



**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 - Shumagin Islands

Geographical Area: Kodiak, AK to Dutch Harbor, AK

Date: July 7, 2009

**Position**

58°01.18' N, 153° 29.56' W (en route to the Shumagin Islands)

**Weather Data from the Bridge**

Weather System: Fog

Barometer: 1019.5

Temperature: 11.8° C

Sea State: 1-2 feet but to increase through the night

**Personal Log**

It's 0610 and at almost exactly 0600 the generator started. The generators (there are 2) on board the *Fairweather* each put out about 300 kilowatts of electrical power. It's the electrical power plant that will provide us with electricity for the next 2½ weeks. We're going to sea in just 4 or 5 hours!

I was fortunate to have breakfast with Captain Baird. Focused, professional, likeable, gregarious. He demonstrates characteristics of a fine leader.



**Ships in the distance as seen from the *Fairweather***

Forty-five minutes prior to sailing, the ship's alarm, fire alarm, watertight doors and PA were all tested. The professionalism of the crew is repeatedly demonstrated and I am in excellent hands.

Every crew member has specific duty stations for specific duties. For docking and undocking the ship, my station is forward on the bow for assisting with line handling. The dock lines are



You can see how big the lines are when compared to my hand.

really big and they are so long that they require several people to manage. Once again, teamwork, clear communication and coordination were displayed.

Well, my hands are still trembling from the exertion; in the comfort of my cabin I tried on my cold water immersion abandon ship suit (“Gumby suit”.) I wanted to see what was involved before we have an abandon ship drill later on. I sure hope we never need it. Being somewhat claustrophobic, the notion of being fully enveloped in a neoprene rubber suit with only half of my face showing is not exciting. To make it worse, I had a heck of a time escaping from the suit. It literally took about 7 or

8 minutes without assistance. I’ve got to ask if that’s normal or if there are any bigger suits!

Well, it’s 4 hours later and I just finished my safety briefing with Mr. Rice. Putting the suit on and taking it off are *MUCH MUCH* easier with assistance and instructions! I’m now comfortable and capable of donning it easily – but in no means do I want to need to!

We’ve been under way for about 5 hours now and just completed a fire drill simulating smoke in a cabin aft on C-deck. Once again, well done. Shortly later, that was followed by the Abandon Ship drill. The entire crew had to don their Gumby suits and I was as ready as anyone. The two previous donnings saved me from looking foolish!

Almost 1800 hours. Dinner was: fried chicken, barbequed pork chops with chipotle/sundried tomato glaze, fresh snow peas, cheesy potatoes, salad, and rice pudding with fresh whipped cream and raspberries!!! OMG I don’t want to go home! The BBQ is on the port side and the smell of dinner cooking just permeated the air. What a joy!

**Animals (or other cool stuff!) Observed Today**  
FOG – with fog signals

While I was in the safety briefing the bridge spotted a couple whales ☹ but there will be others!



Here I am in my immersion suit, also called a “Gumby” suit.



Lots of fog on the sea...

And as I get ready to turn in for the day, brilliant sunlight at 2200 hours!

**Questions for You to Investigate**

Without the immersion suit, in 45°F water, how long would a normal person survive before hypothermia set in?

The mooring lines are a synthetic material less dense than water. Why is that an advantage?

What do “RADAR,” “SONAR” and “GPS” stand for?

Which animals are whales more closely related to, people or tuna?