



**NOAA Teacher at Sea  
Allison Schaffer  
Onboard NOAA Ship GORDON GUNTER  
September 14 – 25, 2007**

**NOAA Teacher at Sea: Allison Schaffer**  
NOAA Ship GORDON GUNTER  
Mission: Ichthyoplankton Survey  
Day 14: Thursday, September 27, 2007

**Science and Technology Log**

The past few days have been kind of crazy on the ship. Two days ago we did a fire drill and an abandon ship drill. We did these drills the within the first few days of our cruise and I got lost trying to get to my correct area for the abandon ship drill. But this time, not a problem. First we did a fire drill. They sounded the horn and let us know it's a drill and all the scientists report to the same area where wait for word from the bridge to release us from our drill. While we were waiting, the crew suited up in the gear they would need for a real fire and the Executive



**A beautiful sunset on the Gulf of Mexico**

Officer, or XO, Nathan Hancock, picked me and one of the other scientists to help out with the fire hose. I was up front and held the nozzle while the other scientist supported the hose. That was my very first fire hose experience! Next we did an abandon ship drill. Everyone on board is assigned a specific area to report to and you must bring with you few items: your survival suit for cold water, a long sleeve shirt, long pants and a hat. Once everyone has reported to their area, we wait for word from the crew to let us know we can head back to the lab. Then yesterday, we did a man overboard drill. To simulate a real man overboard situation, the crew threw a dummy into the water, sounded the man overboard alarm and alerted everyone that there was a man overboard on the port (left) side. The scientists all report to the same area and have the important job of being the eyes for the crew while they ready the rescue boat. For this drill, we stood up on deck and pointed in the direction of the man overboard as the crew deployed the rescue boat and headed in the direction we were pointing. We did that

until the rescue boat was in view of the man overboard. I liked watching the crew in action and seeing how well they worked together.

Last night I was able to visit the bridge to see how they run everything up there. My shift was over and the night shift was getting set up to do their first station of the night. I asked if I could stick around and watch them do a station so I would know what it's like from the perspective of the officers. It was very cool.

And then we had our last full station today. I finished my last bongo, Neuston and CTD tonight. We will be doing some more methot samples as we head home for me and some other teachers to bring to their classrooms. So we aren't completely done with everything, but the cruise is definitely winding down.

### **Personal Log**

Last day of stations was today! This is exciting because it means that we successfully finished the leg of our cruise. But at the same time it's sad because that means I will be going home soon. And I just figured out how to get everywhere on the ship. As educational and fun as this has been, I am excited to get home. I have so many stories that I can't wait to share with everyone and hopefully inspire some of my co-workers to get involved with experiences like this.

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### **Addendum: Glossary of Terms**

- **Visibility** is how far ahead you can see from the ship. On a very foggy day you may only have a visibility of 10 ft whereas on a clear day you can see all the way to the horizon, or 12 nautical miles.
- **Wind** direction tells you which way the wind is blowing from: 0° is north, 90° is east, 180° is south, and 270° is west.
- **Sea wave height** is the height of the smaller ripples
- **Swell height** is the estimates larger waves
- **Sea level pressure (or Barometric Pressure)** indicates what the trend of the weather has been. High barometric pressure usually means sunny weather and rain can not build up in clouds if they are being squeezed together by high pressure. Low barometric pressure means rainy or stormy weather is on the way.
- **Present Weather** is a description of what the day's weather is.  
- Courtesy of Thomas Nassif, NOAA Teacher at Sea, 2005 Field Season
- **Field Party Chief** or FPC is in charge of the team of scientists on board the ship. This person oversees all activities having to do with collection of samples and is the go to person in case anything goes wrong that the scientists can't handle. They also act as an extra set of hands when needed.
- **Bongo Net** is two circular frames 60 cm in diameter sitting side by side with two 333 micron nets and a weight in the center to help it sink. At the base of each net is a plastic container used to collect all the plankton that can be easily removed so we can retrieve the samples
- **Lab Scientist** is the scientist that stays in the lab to work the computers recording the data on sample time, sample depth and is the one that relays information to the deck

personnel about when the nets have hit maximum depth. They keep watch in case anything goes wrong underwater.

- **Deck Scientist** is the scientist out on deck getting the nets ready, rinsing the nets, collecting and preserving samples. They are the eyes on deck in case anything goes wrong at the surface or on deck.
- **Neuston Net** is one net 1 X 2 meters with a 947 micron net. Neuston samples are done only at the surface and placed in the water for ten minutes.
- **The Bridge** is the navigational hub of the ship. This is where the officers steer and navigate the ship and where all the equipment is located to help them to do so. It is usually the top deck on ships to give the crew the best visual of the water.
- **XO or Executive Officer** is the second in command to the CO. The XO is responsible for the administration of the ship, supervising department chiefs as well as all officers. They are also responsible for the budget.