



**NOAA Teacher at Sea
Karen Meyers & Alexa Carey
Onboard NOAA Ship ALBATROSS IV
August 14 – September 1, 2006**

NOAA Teacher at Sea: Karen Meyers

NOAA Ship ALBATROSS IV

Mission: Eco-Monitoring

Day 14, August 27, 2006

Gulf of Maine

Weather Data from Bridge

Visibility: 12 nautical miles

Wind direction 36°

Wind speed: 13 kts

Sea wave height: 1'

Swell wave height: 2'

Seawater temperature: 15.5 C

Sea Level Pressure: 1025.6 mb

Cloud cover: 7/8

Science and Technology Log

This morning we launched a drifter buoy that will transmit its position to a satellite so our students can monitor it via a website. Tamara Browning, the other teacher on board, wrote her school's name on it and I wrote Garrison Forest School and drew a paw print for the GFS Grizzlies. The buoy consists of a small flotation device – about a foot in diameter or a little larger – which contains the electronics and is tethered to a part that looks like a wind sock but will be underwater where it will catch water currents as opposed to wind. Jerry picked a launching spot in the channel where the Labrador Current enters the Gulf of Maine. He says it may stay in the Gulf of Maine and circle around or it may exit with the outgoing current. It is designed to last for over 400 days. It will fun to have my students follow it and plot its course on a map.

JE Orlando Thompson gave us a tour of the engine room this morning. He took us into the air-conditioned booth which overlooks the room and contains the control panels. Orlando explained that the center part of the console controls the main engines (there are 2), the left portion controls the power supply for the ship, and the right side is for the trawl engine which is used when trawling or dredging. He said that the fuel for each day is first purified to remove sediments and then put into the day tank. The emergency generator, which is located behind the bridge, has its own fuel tank. The ship runs on diesel fuel. Down on the floor of the engine room, he showed us the transmission and the shaft that runs aft to the propeller. The ship moves forward when the blades of the propeller are adjusted to the right pitch. To stop the forward motion during sampling, the pitch is changed. Orlando, who was originally from Panama, learned his craft in the

Navy where he served on aircraft carriers that he says make the ALBATROSS IV look like a toy.

Personal Log – Karen Myers

We finally saw whales today! Well, maybe not whole whales but we did see spouts, flukes, and tails. Ensign Chris Daniels identified them as Right Whales by their divided, v-shaped spouts. One reason that whalers called this species “Right” whales is that they are slow and sluggish and so were easier to catch up with and kill.

Personal Log – Alexa Carey

Tracy, Alicea and I all sleep through breakfast and lunch so we meet in the galley for cereal and toast around 12:00. Unfortunately, we missed the whales that showed up around 10 a.m. Apparently there were several pods swimming around the boat, one off the port side, one off the starboard side and one off the portside of the fantail. I’m still trying to understand the different terminology. Don Cobb stated that there were probably close to 40 whales total in the three different pods.

Karla is definitely a trooper. For her sampling, she has to be working for sixteen hours straight, however, there have been days when she’s been awake for over 24. It’s great to be in a group of close girls. Tracy and Alicea are very welcoming, friendly and personable. In such confined spaces, that’s a blessing to find two women who are so agreeable. There’s no pettiness, nor competition.

Life at sea is simpler than on land, I think, though you have to be able to find ways to keep yourself occupied and still find times to simply sit back and enjoy the frontier around you. I’ll spend time writing to home and my friends, talking to the various crew members, scientists and officers, reading, journaling my opinions and interpretations, and relaxing on the hurricane deck looking out to the sea. It’s very calm and laid back here. I think I like it here...

We’re having a cook-out tonight! Well, actually, it’s a pseudo-cookout because we left the propane tank at port. It’s basically an onboard barbeque which everyone gets together for (assuming that we’re not on station at the time). Tracy says, “Nothing beats eating dinner right on the ocean as the sun starts going beneath the clouds.” Following, Alicea said, “We takes a beating, but we keeps on eating.”

Ten minutes before we arrive at each station, the bridge sends an announcement over the intercom. Depending on the officer manning the bridge, a variety of calls can be decreed onboard. Ensign Chris Daniels (now nicknamed the Nascar driver), however, gave all the calls in one, “10 minutes to station, 10 minutes to CTD, 10 minutes to bongos, 10 minutes to bottom grab, 10 minutes to the longest station of the cruise.” Unbeknownst to the shift at the time, it was indeed the longest station and took over two hours on station due to problems with the CTD and bottom grab. As Alicea put it, “We should kindly ask the bridge to keep their comments to themselves [so they stop jinxing us]!”