

## A conversation with a delivery captain Calls "competence, sense of humor" keys to success

Soon after Eric Wiberg graduated from St. George's School in Newport, he set off to sea. Thirteen years and 26 voyages later, CBNS caught up to him on a Saturday morning in October at Gary's Handy Lunch in Newport, a popular spot among sailors and locals which as usual was so packed that there was hardly enough elbow room for Eric to unfold his well-used charts on which he had plotted courses during deliveries to Bermuda, the Caribbean and Europe.

Although Eric, 31 is now living ashore in Newport while attending law school at Roger Williams in Bristol, he continues to run his ECHO YACHT DELIVERIES.

Sipping coffee and surveying the crowd in Gary's (he later mentioned spotting someone from Stars & Stripes), Eric explained that he'd done deliveries to make money but also to travel. He estimates that he's been to nearly 70 countries while circling the globe four times - and paid for 10 percent of it out of his own pocket. And there's another reason: "I do love sailing, being offshore on a boat - especially as captain."

(The money can be good at times - yet over the long haul, according to Eric, one's earnings average out to around \$10.00 an hour "for risking your life.")

In the past, Eric believes that yacht delivery captains suffered from a "rough and tumble" perception. There's even, he says, an "inherent distrust" of delivery captains. To combat this, he's tried to project an air of professionalism. He points with pride to his website ([www.echoyachtdelivery.com](http://www.echoyachtdelivery.com)), mentions that he's been an exhibitor at Newport's annual Used Boat Show, and reveals that on yachts delivered by Echo, there's no drinking or co-habitation. (He adds with a grin that such abstinence is, of course, over once the captain and crew reach their destination.) "The success of my company is based on management of people," he says. While he once advertised in *Cruising World*, Eric now relies solely on word-of-mouth and his website.

Although he's now engaged in studying law books rather than charts, Eric carefully screens all delivery captains and crews which go to work for Echo. A captain, he says, must possess the competence which will allow him, for example, to set off confidently from Newport for Bermuda in a snow storm. But he also needs "a sense of humor" because "things will go wrong....and you need to be able to humor the owner, your crew, Immigration...."

Eric, who has written for *Cruising World*, is working on a book about a transpac he made when he was 23 and unexpectedly became the captain in mid voyage aboard a 68' Camper Nicholson Burma teak ketch. The story will undoubtedly have much good information for those aspiring to go offshore, and - we suspect - a good dose of humor.

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Since 1985, Eric's been in and out of Newport. He grew up in the Bahamas where his father is the longtime Swedish Consulate. His mother is an American who who is a professional tennis player (Bahamas champion) and runs the family business.

In addition to deliveries, Eric's sailing resume includes half a dozen Newport to Bermuda races and four Marion to Bermuda races (including the 2001 race).