

To The Bitter End

A Newsletter from the Tall Ship Semester for Girls 2008

T a l l S h i p E d u c a t i o n A c a d e m y

Special points of interest:

- Nautical Vocabulary, page 4
- Read more about TSSG 2008 on our Blog! www.tallshipacademy.org/voyage08
- Girls Summer at Sea begins June 23, 2008. Check our website for more information!
- Summer Sailstice: June 21, 2008 <http://www.summersailstice.com/>
- San Francisco Festival of Sail: July 23 to July 28 <http://www.festivalofsail.org/>
- Master Mariners Wooden Boat Show: Sunday, July 13, 2008

Inside this issue:

Knowledge	1
Teamwork	2
Comfort Zone	2
Advice for TSSG 09	3
Our ship Westward	3
Adjusting Home	4
Special Interest	5
Special Thanks	5
Aloft	6
Independence	6
The Rough Plan	7

Knowledge

By Ashally Park

Knowledge comes in many forms. There are lessons that are given to you which are important because there are so many things to know. Before we started our actual voyage, we had lessons in Oceanography, Navigation, English, History of the Caribbean and we learned how to be physically fit. It was good to have this information under your belt beforehand because there will be things that will be taught to you on the boat in conditions that might be hard.

I remember learning all of my lines, knots, and emergency gear all in one day, at 4 in the morning! It was the most difficult situation I've ever been in. I was barely half awake with a nauseous stomach, but after two days of practicing I was successful in memorizing all of the lines and how to sail handle them. It was the best feeling of accomplishment I've ever had. There was knowledge that came as I sat in my bunk, writing in my journal. And knowledge that emerged as I stepped onto islands and met people.



There are not a lot of people in the world who have the knowledge that I have today and not a lot of people who understand the hard work I had to go through in order to be successful. Knowledge will get you anywhere you want to go, or be whoever you wish. This experience has certainly shown me that it is worth working hard for that kind of freedom.

Teamwork

By Naiema Jackson

Life on Westward was full of rocky and windy times that brought about our worst and best sides of teamwork. We incorporated teamwork into every aspect of our lives on Westward. We were each others safety, and we had to be able to rely on one another. From eating breakfast to tacking and jibing to scrubbing the soles (floors) there was a system created to make teamwork possible. We learned that by working as a team, jobs got done faster and more efficiently.

We were separated into watch groups and given specific tasks. A watch group is a group of four students, a mate, and a deckhand. The

word watch is also used for the time your watch group is in charge of the boat. Each watch is four hours except for dog watch which is only two. During watch, we navigated, cleaned and overall controlled the ship until our four hours were up. We did things such as steering, bow watch, soles and bowls (cleaning floors and bathrooms), trash duty, assist the cook, tacking, jibing, deck wash, brasso, etc. We did wakeups in order to keep a time rotation going on the ship, and so everyone would eat on time. If we did not have wakeups we would have to use alarms which would be annoying if they went off every three and a

half hours. It was also a great way to keep a pretty slacked sleep schedule.

We earned points for our teamwork later on in our voyage when we began the Schooner Olympics. The Schooner Olympics is a series of events that we competed in. Some of them were silly, like a crab crawling relay race and a relay race to put on exposure suits. Others tested the skills we learned on the boat, like setting the jib for time. It was a way to lighten the day and to stretch our teamwork skills further.

Outside my Comfort Zone

By Marzett Lee

Living on a boat for six weeks had its challenges. One of my biggest challenges was stepping out of my comfort zone. Everything was very new to me. On our voyage I felt very irritated with myself, because I didn't feel good. I was very hungry for food that I was used to eating. I wasn't used to having to not shower for so many days. Our cook knew how to cook but my seasickness was getting the best of me and I couldn't eat. Not being able to eat led me into going to the hospital in Vieques, Puerto Rico.

After I saw the doctor, I

started to be able to eat and monitor my seasickness with medication. I still felt out of my comfort zone when I had to listen to people that I had just met tell me what to do. As time went on though, I

realized they didn't mean harm when they yelled at me, the ship just needed me at that time.

Overall I stepped up to the plate and tried to learn everything that Nettie and Molly were teaching us about sailing, community and the Caribbean. I never experienced nature in the way I did. I learned to get used to the things that had made me uncomfortable, from the food to the commands I was given by the crew. I very proud of myself and realize that the next time I go into a new situation, I will be able to adjust faster.



Myeshia & Marzett hauling a line

Advice to Future TSEA Girls

By Marleina Benavente



Angelina & Marleina

I will tell you that joining Tall Ships will be the best thing in your life that you decide to do. Starting from the beginning of the program to the end, it is going to be a big shift for you personally and how you view your life. You realize a lot during the voyage and after.

After six weeks going to SF State for class, the great adventure starts when you're on the plane on your way to start the voyage. As soon as you get on board, you will be put to work right away. You'll be shocked with the tasks that you are going to be doing and hating them at the same time.

When you finally complete the voyage you will tell your self that it was totally worth it.

One important thing to remember is the ship comes first, then your shipmates, and your self is last. Sounds unfair, huh? But when you really put it into perspective you will start to understand. Anything said or any task that is going to be given to you is only to help you. Just doing what you need to do with a lot of alacrity will benefit not only your shipmates but you as well for your accomplishments. You cannot back down or say no, because then someone else has to do your work. If that happens, everyone will be on your case, and I know no one likes some one bugging them. For six weeks, working a lot, doing chores and class will become your new lifestyle. With the girls, you all are going to learn things about each other, some of it will be bad, but most of it will be good. There will be snappiness, cattiness and every now and then really bad attitudes. The

best you can do is stay positive and not add to the negativity. It is going to be hard because it does affect you and the rest of the girls. The best thing to do is to let things cool down and then have a big discussion about "the situation" whatever it may be. It is up to you and the rest of the girls to work things out. Nettie and Molly are there to facilitate these conversations, but they give you, as a group, the responsibility of solving the situation. You can't walk away from the situations, I mean you can walk forward to the bow, the starboard side, the port side or some where else but that is going to get you nowhere because the tension is going to be right there in your face. It's a challenge. This challenge makes you stronger and that strength is what helps you get all the way through the program, from the beginning to the end.

With the girls, you all are going to learn things about each other, some of it will be bad, but most of it will be

Our Ship, Westward

Westward is owned by the Ocean Classroom Foundation. It was built by Abeking and Rassmussen in Lemwerder, Germany in 1961.

- Length: 125 ft., Gross tons: 138 tons
- Number of students: 25, Number of Crew: 8-11
- Sails: main sail, forestay sail, mainstay sail, rafee, fisherman, course, jib, jib topsail
- Freshwater Capacity: 5500 gallons
- Diesel Fuel Capacity: 5000 gallons



Westward

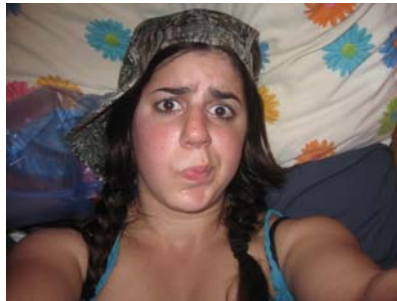
Adjusting Home

By Sofia DeNicola

Every one of us was about to burst with excitement when we stepped into the San Francisco airport. We marched together towards our family and friends awaiting us across the barrier. We were met with tears and laughter and endless hugs. I had been thinking about going home for so long, actually coming back felt surreal. I tried to tell my family everything that had happened but realized I simply couldn't find the words. When I pulled up to my house for the first time in 6 long weeks I couldn't sort out my emotions. I was happy, relieved, sad, tired, excited and all I wanted to do was curl up into a ball in my soft, warm bed but

my friends had other plans. I was thrown back into my life in a snap. I found myself

age that had taken over my life? I couldn't wrap my mind around it.



pausing, looking around and wondering how it was possible that I was really back. Just a few hours ago I was crab walking through a hotel in Florida, winning the gold medal for A Watch in the Schooner Olympics. How did I suddenly find myself surrounded by people who hadn't been at my side through this voy-

Every person I talked to asked the same question, "So how was your trip?" I didn't know what to say. How could I possibly fit this experience in a few words? I

tried the generic, "It was amazing. It was fun. It was challenging." But these phrases were far from giving people a real idea of what we had just gone through. You see, I've come to realize that no one, no matter how much they are told about our trip, can ever truly understand what those six weeks were like for

us. It is something that is ours and ours alone and at first this thought saddened me. I wanted to share what had happened to me, every emotion that I had felt, every challenge that I had overcome; I needed people to just get it! Then, after thinking about it I saw the beauty in the fact that this was just ours. Yeah people may have fought with each other now and then, but we're sisters now and that's just what sisters do. Twenty years down the line we'll run into each other walking down the sidewalk and we'll be as close as those days we spent hurling over the side of that glorious ship.

Nautical Vocabulary

By Ami Simpson

Dividers- used to measure distance

Parallel Ruler- used to transfer parallel lines

All hands- stop what you are doing and report on deck without delay

Beaufort scale- helps to determine the wind speed by observing

the sea

Aft- towards the stern

Midship- middle of ship

Below decks- beneath the deck

Gybing- to bring the wind to the other side of the ship by bringing the stern through the wind

Head- ship's toilet

Galley- the ship's kitchen

Haul- to pull on a line

Ease- to give the line slack under control

Tack- to bring the bow of the ship through the wind

Soles- the floor on the boat below decks

Main salon- the main area to eat and socialize

Reefer- the refrigerator

Bulkhead- the walls in the ship, below decks

Slops- food scraps that are not wanted

Special Interest

By Naiema Jackson

You have never seen how beautiful the stars are until they have led you through a rocky midnight in the ocean. Or, how glorious and bright the moonlight is, and how it is followed by the most colorful sunrises over the horizon. Not until you have spent six weeks sailing a ship, seeing the world for what it truly is; nature at its finest.

Living on a sailboat is living constantly with nature. Living on a sailboat also is constantly traveling to

places you have never been to before. Living on a sailboat introduces your mind and soul to so many new things and emotions.

Living aboard the ship herself is a challenge. It completely flipped our way of thinking and may have changed it forever. In living as the crew of a ship, we had to be more aware of the people around us. Some of us become more conscious of our attitudes, how our expressions come across to others and

how to adapt to the strangest situations.

Traveling to other countries also changed the way we think. Some found the importance and advantage of being bilingual and look forward to taking advantage of our Spanish classes at home. Some of us now have different views of our lives in the future. Maybe we will join the Peace Corps, study astronomy, or study abroad. I know I definitely want to do some more traveling.

I had never seen the stars the way I did at sea. I want to study all the configurations in the sky, what they mean and their history. I want to know everything because they have fascinated me in a big way.



Special Thanks

By Ellissia Hill

TSSG 2008 would like to thank the many people that have made this experience possible.

First, our parents/families and guardians who encouraged us to seek out a new opportunity.

And then...in no particular order

Vincent Chandler
 Nettie Kelly
 Molly Simmons
 Christine Whitcraft
 Jessica Ramos
 Fort Miley Ropes Course

Katie Shea
 Erin Blackwood
 MJ Harris
 Maddie Eustis
 Kate Richardson
 Bay Area Boot Camp/
 ALaVie
 Stonestown YMCA
 Romberg Tiburon
 Center/Questuary
 Crew
 Jim Murphy
 Barbara Enes
 SF State Recreation &
 Leisure Studies Department
 Don Taylor
 Laura Marty
 Westward Crew
 Bahamas
 Colin Ingraham

Great Inagua All
 Age School
 Debbie Furguharson
 Captain Fox
 Chishelle Curry
 Tortola
 Sam Henry
 Aragorn and the
 crew of the Gli Gli
 Vieques
 Blue Caribe Kayaks
 Dominican Republic
 Chicho Alvarez
 Robin Kiesling
 Joe McElligott
 The Green Brigade at Los Haites
 National Park
 Master Mariners Benevolent Foundation

John Heid
 Josia Lamberto-Egan
 Seth Muir
 Christian Buhl
 The crew of Alma
 Alice Watts
 Chris Janini (Tar
 Brush)
 Tricia Creason-Valencia
 Ariel Lopez

We would also like to thank our home high schools and teachers. And the many supporters that helped to make this financially possible for us.

THANK YOU!!

Aloft

By Erika Monroe

I have a fear of being very high over open water while moving. When we had a chance to go aloft, I sat on a deck box watching everyone as they climbed up the shrouds with what I would call a nervous grin on their faces. I coached them when they seemed to get stuck yet deep down inside I was feeling like I couldn't do it.

When it got to my turn, I felt my heart start beating faster and my



Christina going aloft.

eyes start to water. I was scared out of my life! I just wanted to run below deck and hide because I didn't want to do this anymore. The people around that have become my family encouraged me. They said, "Go ahead Erika — just take it one step at a time." So I walked over grabbed the shrouds. I took one step up, and I told myself, "Go ahead Erika, you can do this. It's not that bad. You're not that high yet." So I went a couple more steps and I was thinking that I can't go anymore now; this is too high and I need to come down. The voices below me said I could do it if I just gave myself a second. So I tried but I still felt like I couldn't

do it.

Then I heard the captain say, "Erika it's ok just hold on a minute."

I looked down and I saw her putting on a harness. I hoped she was not going to try and climb up here with me! The next thing I know she is climbing up to be with me and to help me continue. She gets up next to me tells me to take it one step at a time when I am ready. She wanted me to try and take another step up, so I took a deep breath and took a step up and a couple more. Then I felt myself getting too high, and I couldn't do it anymore. I told the Captain that it was time for me to go

down. She told me that was fine, and we climbed down to deck together.

After pushing myself on Westward, I am not afraid to climb over open water anymore.



I never thought I would have to face that fear. Now I know I can do it and I am very proud of myself.

I n d e p e n d e n c e

By Sophia DeNicola

Every one of us took a huge risk in going on this trip, we put ourselves in an extremely vulnerable situation. We left our family, our friends, our home, our very way of living. Leaving a comfort

zone is one of the first strides towards becoming independent and that's exactly what we did. Though we always had each other to fall back on, we were out there without the support

system we all had at home. Ami could shake me awake all she wanted, but it was me who dragged my tired body out of my bunk and up on deck in the middle of the night. We all saw the

potential we had and how far we could push ourselves being away from our loved ones and our lives, we all grew and knew we can support ourselves in any situation.

The Rough Plan

By Valentina Perry

Weather is unpredictable, and that is the one thing we found to be certain on this voyage. Describing the "Rough Plan" became one of Nettie's famous saying because she said so often. We set about 20 rough plans throughout the voyage, each getting canceled as weather conditions changed. Then again, that is why they are called *rough* plans.

The weather was definitely not on our side. When we first got on to Westward we couldn't leave Miami, Florida, for a couple of days because the weather was creating strong winds and big seas that would have pushed sent us right back into port. When we finally started on our way to Great Inagua in the Bahamas, the wind was in front of us and we had to sail with the motor most of the way, to help us get to the island on time. We also did a lot of tacking to fill the sails with wind.

Our trip to our second stop in Vieques, Puerto Rico, involved more wind on our nose, big swells, more motoring and more tacking. It took us seven days to reach Vieques. In Vieques, the island experienced power outages because of the large waves that were pounding the Puerto Rican coast.

From Vieques, we had planned to refuel in St. Croix but the northern swell made visiting the northshore fuel dock impossible. These swells would keep us from getting out of the ports.

At this point, we realized too that we could not continue on our planned voyage to Dominica. We had spent so much time getting to Vieques that we couldn't continue that far south and east. We were really disappointed. We instead went to Roadtown, Tortola, a part of the British Virgin Islands, which is very touristy. We short-tacked (where we tacked in close quarters within small islands) our way to Trellis Bay and got some thrills when we were coming up to an island less than 1 mile ahead of us, and suddenly the fisherman sheet started to whip violently from side to side. Everyone was confused and shot their heads up to see that the sail had gotten loose. It turned out that one of the clews had torn. We dropped the sail quickly, and made it safely to the other side of Tortola.

Our next stop was St. John, a U.S. Virgin Island and then we turned west to head for the Dominican Republic. Sailing to Samana in the Dominican Republic was much easier, for the wind was helping us and pushed us along. We finally learned why Ms. Heyman loved downwind sailing!

But the weather wasn't done. A cold front was coming and in our final passage to the northwest, the wind was coming from the northwest (that's troublesome for sailors). Our final destination was West Palm Beach instead of Ferdinandanda Beach, which was too far north. It would take us too long, and we'd probably miss our flight.

For the Tall Ship Semester for Girls 2008, we certainly learned that just like the weather, life is unpredictable and we need to be aware and open-minded to changes.





Recreation & Leisure Studies Department
1600 Holloway Ave
San Francisco, CA 94132-4161

Phone: 415.405.3703
Fax: 415.338.0543
E-mail:
info@tallshipacademy.org

www.tallshipacademy.org

The Tall Ship Education Academy teaches personal growth through experience-based academic programs for youth of diverse backgrounds, with an emphasis on girls. By placing students in demanding classroom and shipboard environments, we challenge them to learn rigorous skills and to return home anchored in experiences of self-reliance and teamwork.

TSEA is accredited by the Schools Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

TSEA is a special project of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at San Francisco State University.

Tall Ship Education Academy
RLS Dept 1600 Holloway Ave
San Francisco, CA 94132-4161

