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Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 5: Mr. Potato Head

Zoe Sandwith
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Around 5pm this evening an announcement came over the ship's intercom: "Attention all ship personnel: If this is your first trip to the arctic, please report to the forward lounge at 8pm sharp."

Life at sea can become very rhythmic, with each day blending into the next. Blair Walsh, our head cook, has taken on the role of 'entertainment officer' in an effort to give some punctuation to our days. He'll be putting together activities throughout the cruise for any and all to participate in. It's a great way to shake up our daily routines, as well as a great way to meet others aboard the ship we might otherwise not. An aside – the headcount on the ship this year is 81! No small number.

Blair's already off to a running start, with a Biggest Loser (or Gainer) competition: whoever has the greatest change in weight at the end of the 4 weeks wins. I think the gainer option would be my best bet given the amazing food coming out of the kitchen…. I missed the weigh in though. Other activities that are starting to spin up are the darts tournament and the cribbage tournament. The crib is the one that I've been waiting for: Blair and I have an old score to settle from 3 years ago, where after besting me in the semi-finals he went on to win the tournament. He was sure to remind me of it today so it's high time for a rematch!

The announcement tonight was for a special activity though.

We all consider the Arctic Ocean to be a special place that is very difficult to get to. Tonight was the start of a series of games reserved for those who are on their first trip in the Beaufort Gyre. 35 on board are candidates -43%!. When the newcomers showed up tonight, they were greeted by a Blair with a bin full of potato heads on string necklaces. The initiates have to carry the head around over the next 5 days to advance. If they're caught without it, they lose points. Another task last night was a scavenger hunt. Whoever has the most points at the end of the trip wins!

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Mail: Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, 266 Woods Hole Road, Woods Hole, MA 02543, USA.
E-Contact: info@whoi.edu; press relations: media@whoi.edu, tel. (508) 457-2000
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