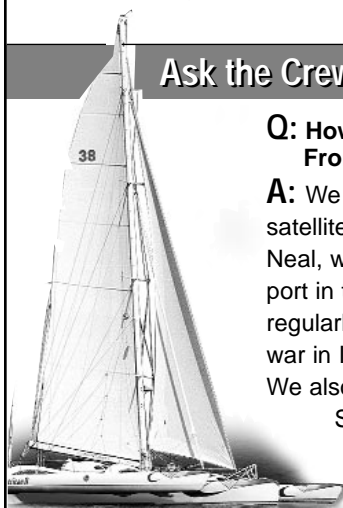
should visit and learn from these peoples and places. We may believe in our own ways, but we ought to expand our horizons and learn from others' ways as well. With that learned understanding we can help our diverse planet advance—better together than apart.



ANSWERS AT
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1. Approximately how many people live in India?
2. Look It Up: What religion is most practiced in India?
3. If you could visit any place on earth, where would you go?

Ask the Crew of *Great American II*



Q: How do you guys get the news?
From Ivan, New York, USA

A: We get news about home through satellite email from our families. And Neal, who provides our shore-based support in the sitesALIVE! office, has been regularly sending us updates about the war in Iraq and about the SARS illness. We also have a long-range radio, called a Single Side Band, where we can tune in the BBC News.

—answered by Rich Wilson



Use the communications Team Project Guide as a class project. Have students

search the newspaper to identify news of interest for the Great American II crew, and write a news digest for them. Organize the project so that student teams work on different sections of the paper.

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