



NOAA Teacher at Sea
David Babich
Onboard NOAA Ship FAIRWEATHER
July 5 – 14, 2005

Mission: Hydrography

Day 4: Thursday, July 6, 2006
Shumagin Islands, Alaska

Weather Report

WX some rain, patchy fog
Wind NW 15kt
Sea 2-4 ft
Temp low 60's

Science and Technology Log

Yesterday, the crew was excited about a planned safety drill with the U.S. Coast Guard. We were going to have a Coast Guard helicopter meet us out at sea and conduct some drills raising and lowering the emergency rescue basket. Very few crewmembers had experienced the excitement of the helicopter hovering over the ship simulating rescue missions.

The ships officers attended a briefing in the morning to discuss plans for later in the afternoon. Unfortunately, due to some mechanical problems aboard ship, the drill was forced to be cancelled.



The FAIRWEATHER officers listen to a briefing about the helicopter rescue drill planned for later in the day.



The FAIRWEATHER crew getting ready to lower the CTD device into the ocean

The FAIRWEATHER finally headed out to sea around 1:00 pm, towards the Shumagin Islands. It would take about 36 hours to reach the Shumagins, which gave me a chance to adjust to time at sea.

The next morning, the FAIRWEATHER survey technicians began data collection. Even though we hadn't reached our starting point yet, data on the profile of the ocean bottom is still being collected. One instrument

the survey technicians need to send out periodically is called the CTD (Conductivity, Temperature, and Depth) device. This device is sent down to the bottom of the ocean to collect data about the current conditions of the ocean. This data is then used to help develop the profile of the ocean bottom.

Later in the afternoon, the crew went through both fire and abandon ship drills. The drills were both thorough and precise. Everyone on ship has a role to carry out and they are expected to be in the right place at the right time. It was comforting to see such a commitment to boat safety being emphasized. The crew was very well prepared and professional throughout the drills.



Teacher at Sea Dave Babich trying on the survival (or "Gumby") suit during an abandon ship drill.

FAIRWEATHER Profile: Ensign Michael Gonzalves

Mike was the first member of the FAIRWEATHER crew I met. As one of the junior officers, he welcomed me aboard ship and gave me a brief orientation and tour of the ship. Mike's main duty is as a navigational officer. As a navigational officer, his duties might include things like laying out all tracks for the ship, keeping charts up to date, and overseeing the navigational duties of others aboard ship. In addition, all officers are scientists, so they do everything the survey technicians do as well!



ENS Michael Gonzalves reviewing data during a recent hydrography run.

Mike is a graduate of Florida Tech with B.S. degrees in both Applied Mathematics and Oceanography. His Masters degree in Applied Mathematics allowed him to teach for three

years at Florida Tech before pursuing his career at NOAA.

He greatly enjoys the ongoing challenges that his job provides. In addition, NOAA personnel rotate every two years from posts on ship to posts on land. So every few years,

Mike will experience a new location, a new job position, and new challenges! He may be in Alaska today, but then in Mississippi, Hawaii or Antarctica two years from now.

NOAA offers a wide range of opportunities for students interested in a science field. Mike's advice to students who might be interested in a science career is that "You can do anything that you want. There is so much out there. Don't limit your options. Keep an open mind".

Dave Babich
Teacher at Sea