

Guest Column: Rose still aboard Coast Guard vessel

Editor's note: This is one in a series of **guest columns** planned to cover a local teacher's trip to the Arctic.

By CHANTELLE ROSE

Life aboard a Coast Guard vessel is quite different than life in Champaign County. My new home away from home, the United States Coast Guard Cutter Healy is 420 feet long. With 3 diesel engines, we left port in Seward carrying 85 percent of the 1,221,921 gallons of diesel that she is capable of holding. The designation for Healy is WAGB-20. The "W" represents that she is a Coast Guard vessel, "AGB" represents Arctic gun boat and she is the 20th icebreaker to be put in service.

There are 114 of us aboard the ship; 96 Coast Guard officers and crew and 18 in the science party. The Coast Guard has 11 different Statutory missions. The Healy was designed to fulfill Mission #11, Ice Operations. As a scientific research vessel, she is equipped with lots of lab spaces - even refrigerated lab space where we can work at the same temperature as the Arctic winter water, around 30 degrees F.

Meals have been remarkably good. We even have homemade desserts at every meal and made to order eggs for breakfast. I never imagined we would eat this well! During a tour of the galley the Senior Chief told me that 80 percent of what is served aboard Healy is prepared from scratch.

The crew of the Healy has been at sea since May ... so my time away from home is very short to what they have experienced. The morale of the ship is high. They are all aware that this is the last mission of the year and they are anxiously awaiting arriving back at their home port of Seattle, Wash. The Morale Officer plans activities and events to maintain morale and the science party is included in these events. We have had an Arctic Steel Beach Picnic on the fantail of the ship, movies in the helicopter hangar, UNO tournament and other fun activities.

I am enjoying my stay on the USCG Healy and I'm looking forward to continuing our science activities. For more information on my voyage, go to www.polartrec.com/expeditions/winter-sampling There you can access my Daily Journal, photos, resources and much more!

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