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Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 2: A Floating Lab

Chris Linder
August 2, 2005

A dusting of clouds and patchy fog gave way to bright sun today as we continued our transit through the Northwest Passage. Ice conditions have varied from glassy calm open water to thick brash ice. Our track is erratic; we weave through the floes searching out the path of least resistance. I spotted a small dark head swimming away from the ship today, diving quickly out of sight... must have been a seal. To our right the low brown hills of Victoria Island reminded us that we were in a very narrow strait. To find out more about the history of this famous passage, be sure to read Quest for the Northwest Passage in the history section of this website.

The labs were buzzing with activity today as the unpacking began in earnest. The hold (a large storage area) below decks is literally overflowing with our crates of equipment. It was loaded in Halifax, the *Louis'* home port, in early July. Starting right after breakfast, the science party lifted, dragged, opened, and emptied boxes upon boxes of scientific gear. The precious cargo--our scientific instruments--need to be assembled and tested before being dunked in the waters of the Beaufort Sea. In a day, an empty room (the main lab) was transformed into a fully-functioning oceanographic laboratory. The first science station has been scheduled for the early hours of tomorrow morning, so there is no time for delay. After working for sixteen straight hours, Linda White surveyed the main lab and commented with a satisfied smile "it's starting to look like a lab now." Tomorrow is going to be another long day, starting at 5AM with the first of many science stations. To learn more about CTDs, ADCPs, MMPs, and all of the other instruments we are using, read the instruments page.

One of the things that has really impressed me in my short time aboard the *Louis* is how welcome the crew has made us feel. Tonight after dinner we had a "meet & greet" in the main lounge so that scientists and crew could take a break from their duties to swap handshakes and stories. There are a total of 48 crew members and 18 scientists aboard. In the dispatches that follow I will feature interviews with both ship's crew and science party, and of course answer questions from the public that I receive via email.

Last updated: September 6, 2013

Glassy calm--the only ripples are the ones we're making.

First Officer Stephane Legault (right) points out the location of the life rafts on a familiarization tour.

Bos'n Bob Taylor and Seaman Glen Watton prepare the ship for mooring operations.

Michiyo Kawai (left) and Mary Steel (right) set up Michiyo's alkalinity analysis equipment. Michiyo is a post-doctoral scholar at the Institute of Ocean Sciences, British Columbia. She is studying the origin of fresh water in the Arctic.

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