



NOAA Teacher at Sea
Jeff Lawrence
Onboard NOAA Ship RAINIER
May 22 – June 2, 2006

Mission: Hydrography

Day 3: Wednesday, May 24, 2006

Weather data from bridge as of 0730 hours:

Visibility: 0.5 miles or 0.8 km

Wind direction: 260 degrees

Wind Speed: 5 knots

Sea level pressure: 1016 mb or 30.0 inches

Present weather: mostly cloudy but clearing off earlier this morning

Temperature: 47 deg. wet/48 deg. dry

***By the afternoon the weather was sunny with calm winds and beautiful scenery.

Science and Technology Log

I began the day as usual with breakfast in the mess hall at 0700 hours. I must say the staff aboard the RAINIER know how to make a person gain weight. The food choices are great and there is plenty to eat. I was assigned to work off RA 8 with a survey crew. We left the ship at 0800 hours after a short briefing on the fantail of the RAINIER.

The RA 8 crew's task for the day was to survey the area around the tide station to make sure the tidal data collected that shows the rise and fall of the tides was accurate. Deck Utility man, Kenneth Keys, and General Vessel Assistant, Kelson Baird, piloted the boat to the destination and delivered the survey crew onshore with great care. The survey crew was managed by ENS Jamie Wasser, ENS Nathan Eldridge, Assistant Survey Technician Tom Hardy, and myself. Using benchmarks that had been set by the National Ocean Service, we completed a triangulation survey of the dock where the tide station was located at high tide. Surveying is tool used by NOAA to make sure objects are where they are supposed to be according to charts and maps. The crew of NOAA ship RAINIER surveys sites as they set up a tide station and before they disassemble it to move it to another site.

Upon completion of the tasks we returned to the ship while Kenneth Keys trained General Assistant Baird on proper docking procedures of the launch boat. Everyone aboard the ship must work in unison to ensure a successful launch is carried out so that critical data can be collected, disseminated, and analyzed later aboard the RAINIER. Quality charts and maps can then be generated for use by navigators of the shorelines of Alaska.

Personal Log

Today I learned how critical it is for the people aboard the RAINIER to collect quality data to ensure the results are accurate on the finish product. It is a better use of time for each group to take their time and do it right the first time as opposed to having to redo the same task a second time. I hadn't realized navigation of the ocean's waterways was such a precise event and required such precise data collection methods. This is a good lesson to introduce to students on the collection of scientific data. Teachers must emphasize that the work can be tedious at times and that accuracy of data is the outcome that the scientist must strive to attain.

Question of the Day

What is the type of data that scientist collect that can be represented by numbers?

Jeff Lawrence