



NOAA Teacher at Sea
Barney Peterson
Onboard NOAA Ship RAINIER
August 12 – September 1, 2006

NOAA Teacher at Sea: Barney Peterson

NOAA Ship RAINIER

Mission: Hydrographic Survey

Sunday, August 27, 2006

Weather Data from Bridge

Visibility: 10+ nm

Wind : light airs

Seawater temperature: 11.1°C

Sea level pressure: 1017.0 mb

Cloud cover: partly cloudy

Science and Technology Log

The personnel aboard the RAINIER are from a wide variety of backgrounds and locations. They come from the southern states, America's Heartland, cowboy country, the east coast, and the Pacific Northwest. Many now call Seattle, RAINIER's homeport, their home. What follows are brief profiles with some officers and crew members that I spent time with on the ship.

AS Leslie Abrahamson and I talked while she was splicing lines (working on ropes to keep the ends from fraying or unraveling). That is a fairly specialized skill and Leslie had ample time to practice while working for several years on Tall Ships. She was a teacher for over 5 years working with high school aged youths, in programs including widely respected Outward Bound. Following graduation from high school in Long Island, New York, Leslie attended Stanford University in Palo Alto, California to study theater arts. At the end of her 3rd year she went to Shanghai and spent six months discovering the joys of outdoor life: hiking, camping, and trekking. Meeting new people and having new experiences helped form her into an adventurous, self-reliant young woman. She returned, finished college, got into SCUBA diving

and boats, and began working on dive and whale watching boats. After working 24/7 with high school students in expeditionary learning projects, Leslie was ready for a change. She was hired as an Able



**AS Leslie Abrahamson
splicing lines aboard NOAA
ship RAINIER.**

Bodied Seaman working for NOAA. Leslie has been accepted for graduate school and is considering an advanced degree in marine affairs and coastal zone management, but the training opportunities through NOAA are really attractive to her right now. She is enjoying working in the waters of the Pacific Northwest.



Intern Umeko Foster exploring the coastline of Cushing Bay on Mitrofanina Island.

Umeko Foster is a second-year intern aboard RAINIER from California Maritime Academy. Raised in southern California, Umeko is looking forward to the challenges and opportunities of working aboard ships, either with NOAA or in merchant shipping. She spent this summer and last learning first-hand about living and working aboard an ocean-going vessel. Umeko has worked in a variety of jobs aboard RAINIER. I most often found her standing watch on the bridge, or working on deck duties around the ship. She has worked on the hydrography survey launches, but hasn't acquired specialized knowledge of the highly

technical equipment used in surveying. Her background at the Maritime Academy will qualify her as a 3rd Mate for work on ships.

Survey Technician Matt Boles comes from Tennessee. With an Associate degree in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) he joined NOAA 18 months ago to gain some practical experience in that field before committing to a 4 year study program. One of the things that influenced his decision was his experience in an internship he did in 2004: the teamwork and positive attitudes of the crew he worked with made him want to become a part of the organization. Matt feels that being in Alaska, far from his family has helped him to become more aware of possibilities and to develop a new set of values about environmental stewardship. His internship aboard the fisheries ship was his first ocean experience and gave him an appreciation for a new part of the world. He has fine-tuned his goals toward a degree in aerospace science so he will be able to use his skills in remote



Survey Technician Matt Boles (right) locating tide gauge markers on Olga Island.

sensing surveying in other applications such as aerial survey work. He is strongly motivated toward helping people learn more about the world we live in and how to live in it wisely, hopefully avoiding future tragedies like the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Matt, who got married just three months ago, says the hardest parts of his life at sea are being away from family for long periods of time and the lack of physical activity space aboard ships.

As a musician (bass guitar player), outdoor enthusiast, and with a strong interest in aviation, Matt likes to spend his free time actively. There isn't much room to hike on the ship.

Personal Log

I got a really good workout today. I went ashore on Olga Island with Field Operations Officer Ben Evans and Survey Technician Matt Boles. Our job was to locate and document five brass survey monuments for positioning a temporary tide gauge on the Island next season. I served as photographer and we all scrambled around on the rocks looking for the brass plates fixed onto the rocks.



TAS Peterson with Lt. Ben Evans atop Olga Island.

When we finished documenting locations we took a few minutes to climb to the top of the island for the view. ST Boles and I went straight up through the brush at about a 50° angle and met Lt Evans on top. He had found a better slope and walked right up. There was a pair of Bald Eagles circling and calling above the summit and the view was wonderful. After taking pictures we headed back down. Who would have ever thought I would be climbing like this in rubber boots? You have to love these “XtraTuf”s!”

**Barney Peterson
Teacher At Sea
NOAA ship RAINIER**

barney.peterson@noaa.gov