

----- Forwarded message -----

From: SA Agulhas Radio Room <sa.agulhas@andrapido.com>

Date: Sat, Feb 13, 2010 at 1:17 PM

Subject: Scholes cabin 5 (p): Farewell Antarctica

To: Stirlingj.Scholes@gmail.com

To: Subject:

13 February 2010 0958 UTM -70.2292, -7.4029

Dear Stirling,

We sailed from Atka ice-port at 2310 last night, after a full day of loading cargo. The Agulhas is bustling with passengers again. It is nice to greet familiar faces and to hear of their adventures, but it is hard for us who had the ship to ourselves for more than a month to get used to sharing the space! The other passengers are relaxing because their job is done, but we are working hard, on day and night shift. I have the first part of the night shift this time, up until midnight. That is much easier to get accustomed to than the midnight-to-dawn shift I had before, but I will miss the cosy chats and mugs of coffee on the bridge with the lonely officer-on-watch.

Everyone has mixed feelings about heading home. They miss their families and friends, and look forward to fresh, home-cooked food. But this place has a way of getting under your skin. A surprising number of the team come back again and again. Apart from the severely beautiful landscape, there is a simplicity and clarity to life here. I am often reminded of a poem by Gerald Manley Hopkins, that starts 'The world is too much with us, late and soon/ Getting and spending we lay waste our powers.'

We are still nudging through slushy pack-ice, looking for a way through to the open ocean. The drifting ice has dammed up behind B15K, which juts out to sea nearly 50 km. I think we will break free quite soon, then it is time to begin the UCTD casts. Patrick is busy replacing the line - we have done over 300 casts so far, and statistically it should break at about 200!

When we are clear of the ice we will cut across to the 0 degree longitude 'Good Hope' sampling line, and head due north to about 40 degrees south, before turning northeast for the final run into Cape Town. We are scheduled to arrive at 0800 on 23 February 2010, and I suspect we will be there on the dot, even if it means idling outside the harbour!

See you soon, Dad.