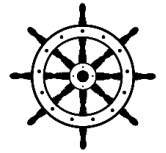




The Mizzen



Class Afloat 2022 - 2023 Student Newspaper. Volume 4: January 15

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Blanche Racicot

The Mizzen's Paradigm: consent, diversity, accuracy, quality, student perspective,
representing ourselves, our peers, and the people and places we visit with respect.

A Letter to CAF

Pamela F.

Dear Class Afloat Students and Teachers,

I write this letter to you as I prepare to leave the most extraordinary community I have ever found myself in. Before I fly back home and make back all the money spent on food and data these last few months, many thanks are in order.

Firstly, thank you to my teachers who have gone above and beyond what was ever written on your job description. Whatever half-strung together sentences I come up with in the middle of the night as I write this will only scratch the surface of expressing the amount of gratitude I have for what each of you has done for me. I remember thinking on the first day how challenging the work cut out for the CAF teachers must be. Not only do you have the duty of teaching 2-3 classes, but you also have the responsibility of looking after a small village of hormonal teenagers outside the classroom and around the clock. Despite this impossible task, every day you've managed to lead by example with such joy and care (or at least it came off that way) and consistently inspired me and opened my mind to the world around me. You blurred the lines between teacher and friend whether you liked it or not and I could always count on receiving genuine encouragement and advice from all of you. The laughs and connections I have shared with you are some of my most prized memories that I am taking home with me. I really hope you feel proud of the job you have done and will continue to undertake this upcoming semester. When someone in the future asks me to describe what makes a good teacher or who my favourite teacher was, I will describe all of you.

Secondly to my fellow Floaties: you folks are absolutely incredible. By the time you are reading this, I am most definitely blubbering alone curled up in a ball thinking about how much I miss you all as I scroll through the thousands of photos taken from the last four months. I worry that I will never find myself surrounded by such a joyful and thoughtful group again. Before joining the ship, I had a falling out with my high school friends and I was feeling very insecure about my ability to fit in and live my life beyond being an observer. Four months later and I'm leaving the Alex II feeling loved and with the knowledge that I have made some friends for life. You have all looked after me so well and accepted me with all my flaws. You've made me laugh until my face was wet with tears and made me feel safe to dance and sing on the dance floor until my legs were buckling beneath me. I'll never forget the moment I found out I got into NYU and walked into the mess while everyone cheered and hugged me and told me how proud they were. I'm grateful for how eager so many of you were to check in and help me out in Suriname when I sprained my ankle whether it was grabbing my food or carrying me across a river because I couldn't jump across. I owe a lot of my growth to my connections made and time spent with each person on this ship. It's been a blast travelling the world with you on our little floating school on the ocean and getting to know you all these last few months. Thank you everyone so much for being the best travel buddies I could have ever asked for and I wish you nothing but good laughs, fair winds, and safe travels next semester.

Sincerely,



P.S. Don't forget to upload your photos to the Google Drive.



Cassava

Eric S.

The machete, expertly wielded by the Saramacca Maroon women, detaches the uprooted cassava from its stock with a swift chop. The stock is replanted and will yield cassava again in 7 months. The harvested root vegetable is carried out of the jungle in baskets on the women's heads. In the village, the cassava is peeled with sharp knives and then grated on a steel board. The contents are gathered and placed in a press which extracts the starchy fluid. The solid mass is pounded with wooden poles until it is a fine powder. The cassava flour is sifted onto a metal pan, and then placed over a wood burning fire. The cassava is cooked for 3 to 5 minutes per side, or until the edges curl. This involved process produces a delicious bread that is a staple of the Maroon and Indigenous people of South America. The Maroons are descendants of African slaves that fled into the jungles of Suriname to escape from persecution and subjugation by the Dutch colonists.



Image by Andy

During our visit to the Maroon village, we witnessed a community that is proud of its culture, is self-sufficient with food, is welcoming and warm to guests, and is engaged in meaningful labor and activities.



Jungla de mi Vida: Por fin estoy en casa y no me quiero ir

Andy Munar

I wake up to the sound of water, not from the waves splashing on the porthole, but from the current of the river crashing into rocks. That is when it hits me: I am in Suriname. I just spent two weeks sailing across the Atlantic and we finally made it to South America.

Since the moment I arrived on shore I was admiring the view, which made me so excited to be in a tropical country. That excitement grew when I was transported on a canoe through the Saramacca river and got to the Amazon jungle where the trees have never looked greener and the birds and insects have never sung louder. It is a place to sit on a rock in silence and let the river talk to you. I came here worrying about personal and academic matters, but every thought and anxiety was washed away by the river, giving me a sense of peace and freedom.

While walking through the village I was reminiscing of home as I was making a list of the plants that I have or used to have in my backyard, which I counted at least 15. I am so far, but so close to the place that a few months ago I said goodbye to get on board the Class Afloat journey, that every time I look around, I must remind myself I am not in Panama.

Some feelings that I have not felt for a while arose within me. The happiness and safety of being in a familiar environment, and the euphoria I felt when I heard the sound of the paila (pot) calling me for lunch and saw that there was plátano sancochado (boiled plantain), one of my favorite meals. Ask anyone on the ship and they will tell you how excited I was to arrive in tropical countries to finally eat it again.

Something that caught my attention was when we were chopping yucas (cassava) in the village's field and one of its inhabitants said "the jungle is the biggest supermarket, and it is tax-free." This quote demonstrates the integration and interdependence some communities still have with the natural world, and makes me think how the world is not appreciating such a diverse and amazing place like the Amazon jungle.

Many leave a place like this looking for a better way of living, especially a better education, until they take a step back and see what a dramatic change that is. This is exactly what happened to me. Spending three months away from all of this, has made me realize that it is something I have been taking for granted and it is a part of my soul that I do not ever want to be ripped away from me. *I am finally at home and I don't ever want to leave.*



Semester Break Wellness

Dr. Beth Warsof, PhD

Congratulations on achieving a phenomenal milestone – you have completed your first semester with Class Afloat! You now have a well-earned break approaching. What are some strategies to support your wellness over break?

Here are 5 Wellness R's for your time off:

Rest! You've earned it. Sleep in. Sleep late. Sleep through a full night without waking up for watch. (Warning: You still might wake up for watch – just out of habit.)

Reflect! Take some time to reflect on your semester: What really worked for you? Where did you get stuck – and what are some different choices that might work better for you? What were your highs – and how can you create more? What were your lows – and what might they teach you? This is a great time to look at what behaviors you might want to change. What do you need to make these changes? How can faculty support you? Reach out to let us know what would help set you up for success in Semester 2.

Rejuvenate! Engage in behaviors and relationships that really fill you up - that feel in alignment with who you are and how you want to be. You only have a short time – hold boundaries around things that won't serve you. It's a great practice to learn to say "no" to what isn't for you – in order to say "YES!" to what is truly for you. You can communicate with care how your "no" choices simply don't meet your needs right now. Do things you love, that bring you ease and joy, and create memories to bring back to the ship.

Retell (Your Story)! Let others in to your experience. Share bravely about the past few months. What have you learned? What are you still learning? What are you celebrating and what continues to challenge you? Connect with your home support system by guiding conversations to what's been particularly meaningful for you. It can be scary to share our full selves, especially with others who may not fully understand. How will you share your transformation story? And how will you listen to theirs?

Reset! - We can start anew any time we like; why not now? Every moment is a chance to become more the person we want to be. Who do you want to become in Semester 2? Would you like to be kinder, braver, more aligned with your values? What steps can you take to start? What might you want to let go of – what wasn't serving you? What (scary) conversations might help clear the way? Imagine yourself now at the end of Semester 2... who and where do you want to be? How can we support you?

We hope these 5 Wellness R's will serve you in the upcoming week(s). We're always here to celebrate, champion, and challenge you on your path. Congratulations... and here's to a wonderful Semester 2!

Nikki Davidson

Green sails,
rigid nails.
Beautiful ocean views,
and fully greased shoes.
The heat of a summer's sun,
is the sign a new day has begun.
Soft winds in our hair,
and happiness everywhere.

Exploring different places,
making lifelong friends,
always seeing new faces,
and life from a new lens.

A life of zero regret.
The adventures found upon the sea,
on our home in the water,
we are the happiest we could be.



Gaal, DSST Crew Member

We sink Cape Verde, finally.
An overflowing moon
Bidding us farewell,
Then giving playful chase
Sargasso parting 'neath our bow
Growing more, then less, and more again.

A busy first night: hauling yards and canvas
Trimming, bracing, turning, turning.
And then silence: the clouds do more than
We in this Atlantic crossing.
Dousing stars and heaving air;
Hiding southern constellations.
Only bright Canopus arcs above,
The Cross revealed to us just twice.

A fair winds' bargain.
Two weeks and nary a sail changed
Till we reach an old new world.



The Death of a Dreamer

Kiran Séqueira

I wake up suddenly, my heart kicking against the walls of my chest, tears sprinkling my eyelashes.

What was it?

Oh.

The dream.

I close my eyes, hug my knees, listen to the thumping in my eardrums. I take a deep breath in.

I wipe off my wet cheeks against my pillow.

I open my eyes again.

I stare through my window, the cool night air is seeping into my room. Everything is cloaked in stillness.

I watch the blinking lights of the thermal station towering over the town. The city's heartbeat. It is my lighthouse, whenever I find myself lost in the sea of my dreams.

What was it again? I feel it fluttering at the edge of my mind.

Time doesn't heal wounds, it anesthetizes them, reduces them to silence. But what is a wound without pain? A dumb hole, a leak in the self.

The hollowness spreads within me like a disease.

What was it again?

Oh.

Let me hold on to it a bit longer. I fight against the current. I feel myself drifting away. I look into theirs eyes, promise that I'll come back to them.

I let go.

I open my eyes.

My cheeks are dry. The bleeding has stopped.

A gentle breeze brushes against my skin. I close my window.

A tentative ray of sunlight reaches out from the horizon.

I stare in dumbfounded hollowness. The stream has ripped off another part of me.

What was it again?

Oh.

The day is here, time to start walking again.



Putting the Crew to Work

Felix, DSST Crew Member

On the 27th of December 2022, the new maritime crew arrived. Given a lack of familiarity, the new crew members used the time to accommodate to the new setting in the tired harbour in Suriname. While the students and their teachers were still ashore, maintenance work began.

Upon their return, a Tausendfüßer (millipede) was to be attached to the Vorstag. Student and Ordinary Seaman Kiran, bravely volunteered to work from the Bootsmannsstuhl (boatswain's chair). After many hours of hard physical labor, the Toppsmatrose in charge (and author of this article) noticed the ship had run out of Tausendfüßer. Further attachment was therefore delayed indefinitely, until enough replacement had been fashioned, which was to be done during long and cold hours of night watch.

Shortly after, the priorities shifted when the ship set sail and watch rotation began all over again. The students in Watch 6 got to learn the wonderful world of Feintrimm (fine trim). For hours, the yards' angles were adjusted until the windward boltrope was nice and taught and a decent fan was braced on each top.

The experience gained here prepared the Floaties for the upcoming gybe which they executed flawlessly. During the manoeuvre, Toppsmatrose "Berserker Claas" shifted the Vorstengestageegel all by himself, using only his bare hands. After the ship's heading was turned back to Barbados (which was missed in the first attempt), not much of interest happened until we reached our anchoring position.

Now the crew could finally focus on maintenance again, using the newly fashioned Tausendfüßer to further cover the Vorstag for enhanced protection of the Fock. Furthermore, simple paint jobs were done and chains were greased in the rigging. Due to current and upcoming examination, no student could be found near the work. The crew, being stereotypically efficient, punctual, and joy-free, finished their assigned taskings before noon and then used the afternoon to go ashore to enjoy the beautiful island of Barbados.

In conclusion, the students more than fulfilled the maritime crew's expectations.



The Last Whale

Anonymous

How much is one whale worth?

For fifteen men aboard a wind-beaten whaler, far from their families on the unsparing waters of Frobisher Bay, the answer is: enough. Weeks ago, we felt so much. We were inspired and vicious. We hunted with no remorse, encouraged by the cries of our captain and willfully blind to the warning gaze of the winter star. He sought one final whale, but how much is one whale worth? The ice approached undeclared. The ice that now hugs our hull. It cracks like a whip: a deafening reminder of our fate.

Next, we felt fear. Fear as realization of our situation extended through the ranks, seeping through the cabins like poison on cloth. Tales of Frobisher Bay infect the ear of anyone who calls themselves a sailor: arrogant whalers foolishly attempt to race nature, but the ice is faster. It closes in until suddenly all that can be seen for miles is a prison of ice. These are the cautionary tales narrated by sailors who happen across a shipwreck during their summertime voyages. Those who experience the actual fury of winter do not return to share their stories.

Now, we feel nothing. We have long grown accustomed to the gasping of wind, the chilling of the bone with each new breath. What else is there to do but to hold tightly to your playing cards with rope-torn hands, grasping at fleeting distraction? But now, the cards have flown away with the wind, cobwebs adorn the pantry, and our tar eyes grow dimmer. We know we are going to die. We have known for days. The mate, in all his sorrow, has gone mute. His accordion picks up dust. The cook's wooden spoon, once rich with sweet batter, is now used to batter down the water in his mind. To understand that we are soon going to die is one thing. To be alone, already lying in our frozen graves while we wait, is another thing entirely. All this silence and all this empty time to think leads me to wonder: how much is one whale worth? Maybe, this whole time, the whales understood like us that they were going to die, and in the same very waters, no less.

Suddenly, through the sheet of silence that had befallen our boat, a new sound echoed. A melted melody: a whale call. Instinctively, I reach for my telescope. I have briefly forgotten that we can no longer sail, and our equipment is tired and rusted. Without my telescope in one hand, without my harpoon in the other, all I can do is listen. I listen to its song of mourning. I listen to the harmonizing wind. I feel that, had my tears not dried up days ago, I would have shed one just then. A whale call is the most beautiful sound in the world.



End of Semester Reflections

David Green

I am typing these words from the Red Salon, late at night on the final evening of the first semester of Class Afloat 2022 – 2023. This morning we had our final colours. The final daily update was read. We deep-cleaned the ship for the last time this morning. In the afternoon the zodiacs whizzed everybody to the beach in Barbados for a final swim. We had our final Captain's dinner. Afterwards we had the End of Semester Awards Ceremony on deck. We gathered in the mess to watch movies we'd made on our voyage. And then we started saying goodbyes; some of us will be gone before dawn.

Over 6000 nautical miles have passed beneath us since we left Bremerhaven. The waters have sometimes been kind and other times, not so much. Storms overcame the engine and blew us backwards in the English Channel. The waves rolled us in a baptism of seasickness. On the Atlantic Ocean, there were days when dolphins played in the spray of the bow, the sky rippled pink on the circumference of endless blue waters and the wind blew us like a dart to the old New World. There have been days when we felt together, our feet in time on the shrouds, our hauls and our legs synchronised, days when we smiled from wake up to lights out and knew in our hearts how lucky we were. Other days were not so easy and we woke up like the Ancient Mariner, cursed to share our woeful tales with every one in three for eternity. But the next day came and the smiles returned. All moods happen to you when you're crammed with 78 people into a big tin can and your body is moving at the whim of the ocean swells.

The days were great. The difficult days were necessary. All the days piled up on top of each other until they reached this one. The final day. Tomorrow we all disembark and take our stories with us. The world out there won't ever really know what it was like to be in this community, on this ship, crossing this ocean with these friends. When we tell our stories there will always be a slight tug at our hearts, because we'll never be able to communicate the essence of it to others, only the details. This and that happened. It felt like this. There were superlatives. It was full of adjectives. It was full of happenings. Such is the way of great adventures and unusual journeys; sharing the heart of it might feel like you're describing a colour nobody has seen before.

But we'll all carry the heart of it with us, some to voyages new, others for a brief rest with family before returning for another spin around the waters, up through the **continued**

Caribbean to the North Atlantic where the wind carries a memory of ice and the waves roll high with bluster. We'll carry it and the things we have experienced with one another will do their quiet work on us. It might take time. You might not notice it at first. But one day you might wake up and it will be there fully formed. A change. You might even see a colour you haven't seen before. Such is the way of great adventures and unusual journeys.

A heartfelt and genuine thank you to the crew of Class Afloat 2022 – 2023. You have become fine sailors and fast friends.



Image by Beverly

