



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

Date: Monday June 5, 2006

Time: 4:00 PM Hawaii

Location: In Port

Entry

I was picked up at my hotel in downtown Honolulu around 12:30 PM. Boarding the van with the other researchers, I was pleasantly surprised to find that they were mostly young undergraduate students, by appearance, about my age. I am sure that they sighed the same relief to find that their Teacher at Sea was not some “old fart” science teacher from the mainland, but instead a bearded 24-year-old man on a similar quest as their own: to gain insight into the happenings of the science and research world. It is a common misconception that teachers keep up with, and know all about the subjects that they teach. This may be true for literature teachers, (When was the last time that Shakespeare composed a piece of literary art?) and even more so for mathematics teachers (I cannot tell you the last time a math story made the front page!). But science- Wow! is that a hard subject to master! Even yesterday a volcano erupted in Indonesia.

This is the last thing I told my students at the end of May before they were released for summer break (and most of them just rolled their eyes because they have heard it so many times throughout the year): the Earth is truly a living thing, and there will be more signs of its life in the coming years as we advance our perception of it through the use of the same science and technology that we learn about in class. Here I am, a Teacher at Sea aboard a NOAA research vessel, participating in the scientific studies that some of my students may get involved in on their own as college students and beyond! I am amazed, and truly fortunate to have this opportunity to connect the science of the *real world* to the science of my *classroom*.

We are leaving Oahu now for 31 days (counting today). Right now I am on the ship’s “boat deck,” the level of the ship where all of the life rafts and rescue boats are located, sitting in a chair watching the crew scurry about to send us on our way. The port around us is full of freight ships loading and unloading cargo, and the airport behind me is active intermittently with an overseas arrival or departure. The temperature is perfect for shorts and a t-shirt and a nice breeze keeps the air from becoming too hot and stale for comfort. I am not going to lie, this is one heck of a good deal! And until the Pacific swells become too much and I find myself keeling over the side, I cannot imagine a better way to spend my summer than on this ship. Then again, you must remember that I am a science geek, and we geeks tend to get excited about this sort of thing!

On a low note, my bunkhouse mate and best friend so far on the trip, Tonatiuh, has been removed from the cruise due to an infection on his foot. We have already had several

great conversations and I was looking forward to working with him, as he has much graduate work experience that I have not.