



**NOAA Teacher at Sea
Lisa Hjelm
Onboard NOAA Ship RAINIER
July 28 – August 15, 2008**

NOAA Teacher at Sea: Lisa Hjelm, Crossroads Academy, Lyme, NH 03768
NOAA Ship RAINIER
Mission: Hydrographic Survey
Geographical area of cruise: Pavlof Islands, Alaska
Date: July 28 and July 29, 2008

Science and Technology Log

We set sail at precisely 1300, in bright sunshine. Once we were underway everyone was busy. The gangplank and onshore equipment were stowed away. Survival suits, hardhats and lots of instructions were handed out to the newcomers. Before I knew it I had been in and out of a survival suit and knew my job and location in case of fire or any other possible emergency. I made sure I knew where my lifeboat was as well (#7). This is after all my first adventure at sea. As soon as possible I stationed myself on the Bridge where I



As soon as we pulled away from the pier the incredible beauty of Alaska began to unfold all around us.



Scenery in transit

spent most of my time during the transit from Kodiak to our work site at the Pavlof Islands. I was very interested in learning about the navigation of the RAINIER, but initially I was distracted by the islands, volcanoes and wildlife to be seen in every direction. Puffins, with their funny orange feet, were everywhere and in one of the narrow passages I saw at least ten sea otters. As we moved beyond Kodiak Island we frequently saw the spouts of whales. Our transit time was 32 hours at 13 knots, so I did get to spend time observing the Bridge in

full operation.

There were always at least three people at work on the Bridge, usually more. Everyone worked a



View of the Bridge, in transit from Kodiak to Pavlof Islands, AK

four hour shift, and they were alert, attentive, observant, and busy every minute of that time. The ship's position was updated on a nautical chart every 15 minutes as was the weather log. I noticed there was a NOAA cloud identification chart posted on the wall, the same one I use in my classroom. Two Ensigns were responsible for directing the ship, monitoring radar, speed, weather, our exact location, updating the chart and using binoculars to scan the horizon in all directions. A member of the Deck Crew was at the

helm steering the boat and providing a third set of eyes scanning the horizon in all directions.

There was constant communication amongst the three of them about what they were seeing and doing. We saw and monitored the progress of many fishing trawlers, an occasional log and whales. Whales were most easily spotted by their spouts and the RAINIER shifted course slightly whenever necessary to avoid them. The Captain was on the Bridge whenever we went through narrow passages, and she was called when fishing boats got within a certain distance of the RAINIER. It was exciting to see people collecting data and using all of the skills taught in science. I was seeing science in action. It was absolutely clear that everyone knew his or her job and did it well. As a result, my first night at sea, I slept like a baby, rocked by the waves.

Personal Log

When I arrived in Kodiak it was cool and drizzly. Patches of snow were visible on the tops of nearby hills and lilacs were just beginning to bloom, very different from NH weather in late July. Our lilacs bloom on



Ensign updating the chart

Memorial Day. A van from the ship picked me up and Ensign Anna-Liza Villard-Howe showed



Life raft #7 and a launch used for hydrographic surveys

me to my bunk and gave me a quick tour of the ship. After practicing climbing into and out of an upper bunk and stowing my stuff, I spent some time investigating on my own. My first impression was that NOAA Ship RAINIER was similar to Hogwarts, lots of narrow passageways and staircases that moved around when I wasn't looking. Now that I've been aboard for a couple of days, I know it's only the ship that moves, not the staircases, and I've learned the way to my favorite place so far, the Bridge.



NOAA Teacher at Sea, Lisa Hjelm, learns the ropes!