

ATLANTIC OCEAN EXPEDITION

Following the Route of Columbus: Crossing the Atlantic by Sailboat

In the spring of 2007, 12-year-old Beryl Bell carried Wings WorldQuest Flag #6 during her crossing of the Atlantic Ocean with her parents on a 38-foot fiberglass sailboat, the SV Mabel Rose. Beryl hoped that this three-month voyage would help her to comprehend the weather, waves, and animal life that Columbus may have experienced.



Beryl hoists Wings WorldQuest flag as she enters the Bermuda Harbor. Photo: Robin Bell

HOMeward

Shining stars
 Glimmering moon
 An endless stretch of water,
 Yet far away,
 Too far to see,
 Lies a place to be desired,
 A place of rest,
 A place of love,
 A place where light does shine,
 There I go.
 Though I shall not stay,
 For other places beckon
 And I shall ever travel.

—Beryl Bell, written at sea, April 2007

Since Beryl was taking time off from school, she and her parents developed a home-schooling plan for her months aboard ship, which included math, science, social studies, and reading Shakespeare. After obtaining her boating license, Beryl was ready to sail. The family met their first test at sea as they weathered a thunderstorm while sailing from the harbor in Barcelona, Spain. After crossing the Straits of Gibraltar, they made a quick stop at the Canary Islands before sailing across the Atlantic.



The voyage began in Barcelona, Spain in February and ended 78 days later in May in New York.



Beryl studies navigation charts aboard SV Mabel Rose. Photo: Robin Bell

STANDING WATCH ON THE HIGH SEAS

Beryl's daily activities included standing watch for three two-hour periods, manning the sails, steering, observing bird and animal life, scuba diving, reading, and fishing. Life at sea was not always easy: bouts of foul weather, exhaustion, occasional monotony, and homesickness were challenging. Among the highlights were the sightings of dolphins, whales, and a lunar eclipse. After completing a successful 3,000-mile trip on a small sailboat, Beryl is now well-prepared to take on other fascinating future expeditions!

ABOUT BERYL BELL

Beryl Bell is in the sixth grade and lives in New York City. Beryl loves animals, particularly her dogs, Frodo and Lupie.



WHO

Beryl Bell

WHAT

Retrace the route of Columbus by sailboat

WHERE

From Spain across the Atlantic Ocean to the Canary Islands, Bermuda and, New York

WHY

To understand what Columbus may have experienced during his long ocean crossing



SV Mabel Rose heading west into the setting sun. Photo: Robin Bell