



**NOAA Teacher at Sea
John Schneider
Onboard NOAA Ship *Fairweather*
July 7 – August 8, 2009**

NOAA Teacher at Sea: John E. Schneider
NOAA Ship *Fairweather* (S-220)
Mission: Hydrographic Survey
Geographical Area: Shumagin Islands
Date: July 16-17, 2009

Position
Shumagin Islands

Weather Data from the Bridge
Weather System: Light fog, clearing through the day
Wind: light and variable
Sea State: <2 feet

Science and Technology Log

This morning, I went up to the boat deck and took a shot of the FOO in the morning safety briefing on the fantail. Afterwards, while the launches were conducting near-shore and off-shore surveys, the *Fairweather* ran cross track lines where we had completed a large open-water polygon. Once the large offshore polygons are surveyed by the *Fairweather*, the ship runs several transects at a 90° angle across the original survey lines. This is to corroborate prior data. When the survey crew finally completes their data analysis, they have checked and re-checked the data a minimum of 4 times before the report leaves the ship. Then, the information goes to NOAA's charting offices and is reviewed multiple times again before being incorporated and published on charts and in the Coast Pilots.

Personal Log

Perhaps the three most frightening prospects on board a ship at sea are:

1. Fire
2. Abandoning a sinking vessel
3. Man Overboard



Morning safety briefing



Going up the ladder blindfolded

This afternoon, we ran drills addressing the first two situations. In the first drill, we simulated a shipboard fire with thick smoke. Rather than filling the ship with smoke, the crew paired up and practiced escaping from their cabins blindfolded. Each person took a turn being the eyes so their



Andrew cornered in the mess!

partner didn't get injured, but could not give directions. My path was relatively easy: Left out of my cabin, right along the wall, up the ladder, right to the next wall, right again, pass the door to the *scullery*, go over a *coaming* and left out to the weather deck. I did fine, and my partner, Engineer Joe Kelly, also did. On the other hand, Andrew Clos, one of the survey techs, made one wrong turn and wandered into the mess. Once he got there, well, on board ship folks tend to enjoy a good laugh – either at their own expense or someone else's. Once Andrew got into the mess, other crew members put chairs in his way, opened cabinet doors, blocked the ability for him to go backwards! Oh, they were

merciless! Finally, someone led him out and we all shared a good laugh. The XO was, however, quick to point out that Andrew had *crawled* during the drill – one of the few who had done so. Remember what they teach even in pre-school, if there's smoke, the smoke rises, so *crawl* to safety. So I guess the point was well-made.

The abandon ship drill is very simple in concept, but with 45-50 people hustling through passageways with life jackets and Gumby suits (not wearing them, but just carrying them) it can be chaotic. Nonetheless, within less than 4 minutes, every crew member was at their abandon ship stations.

The best aspect of the drills was the seriousness of the personnel. We all realize, even the crewmen who have been to sea for decades, that life on the sea is held by a thin thread and frivolity belongs in its place.

Speaking of Frivolity

While the launches were operating, Survey Tech Tami Beduhn (with help!) put a chicken suit on the CPR mannequin that we have on board and set it up in Ensign Matt Forney's station in the plot room. They even put his ball cap on it!



"Ensign Forney" at his station in Plot

Being more than halfway through the leg and getting work done at a really good pace – through crew efforts and cooperation from the weather – the CO (currently Jim Bush who has relieved CAPT Baird while he is on leave for a short while) approved a “beach party” to be held on one of the accessible beaches (Flying Eagle Harbor - 55°10' N, 159°30' W) of Big Koniuji Island, the second largest island in the Shumagins.

The ship arrived in the “harbor” a few hours before the launches returned and anchored. While the launches were conducting survey ops, the stewards (chefs) and the deck crew repeatedly took the skiff (a small utility boat) and set up a HUGE meal on the beach. As you can see, the bonfire was ready to go – collected from the ample supply of driftwood. We even had a Beachparty Internal Temperance Control Honcho – kind of a 2009 version of Women’s Christian Temperance Union of the late 1800’s! After a while on the ship, it was cool to get ashore. A couple of the crew hiked to the summit of the mountain.

Vocabulary

- Scullery – the area of the galley (kitchen) where used dishes are rinsed and put into the dishwasher
- Coaming – a raised door sill at a hatch to keep water from flowing inside



Ensign Matt Forney (left) and the CO at the bonfire. It would get real big!



The ship waiting offshore



It doesn't get any better than this!



Yup! We went swimming! That's me with my arms up. Water was about 43°.