



NOAA Teacher at Sea Kimberly Pratt Onboard NOAA Ship MCARTHUR II July 5 – 24, 2005

Interview 10

“The Officers of the MCARTHUR II”

Officers of the MCARTHUR II are commissioned by NOAA. They are uniformed personnel with the exception of the First Mate. They all are assigned different watches and their primary responsibilities are, under direction of the Commanding Officer, to run the ship, navigate, take care of the ship’s medical needs and to make sure that shipboard operations are running smoothly.

The MCARTHUR II has 6 officers on board – LCDR Morris, First Mate Greg Hubner (who is not uniformed), Operations Officer Nathan (Herb) Hancock, Navigation Officer Paul Householder, and Junior Officers, Ensign Steven Barry, and Ensign Paul Smidansky. All NOAA Corps Officers have two years at sea, initially followed by three years of shore duty and rotate between sea and shore duty unless they are aviators.

First Mate Greg Hubner has been with NOAA for 26 years. He has a background in the Navy and started with NOAA as a deck hand. He is currently a licensed Officer and enjoys being out to sea. He likes seeing different countries and his favorite port is an island off of Spain.

Another NOAA ship, RONALD H. BROWN,



is involved with international research so some NOAA ships travel the world, and Greg has had the opportunity to see many countries and cultures.



Operations Officer Nathan Hancock is readily noticeable by his sense of humor and laughter. Nathan graduated with a BS degree in Environmental Sciences and a MS degree in Geology and Geophysics. Nathan really enjoys his position as it enables him to “drive the boat”. In the future, he would like to be transferred to the Key Largo Marine Sanctuary or fly into hurricanes. Nathan developed a love for the water when he was a child living at the ocean and running charters with his father a marine biologist.

Navigation Officer Paul Householder, is also the medical person in charge. He has a BA/BS in Chemical Engineering and joined NOAA after being laid off during the downsizing of the semi-conductor era. He's been with the ship for over a year and is adjusting to sea life. He likes seeing the different places, but does miss his weekends.



Ensigns Barry and Smidansky both have a background in Meteorology and Barry would like to join the National Weather Service. Barry, who joined NOAA in February '04, enjoys the adventure of meeting different people. On this tour, it will be his first time visiting Hawaii. Ensign Smidansky, is a licensed airplane pilot, and is looking to join the air fleet of NOAA, but for the time being is enjoying his time at sea.

In order to become a NOAA Corps Officer, you need a college degree, preferable with a background in science or math. You must be under 35 years old, with no arrests or criminal background. Also, it takes between 6-9 months for your application to be processed and then the Secretary of the Commerce grants you a temporary commission. The Senate grants you permanent status. You must undergo three months training at the Merchant Marine Academy and then are assigned to a ship at sea to become a qualified deck officer. NOAA is constantly training officers for higher positions and Officer Householder will be promoted soon to Lt. Jr. Grade. All of the officers while professional and polite still have a sense of humor, they are gracious enough to keep answering the question – “where are we?”



Question:

Malka, grade 5 – Where does the ship/vessel get fresh water? The ship makes its own water, we take salt water and process it to turn it into fresh water. Everyday we make 2,000 gallons worth. The process is started 10 miles out to sea.

Pictures

1. Greg Hubner
2. Nathan Hancock
3. Paul Householder
4. Steven Barry
5. Paul Smidansky