Safety at Sea
Handling Heavy Weather
How Heavy Is Heavy?

- Southern Ocean – 40’ waves, 60 knots.
- Tasmania – Flat water, 55 knots.
- le Marie Straight – 60 knots close reach, 4-6 knots of favorable current.
Be Prepared

- Visualize
- Plan
- Try it out
Harnesses

- FIRST RULE: Stay with the boat!
  - Harnesses vs. Lifejackets
  - Hooking on BEFORE you come out
  - Double Hooking

- Consequences:
  - Southern Ocean Bath
  - Double Handed near tragedy
Lifejackets

- Oakcliff
  - Water below 55f – state law NY
  - Wind over 15 knots
- Your Choice – my considerations
  - When harness discipline is not at 1000%
  - Sea state
  - Less than 3 people on board
  - Night time
Other Tools

- Personal EPIRBs
  - SPOT
- AIS
- VHF
- RDF beacons
- Whistle - $20
  - Rambler
- Personal Laser Flares - $80
  - West Marine
Your Boat’s Preparation

- On-deck Preparation
  - Reef Lines
  - Safety Strops
    - Backstay, Outhaul, Halyards
    - Sheet tails
  - Jacklines
    - Shock sewing
  - Storm Sails – blocks rigged
Your Boat’s Preparation

- Below Decks
  - Secure Stowage
    - Reason race boats strop everything down
      - Rambler’s sails and Juggy
    - Straight Knives handy – up and down
  - Keeping it clean & Organized
  - Handholds
  - Galley Belts
    - Use for prep work
    - Do NOT use for hot cooking
Your Body’s Preparation

- Seasickness
  - Cold, Wet, Hungry, Head, Dizzy
  - Stugeron

- Duffel Bag Organization
  - Zip Locks, Different textures,
  - Clean Washcloth in a zip lock
  - Nappy Rash Cream

- Safety Gear – sleeping with
Your Stomach

- Freeze Dried Food
  - Cooler
  - Teapot
- Potatoes
- Tools
  - Dog Bowls
  - Non Spill Cups
  - Pump Thermoses
- WATER - HYDRATE
Defensive Sailing

- AIS –
- Radar Reflector
- High Visibility Orange Storm Sails
- Orange Rudder and Keel tips
Sailing at 60

- Beaufort Scales
  - Force 1-5 nice sailing
  - Force 6-7 cool  (25-38 kts)
  - Force 8-10 dogs off chains (39-63 kts)
  - Force 11-12 Hurricane
Weather

- Of course you want to avoid bad weather
  - Everyone can/should read a weather map
  - Try not to get yourself stuck with deadlines
  - Long passage making slow boats
    - Hurricane on Maiden
    - Sail w/ wind abeam Stbd.
- Hard to avoid
  - Micro bursts
  - Thunderstorms
  - Tornados and Waterspouts
Now Your Stuck

- If you have no choice be prepared
  - Sail AWAY from land
  - Safety Gear – ONE place
  - Navigate on Paper
  - Communicate position if possible
  - Stow EVERYTHING
  - Eat something
  - Use the head
  - Get sleep if at all possible
Reducing Sail

- All boats are different!
- Generally
  - Smaller headsail & Flatter Main
  - Number 4 and reef
  - Number 5/storm jib and 2 reefs
  - Number 5 / storm jib only (downwind)
  - Storm Tri and Storm Jib
  - Bare Poles – not ideal
  - Drogue(s) / Sea Anchors
Steering in Extreme

- General:
  - Rolling too much, head up
  - Slamming too much, head down
- Buddy
  - Walk her through the waves, up the front, down the back
- Surf if you can – reduces the strain and stress
  - Truly like surfing
  - Or like skiing moguls
- Occasionally ‘Rogue Wave’
- Double harness strops
Avoiding the Condos

- IF you have the choice stay away from:
  - Hard things like land
  - Currents like the Gulfstream
  - Shelves – St. Thomas
  - Harbors
  - Tennyson’s Poem Crossing the Bar – yes death!
    - Forced to?
      - Study timing
      - Abort early
      - Know depth
      - Go FAST
      - Young America
Heaving To

- Again Each Boat is Different
  - Basically it is a bad tack
  - Tack the boat and keep the jib on one side
  - Get the boat ‘stuck’
  - Turn rudder to push back through a tack
  - Main may or may not come into play
  - Adjust to reduce chafe, balance, calm
    - Duct tape silverware
Tiny Story of No Rudder

- Heineken
  - Hove to – duct-taped silverware
  - Steered with:
    - Sails
    - Spinnaker Pole
    - Drogue
    - Spare Rudder