



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

### Interview 7

#### Interview with the Oceanographers

Every evening, one hour after sunset, while everyone on the ship is settling down to a good night's rest, the oceanographers are busy, collecting samples, analyzing data and preparing for the next collection that has to be taken.

On board the MCARTHUR II, you will find oceanographers, Mindy Kelley and Liz Zele. When you first meet them you're struck with their laughter, and the lightheartedness of these two scientists. You have to have a sense of humor when working at odd hours and conditions and these two scientists, know how to do serious science and yet still have fun.

Mindy Kelley, has always enjoyed the ocean especially when she visited Florida during family vacations. Born in Pennsylvania, she treasured these trips and it led her to becoming a Marine Scientist. She went to school at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania and did summer field work through Wallops Island, VA. Her field work led her to the Assateague Island National Seashore where she gained extensive experience within the Barrier Islands and its marshes. She obtained a BA in Biology and a BS in Marine Science/and Environmental Studies.

Her education took a total of 5 years.

Her first job was working with the Pennsylvania's Department of Environment Protection - West Nile virus surveillance program. It was a great experience and

pushed her forward to pursue a Marine Science career instead a settling on an environmental career. Mindy, really likes the computer aspect of being an oceanographer and hands on collecting of specimens. She enjoys seeing her field work and data analysis come together and makes sense. Working in the field is quite challenging. This tour she will be gone from July 2nd to November 30th on the MCARTHUR II. After porting in San Francisco on the 24th she'll head to Hawaii for the rest of her tour. In order to meet the demands of ship life she relaxes by e-mailing, doing art projects, listening to music and practicing ballet. With a long history of practicing ballet, Mindy has adapted her routine so she can still work out on the ship. While in port in Hawaii, she'll attend some classes to make sure that her training is not being compromised. Her advice to someone perusing

a career in Oceanography would be to take a lot of math. She says, "even if you don't



like math, when you can apply it to science, you'll start to like it". She also advises to take calculus, chemistry and physics. Most importantly is the desire to make it work.

You have to be assertive and aggressive to work in the field and if you are, then you'll be successful. Her goal is to return to school, and do further studies in computer science, physical and biological oceanography. A typical day in the life of an oceanographer is demanding. They arise 1 hour before sunrise, around 4 am, collecting chlorophyll, nutrients, salt samples and productivity. Next, throughout the day they collect surface chlorophyll, temperature, and record other data. 1 hour after sunset, they run a CTD station and then to a Bongo Tow. They also send daily reports to their home base in LaJolla, CA and monitor their data throughout the day.

Helping Mindy with this large task is Liz Zele. Liz has a background in marine mammal identification and acoustics. She attended the University of San Diego where she received her degree in Marine Science with a biology emphasis. After she graduated, she



was involved with science education and informal science. Liz has worked for NOAA for almost three years and this is her second long cruise. She enjoys field work because it lets her use what she learned in school, but she does admit however that she misses her family and friends while out at sea.

This project started for her in late June and will end on December 7th on board the David Starr Jordan working with another oceanographer. In order to relax on board a ship, Liz reads, watches movies, and goes to the gym.

In December, Liz hopes to buy a home and would like to open an education facility and continue with marine mammal acoustics. For anyone wishing to enter the field of marine science she advises to volunteer and go after opportunities. She states the field is very competitive so network and meet as many people as you can.

Pictures: (1) Mindy Kelley

(2) Liz Zele