



**NOAA Teacher at Sea  
Christopher Harvey  
Onboard NOAA Ship OSCAR ELTON SETTE  
June 5 – July 4, 2006**

**ENS Sarah Harris**  
Junior Officer/Scientist

Sarah always wanted to be a professional clown when she grew up, but her feet were not large enough to fit into the shoes of a clown, and so she was turned down from the National Clown Academy upon her completion of high school. Instead she attended Long Island University in South Hampton, New York and earned a degree in marine biology. Upon completion of her degree, Sarah had a difficult time finding a job as a marine biologist. Instead she spent the better part of the two years after college working “stupid jobs” in order to make ends meet.

One day, working as a server in a Moroccan restaurant and as a bodyguard in a girls’ home, Sarah had an epiphany of sorts. Memories of a Marine Ecology class came to mind. She had used NOAA data in one of her class projects and had the sudden revelation that she should apply to become a NOAA officer. Sidestepping pressure to join the Air Force or Navy, she attended courses through the Merchant Marine Academy and within three months was qualified to begin work with NOAA onboard several ships.

In an interview for placement aboard a NOAA ship, Sarah commented that she would prefer to be on a Hawaii-based ship. She knew that the OSCAR ELTON SETTE had the best crew, and by far the best meals of any NOAA vessel. As fortune revealed itself to Sarah, none of the other NOAA officers applied for Pacific ships, and she was given a position aboard the OSCAR ELTON SETTE, based out of Honolulu, Hawaii.

Here she is at twenty-four years of age driving the OSCAR ELTON SETTE through the waters of the Northwest Hawaiian Islands. Her unofficial capacity as an officer aboard the SETTE is to “drive the dang boat.” (As it would be, you can put a *boat* on a *ship*, but you CAN NOT put a *ship* on a *boat*!). However, her official job description is to “help coordinate scientists and crew to accomplish the ship’s mission.” (Proper use of the term “ship,” and might I add as an objective interviewer, very well stated!)

Sarah focuses daily on her short-term goal, which is to not jump overboard during the shark feeding frenzy that takes place on lobster cruises each afternoon. In the long run, she hopes to use the GI Bill to help her earn her masters degree in the coming years. She also aspires to become a treasure hunter and, if that does not work out, a pirate!

In her spare time, Sarah enjoys riding her beach cruiser. Of course she cannot do that while at sea, so she also takes up the wonderfully entertaining hobby of reading. Her fondest memory aboard the SETTE was the first day setting sail in January of 2006, when she earned the affectionate nickname of “Princess Spew Wog” for putting on a wonderful

demonstration of what a hangover will do when mixed with Pacific swells and a moving ship.

Sarah carries a line with her everywhere she goes, whether out to sea or on land:

“Desire is Desire wherever you go.  
The Sun with not bleach it,  
or the Tides wash it away.”