



NOAA Teacher at Sea
Charles “Chuck” Gregory
Onboard NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON
August 12 – 24, 2007

NOAA Teacher at Sea: Charles “Chuck” Gregory
NOAA Ship: THOMAS JEFFERSON
Mission: Hydrographic Surveys of New York Harbor

THOMAS JEFFERSON Interviews

The Questions:

1. Name and rank (or job title).
2. How long have you been working for NOAA and what did you do prior to working for NOAA?
3. How did you “find” NOAA?
4. Describe your job on board the NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON.
5. What is the best part of your job?
6. What is the worse part of your job?
7. Immediately after my Teacher At Sea Internship I plan to turn my experience into a Hollywood blockbuster. What person do you want to act as you in this movie?

Interview #1: Commanding Officer (CO) Tod Schattgen

- CO Schattgen has worked for NOAA for 22+ years
- Before NOAA, the CO graduated from the University of Missouri at Rolla with a Bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering.
- He “found” NOAA by attending a NOAA recruiting session during his senior year at the University of Missouri at Rolla. [He obviously liked what he heard and saw!]
- His job as CO is to safely and effectively operate a world class hydrographic survey ship and provide quality data in a timely manner to our customers.
- The best part of his job is the people, mission and driving the ship.
- The worst part of his job is the politics.
- The actor he would like in his role as CO would be Nicole Kidman.

Interview #2: Field Operations Officer (FOO) Chris VanWestendorp

- Chris has been with NOAA for almost 2 years.
- Prior to joining NOAA, Chris spent 6.5 years in the Navy as a submarine officer aboard the *SSN Oklahoma City*. He chose not to stay in the Navy and began looking for other job opportunities. While getting his degree in Marine Science and working as a NROTC instructor at Savannah State University, Chris befriended a NOAA Corp Officer who encouraged him to look into the NOAA Corp. At first Chris had no idea what the NOAA Corp was, but, after doing a little homework, he became interested enough to apply.
- Now, Chris is third in command of the NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON. He is in charge of the ship’s survey operations: planning the logistics of a hydrographic

survey, data management (acquisition and processing), managing the Survey Department personal, and he has indirect oversight of the Junior Officers.

- The best part of Chris' job as FOO is the challenges he faces on a daily basis while at sea. In addition, Chris enjoys doing something that he and the general public can actually see once the product is final.
- Ironically, the worst part of Chris' job can also be the challenges he faces on a daily basis while at sea. These challenges can make for hectic times and difficult decision making.
- Chris would like Val Kilmer to play his role as FOO aboard the NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON. [However, he feels the ship's personnel would vote for William Shatner instead.]

Interview #3: NOAA Corp Ensign/Junior Officer Megan Nadeau

- Megan has been with NOAA for 1.5 years.
- After high school, Megan took classes for two years at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) before receiving her B.S. degree from the University of Maine (UMaine). After receiving her degree, Megan took a job in a local store while looking for a job in the marine sciences.
- Megan was first exposed to NOAA while at UNH, but didn't really investigate NOAA as a career until a U of Maine graduate student encouraged her.
- Now an Ensign in the NOAA Corp, Megan's job is to drive the NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON. She is qualified as an Officer of the Deck, giving her command of both the Deck and Bridge of the ship. In addition, Megan is the ship's Information Technology Officer, Tides Officer (ensuring the ship has up-to-date tide data from the area being surveyed), and she makes sure the ship's store is open and operating smoothly.
- The best part of Megan's job is being on the water – she loves the ocean. And she loves driving the ship! She also enjoys finding wrecks, and updating the NOAA charts.
- The worst part of her job is being lonely and away from her family and friends. But, Megan is quick to add, she had made her own family while aboard the THOMAS JEFFERSON.
- Megan would like to be played by Kate Bosworth, currently starring in the new "Superman Returns" movie.

Interview #4: NOAA Corp Ensign/Junior Officer Andrew (Andy) Ostapenko

- Andy has been with NOAA one year.
- Before NOAA Andy was a paralegal in Duluth, Minnesota.
- He found NOAA through the NOAA Corp internet. Working in Duluth he knew about the work NOAA was doing, but not about the NOAA Corp. The NOAA Corp website changed all that.
- Andy's primary job aboard the NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON is navigation. He is responsible for the ship's charts, plotting safe courses, and driving the ship. His collateral duties include standing watch, working on the hydrographic survey launches, deploying and retrieving the launches, and he is the "Keys, Flags & Labels Officer".

- The best part of Andy's job is being at sea and driving the ship.
- The worst part of his job is adjusting to life at sea.
- The person he would like in the role of Ensign Andrew Ostapenko is either Val Kilmer or Matt Damon. [I think I'll have to let Matt do this one as the FOO has already asked for Val.]

Interview #5: Senior Survey Technician Peter (Pete) Lewit

- Pete has been working with NOAA for the past 17 years.
- Before coming to NOAA, Pete spent four years in the Coast Guard. And before that he received his Associates degree in History and English from Westchester Community College. During his time at Westchester CC, Pete had to take a science class. He signed up for a course in geology and "the light bulb came on."
- Pete originally spoke with a NOAA recruiter in the fisheries division, but he was told there were no jobs available. So he went into the Coast Guard and then spent nine years working for a mapping company. One day he spotted a tiny NOAA ad in the New York Times asking for people interested in doing map work. He applied.
- Pete's is a hydrographer on the NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON. He examines the data that gets on the charts, writes reports, recommends changes, and assesses the data.
- The best part of Pete's job is the feeling he gets as being part of an organization that's been around for a long time, plus being able to use his skills to create modern charts from reams of data. He likes being a part of history.
- The worst part of Pete's job is being at sea, away from his family.
- The actor who will play Pete in the Hollywood blockbuster is Jeff Goldblum.

Interview #6: Assistant Hydrographic Survey Technician Melody Ovard

- Melody has been working for NOAA for just over six months.
- Prior to working for NOAA, Melody applied her B.S. degree in Marine Biology from the University of North Carolina, Wilmington to a variety of jobs: as a Reserve Boatswain's Mate in the Coast Guard, as a subcontracted SCUBA diver, and in a benthic ecology lab.
- Her marine biology background also kept her abreast of job postings on NOAA's website, and when the right job appeared she applied. The rest is history!
- Her job aboard the NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON is to collect and process data, including working on the survey launches. She writes reports and helps to maintain the survey equipment.
- The best part of Melody's job is finding uncharted objects and wrecks, and learning about the equipment.
- The worst part of her job is that she can't get time for herself.
- The person she wants to play Melody Ovard in Hollywood is Sandra Bullock.

Interview #7: Chief Electronics Technician Eric Thompson

- Eric has been with NOAA for 1.5 years.
- Before working for NOAA Eric was a federal government contractor.
- He found his NOAA job posting through government websites.

- Eric's job aboard the NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON is to maintain all electrical equipment: sonar, radar, communications, etc. In addition, he assists with deploying and retrieving the survey launches, and he occasionally goes on a launch assignment.
- There are two best parts of Eric's job: 1) being on a survey mission looking for unique objects on the seafloor (e.g., wrecks) and using specialized equipment, and 2) going to new and different ports of call.
- The worst part of Eric's job occurs when the Direct TV is down – usually resulting from a lightning strike. The entire crew is after him to fix it!
- The person he wants to play Eric Thompson in Hollywood is either James Doohan (Mr. Scott on Star Trek), or “Carrot Top” Thompson.

Interview #8: Chief Steward Dave Fare

- Dave has been with NOAA just over 1.5 years.
- Before working for NOAA Dave was a Chef in a restaurant.
- He heard about NOAA and the job opening by word of mouth (friends).
- His job as Chief Steward is to cook and supervise the cooks, deliver quality meals, develop the menus, and maintain the ship's store inventory (e.g., food and mess supplies).
- The best part of his job is making sure the crew is happily fed.
- He says there is no worst part to his job.
- The person he wants to play Dave Fare, Chief Steward in Hollywood is Charlie Sheen.

Summary:

- My Hollywood blockbuster will be entitled “NOAA's Skark”
- It will mostly take place aboard the NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON.
- It will star Nicole Kidman as the righteous Commander Tod Schattgen, and Val Kilmer as the dedicated “FOO”. The supporting cast will be:
 - Kate Bosworth as the charming Ensign Megan Nadeau;
 - Matt Damon as the young and talented Ensign Andrew Ostapenko;
 - Jeff Goldblum as the worldly Senior Survey Technician Peter Lewit;
 - Sandra Bullock as the captivating Melody Ovard;
 - Carrot Top Thompson as the brilliant Chief Electronics Technician Eric Thompson; and
 - Charlie Sheen as the multitalented David Fare

Also starring: Sean Connery at the evil Teacher At Sea Chuck Gregory

The plot: A mysterious Teacher At Sea boards the quiet NOAA Ship THOMAS JEFFERSON and turns it into a den of greed, passion, and corruption.

Stay tuned.....if you dare!!!