NOAA Teacher at Sea
Kimberly Wolke
Onboard NOAA ship RAINIER
July 24-August 11, 2006

Mission: Hydrographic Surveys of the Shumagin Islands, Alaska
Day: Thursday, August 3, 2006

Weather from the bridge at 1600:
Skies: Partly Cloudy (PC)
Visibility: 10 nautical miles (nm)
Wind Direction: West/Northwest (WNW)
Wind Speed: 10 knots
Waves: 0-1 foot
Sea Water Temp. (°C): 11.1
Sea Level Pressure: 1002.0 millibars (mb)
Temp. (°C): 15.0 (air temperature)


A fire extinguisher, a fire alarm, and a fire hose aboard the NOAA ship

Log 9
Safety

One of many life rings on the deck of the NOAA ship RAINIER

We had a Damage Control (DC) training program this morning, run by Chief Boatswain Jim Kruger. Damage control is another means of keeping the ship and the crew safe. If there was ever a fire, leaking pipe, flooding or any other emergency that puts the integrity of the ship in question, it's important for the crew to know where the proper equipment is located and how to respond to such emergencies. More detailed training is done on responding to various emergencies and using the equipment at other times.

A self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), which supplies air if needed

I've mentioned in other logs how important safety is on the ship and how much it's emphasized. Some of the things I've identified since I've been onboard as part of the ship's safety are: the wearing of hardhats and float jackets on the deck when deck work is being done, wearing safety glasses when working with paint and chemicals, wearing long pants and long sleeves on the deck, tying long hair back, fire hoses and fire extinguishers located all over the ship, eyewash stations, damage control lockers on various outside decks with

equipment for emergencies, closing all hatch doors after you pass through them, storing all gear and equipment properly, as well as frequent safety drills (fire drills, abandon ship, and man overboard).

All of the things done here on the ship are very similar to the types of safety precautions taken at school in the science classroom. Although a different environment, many of the same safety hazards exist. The Boatswain Group Leader Steve Foye was telling me about some of the chemicals used on the ship. Some of them were chemicals used in some of the chemistry labs we do! He said there was no way he'd allow his workers to work without the proper safety attire and these are adults!

TAS Kim Wolke at the engine controls on NOAA ship RAINIER

Personal Log

Last night while I was standing on the bridge, I was given the opportunity to steer the ship for a little while which made me the helmsperson. Another one of those experiences where it looks a heck of a lot easier than it really is. It takes awhile to get the feel of the ship. I also had a chance to control the engines as we were anchoring. I was better at this task since the ship's momentum didn't effect what I was doing.

I'm learning that there's a special language used aboard a ship. Aside from there being different names for parts of the ship, there's also a special way to communicate. For example, while I was on the bridge as helmsperson and controlling the engines, I needed to repeat the directions given to me (ex. "all ahead 2, aye") so the Officer on the Deck (OOD) knew I heard him. Once I completed a command, I needed to repeat the command again. The OOD then lets you know he/she heard you by saying "very well". Sometimes commands came faster than I was completing them but as long as I was listening and we were communicating all was "very well".

NOAA ship RAINIER'S engine control console on the bridge

Kim Wolke
Teacher at Sea