



**NOAA Teacher at Sea
Beth Carter
Onboard NOAA Ship RAINIER
June 25 – July 7, 2007**

NOAA Teacher at Sea: Beth Carter

NOAA Ship RAINIER

Mission: Hydrographic Surveys, Gulf of Esquibel, Alaska

June 24, 2007

Personal Log

The mountains in Alaska surely do not look like those in North Carolina! Yesterday, I flew over some craggy, gray peaks that were streaked with snow. They looked almost like mounds of gray ice cream with melted vanilla drizzling down the sides. The mountains in Alaska also look as though they were once volcanoes, as the tops are craters with steep sides. Now the crater's edges are soft with trees, but I can easily imagine huge stones blowing from the peak and magma oozing out the tops of these mountains.

I took three different airplanes and one little ferry to reach Ketchikan, Alaska, which took me over 8 hours in the air and 13 hours total.

Today I am going to find my ship, the RAINIER, and find out what time to report. We depart from Ketchikan tomorrow morning, June 25.



NOAA Teacher at Sea, Beth Carter, visits a native site in Ketchikan, AK.

Questions of the Day

1. I crossed four time zones to reach Ketchikan. This means that it is four hours later in North Carolina than here. It is 5:00 a.m. as I write this. What time is it in North Carolina?
2. I woke up this morning at 4:00 a.m., and it was light outside. Why do you think that the sun rises earlier in Alaska, and it sets later, than in North Carolina?
HINT: Look at a map that shows latitude and longitude lines on the earth, and notice the LATITUDE of Wilmington, North Carolina and Ketchikan, Alaska.

June 25, 2007

Personal Log

Last night I unpacked all of my gear into my tiny room that I'm sharing with one of the female officers. My closet is just a little bigger than a high school locker. My berth is the top berth, and making the bed was really tough...I had to perch on a ladder and try not to bang my head on the ceiling. When I lie down, I have about 18 inches between my nose and the ceiling.



A small boat called a launch with a view of the mountains in Ketchikan, from the RAINIER

Today the RAINIER left Ketchikan to begin our hydrographic mapping mission. It is cloudy today, but the mountains are beautiful with their snow frosting. We have had a fire drill already, and an abandon ship drill. It is really cool that all of the officers and crew know exactly what to do and where to go in case of any kind of trouble. All of the "gumby" suits, or survival suits, that we wear if abandoning ship are bright orange. What would Paris Hilton say about that?

Science Log

Today I met Erin, who is also from N.C. She is one of the survey technicians who drive the launches and operate the sound-wave emitting equipment to create color-coded surveys of the ocean bottom. They are color-coded according to the depth of the water; for example, deep blue means deep water, lighter blue is shallower water, and red orange and yellow represent rocks and shallows and sandbars and dangers. Erin tells me that she is going to work with new software that actually creates 3-dimensional images, and I hope to see how that works tomorrow when we arrive where the surveys will begin.

Question of the Day

1. Who uses maps of the ocean floor? Why is it important that they be accurate? How did the first mapmakers make maps of the ocean floor and depths?