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Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 2: Safety: Learn It, Love It, Live It!

Dr. Mary-Louise Timmermans and Jeffrey Nguyen
July 22, 2011

We've been making good time all day (at average speed of about 15 knots) through the straits on our way to the Beaufort Sea to our first science station.

In preparation, Sarah Zimmermann (IOS) briefed those of us standing CTD/water sampling watches on sampling protocol. In the early hours of tomorrow morning we'll begin making CTD measurements and collecting water samples from all ocean depths throughout the Beaufort Gyre to understand the distribution of relatively freshwater (and sources of that freshwater) in this part of the Arctic Ocean, ocean circulation, ocean acidification and the distribution of biota.

Today's transit was a good opportunity for a safety briefing and fire and lifeboat drills (highlighted in the photographs and described by Jeffrey Nguyen, US Naval Academy).

Mary-Louise Timmermans

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Hello there and welcome to Day 2 of the CCGS LSSL expedition! While most of the scientists slept in until 0730 breakfast, some woke up to an early run and workout in the ship's 24 hour state of the art fitness center. After breakfast, the day was committed to learning about ship safety as well as knowing how to react in emergency situations. For example, what would you do if there was a fire aboard the ship? Or what if someone fell overboard in the freezing Arctic waters and you were the only one to see it? At 0830, First Officer Derek gave a brief about the ship and touched lightly upon the Commander's Standing Orders. This included conduct and professionalism, use of alcohol, utilization of ship equipment, etc. We donned "emergency suits," yellow, clown-like, rubber costumes that offer full skin protection in case we were to abandon ship and float in the murky Arctic waters. After a familiarization tour and learning of the infinite secret passageways of the entire ship, the scientists shared their research, goals, and experiments with each other at our daily 1100 meeting.

Lunch was followed by a scheduled fire drill. As the alarm deafened our ears at 1230, everyone grabbed their life vests, jackets, gloves, hats and raced to the helicopter hangar near the stern of the ship. While a voluntary fire team searched for and smothered the fire, the rest of the personnel scattered to their respective life boats. These life boats are huge compartment-like vessels with an all around, orange exterior hull that can fit 20 to 30 people. We watched as the life boats conducted exercises in the water beside the ship.

Afterwards, the scientists went back and industriously prepared their equipment for the upcoming AG-5 Station around midnight.

Midshipman First Class Jeffrey Q. Nguyen

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