



October 21st, 2023 edition  
**So why the Beacon?**

Picture this...

It's 1916, and you have been sailing through 25 days of cold, wet stormy weather. The clouds are grim and dark, matching the mood onboard. Your kitchen ran out of ground coffee this morning, and you dread having to break this news to the rest of your crew. Although you departed the Azores for Bremerhaven so long ago, your journey has taken almost two weeks longer than expected. However, you remain hopeful that you have stayed on course and stand at the front of your ship, desperate for any sight of land.

In the distance, you spot a beam of light, flashing once,

then disappearing. The swaying of the ship causes you to lose sight of it, before spotting the ray of hope again. Your crew alters the ship's heading to follow the light, and 12 hours later, you are safe in the port of Bremerhaven. The Alexander von Humboldt's beacon has saved another ship, and would continue to aid countless more to come. Built in 1906, the original Alexander von Humboldt was a reserve lightship, meaning it would stand in for other lightships while they were out for repairs. By 1945, it had earned its permanent replacement after another lightship, the Keil, was bombed. The Alex served for another 12 years, but in 1957 it was hit by a Swedish freighter and sank. The ship was recovered and returned to service in 1959, when it served for another 8 years. Following another collision, it was towed to Bremerhaven to rest. Its beacon was universal, trustworthy and gave great knowledge to those it came across, helping thousands of ships over its lifetime.

-Henry C



### **-Our travels so far-**

As of October 20th 2023 at 9:28pm, we've travelled a total of 387.9 NM.

Through night and day watch we've all experienced high winds, sprays from the ocean, a little (or a lot) of sea sickness, and rain... lots of rain.

October 21st marks our third full day of sailing, and by now we have been learning the German sail commands.

Here's a refresher:

- "Fieren"/ "Fir" = give slack
- "Fest" = Stop
- "Fest and belegen" = Stop and belay
- "Lass fallen" = Let go

Good luck!

The Beacon stands by: Truth, Authenticity, Respect, Integrity, Fairness, and Engagement



## Hi Mum, I'm fine

I think you've got to be a unique kind of person to be a Class Afloat parent, like having enough faith in your parenting that when you're perched at the edge of the nest pushing your little chick out, you're pretty sure they can fly... I think we're probably fairly adventurous and curious people ourselves - we're willing to offer our kids the opportunity to experience the freedom (and constraints) of studying and learning to sail on a tall ship around the world. To be honest, I suspect I might even be a little reckless with Tom's education, given I've encouraged him to do his final grade 12 national exams in the very first week at sea, when I already know he's going to be seasick (the Australian school year aligns with the calendar year). But I'm 100% sure that encouraging our kids to grab opportunities and take controlled risks is character building and can be so proud of them for taking up the challenge.

The program has already proved its worth it because I'm finally getting more than a one-word answer to my messages (pre-September 2023 shows mostly "good", "fine", "OK", "thanks", "yes", "no", or "probs"). In fact, I've received at least two videos already with information about what he's doing and how he's feeling. My gosh if I'd known this was going to happen, I might have sent him earlier...

So, this is my second time as a Floaty parent. The first time in 2016 I slept with phone on next to the bed and was always worried something would happen. I had obviously conveyed this very clearly, as my daughter sent me this photo from Spain fairly early on in the piece! This time I'm far more relaxed. I already know the experience is going to be challenging at times, and they are going to very excited to hear these stories in months to come.

I love that Class Afloat is the kind of organisation where my kids can push the boundaries to learn what they're capable of doing (making the bed, getting up at 2am to work, navigating a foreign port where they don't speak the language, playing cards because they've finally watched every movie loaded on all their collective laptops, learning how to use the phrase "Let's agree to disagree" to end an argument because they can't access Google, and holding their calculators to stop them falling off the desk as the ship heaves over the swell). It's brilliant, and it'll be life changing.



I've already met some of the adventurous and capable students Tom is lucky enough to be joining on this journey. I feel very privileged that we can participate in the program (and honestly, it's given me a brilliant excuse to "work from home" in Europe for 3 months waiting for the Parent Port in Portugal). Have fun, sleep when you can, be kind, and enjoy the adventure!

- Dr.Susan Abel





# Amsterdam!

Amsterdam is a beautiful and lively city that we were fortunate enough to explore. The city is filled with unique food, buildings, and culture. The food was amazing and contained so many different options from traditional dishes to burgers and pasta. While tasting many different foods we had the most sensational discovery, the stroopwafel. It is two waffle cookies sandwiched together with a sweet and gooey caramel filling. It was a life changing finding, and we will forever be obsessed.



After passing by the cheese museum, we observed many eccentric and historic houses. The city contains narrow houses, which are the result of taxes that were put into place in the 1400s (Jones). The wider the house the higher the tax so people made their houses narrower.



As we continued to traverse the city of Amsterdam, dodging bikes left and right, we found cheese stores around every corner. The Netherlands supplies large amounts of cheese due to the amount of fertile farmland they have. This land allows for a plentiful number of dairy cows, which means cheese can constantly be produced. The Netherlands produces approximately 650 million kilos of cheese each year (discoverholland.com). Amsterdam even has a cheese museum!

Amsterdam is also famous for the Red-Light District. It is an area designated for prostitution and known for its bright red lights from start to end. Some of us visited the Museum of Prostitution to learn about it, as it's a big part of the culture. Some may see it as a negative, but it is a widely accepted cultural norm. Amsterdam is known for leaving a smile on visitors faces and I know most of the student crew are grateful and thankful for the experience of being full tourists trying to make it around the city.

-Lily





---

# Berlin Articulation

“Today is Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. You can celebrate by wishing your Jewish friends or family Shanah Tovah. The actual celebration starts tonight, so tomorrow I’ll explain more of the traditional greetings. Shanah Tovah!”

Beth, the 2023-2024 Class Afloat wellness lead, stepped out of the invisible spotlight of morning Colours, finishing the announcements for the day. The mass of blue-sweatered and shivering Class Afloat students scrambled to their cabins, all eager to primp and preen for the first shore leave destination of the year: Berlin.

Later that day, roughly a dozen students will amass at different historical landmarks to write memos and take photos for a class project. Some students will visit these historical places for pure enjoyment, others will pass by. However, for these few, there is work to be done. Quotes will be attached to photos of Micha Ullman’s “Empty Library”, the winners of the Potsdamer Platz architectural competition are noted and the date of the fall of the Berlin Wall are jotted down.

Once the project is done, the rest of the day will be spent strolling around aimlessly trying to find the best place to buy kaffee und milch, bitte! or wandering into museums to experience the culture, joyfully oblivious to the countless events that have taken place below their feet. Some 70 years ago, the most famous regime of all time festered in this capital city. Growing like a sickness in the cobblestone, Hitler and his allies twisted the German image from innovation and unity into something of fear and eugenics. The Soviets then razed the grounds, and the Big Three together split the city. Citizens faced starvation and division, and the trust was put in the hands of the warring Americans and Soviets.

It is with our group, of students with all backgrounds and all ideologies, travelling on a tall ship following the old colonial trade winds, that we will truly reflect on what it means to walk these streets. Our program is intertwined with its own unchangeable histories, and it’s through that knowledge that we recognize intersectionality in other places.

The city speaks to freedom and unity in a way that is hard to put into words, as seeing Checkpoint Charlie as a simple landmark outside a McDonalds is a very ignorable sight until you understand the casualties and lives that were put on the line - and lost - to try and pass this small box. When shreds of the once-mighty wall are now just graffitied concrete columns, it can take a minute to remember the desperation present here.

That is the feeling students will carry with them throughout Berlin, as seeing each historical landmark seems dull until the connection is made that others stood, dug, fought, and died here so all of us – Swiss, Canadian, American, Bermudan, Guatemalan, British, could walk without pulling out papers or noticing what sector we’re in.

So as we all return to Berlin, rubbing sleep from our eyes and numbly sorting through the photos from the day, we will mumble a barely coherent “Shanah Tovah!” to our friends, text it to those abroad, and remember the next morning, and the ones after, the importance of celebrating these days that were won by those who shouldn’t have had to fight.

- Francesca Hayes



---

# Eric... the Monkey

**By: Noah**

Students in grade 11 & 12 English were provided with 3 pictures at random as prompts for a creative writing assignment. The following story which features a monkey with a fantastic first name was one of the submissions.

It was a bright, sunny morning in Hawaii, where Eric was on vacation. Eric Mohammed is a monkey born and raised in Hawaii in the lovely nature site. He is short with soft dark black hair and a bubbly personality. His passion was climbing, and his favourite food was bananas. Eric was tired of working every day in the jungle, so he took a day pass at a hotel in Hawaii where he lived. The hotel had clear blue ocean views with jungles all around it. The hotel was peach with four-story buildings of luxury and a dozen pool areas for lounging. This is a definition of a five-star hotel. He has been scoping out this hotel to visit for a couple of days now and finally decided to enter and spend the day in luxury. Eric deserved this vacation after raising a family of four and providing for the whole family every day in the heat of Hawaii. Eric knew it was a risk going into a public place from his ancestors, who told stories about why monkeys should not be seen in these places. Eric decided he would take the risk and enjoy his vacation alone.

When Eric entered the hotel, eyes started to glance and stare at him. He felt so uncomfortable and started to sweat a little bit. He began to think it was because he was short or maybe because he never paid to get in. All this went through Eric's head as he entered the hotel, but after a while, he ignored the eyes and headed straight for a room on the fourth floor. The reason the fourth floor was chosen was because it's the highest floor, so he was able to get away from people. When reaching the fourth floor and trying to get into a room, he realized he couldn't open the door. No matter what he tried, he struggled to open any of the rooms, so his only other option was to head to the pool and sunbathe like a king.

Eric made his way to the pool, hoping that he could at least enjoy the pool. As he approached the pool, the eyes continued. He could hear the whispering of other residents. This is an environment Eric always tried to avoid. When Eric reached the pool, all the lounge chairs were in use, so he just decided to lie on the lawn across from the pool and relax. Before he could do that, he had to get some sunglasses, but he didn't have any money on him, so he had to use his next option, which was to take up without asking, which in his world is not stealing if you put back when you are done. Lucky him, a guy was tanning with his sunglasses next to him on a table. So sneaky little Eric, without even thinking, snatched them and was on his way. When lying on the grass, Eric started to think. What is a monkey doing here? Why is nobody troubling me? Usually, when monkeys enter places, people get scared. Little did he know animal protection services were five minutes out. This happens when a monkey tries to fit in with the humans. Eric was enjoying his time lying in the grass. Then, he looked up and saw animal protection services cautiously approaching him. Eric knew it was time to run back into the nearby jungle. He felt he was too young to go to jail.

Eric got up and ran like a monkey far away as he saw animal protection. Hoping he could make it into the jungle and not get caught. He has heard stories about what happens when monkeys like him get caught and what they do to them. He feared for his life and knew going to a public place was risky, but he wanted that vacation so badly. He is regretting it now that he must be running through a hotel trying to escape. As Eric sprinted, breathing heavily, he forgot humans are always a step ahead. Eric jumped into the jungle around the hotel, stopping as he entered, thinking he had escaped. As he turned to his right, the animal protection was just waiting for him to think twice about continuing to run. Eric knew the stories and the risk of going into the hotel, and now he is living the reality. Monkeys are all around; even his family will feel let down if he is not released. Eric, in his head, while being locked away in the cage for animal protection, knew what he was doing today, and he knew what the consequences could be, and he knew he had to continue to live with the regret.

# ★ Art Page! ★



This page is meant to present pieces of art, poems, stories, photography, or anything that shows self expression from the crew, faculty or students.

## Like the sea

By: Esabella Strickland

How the sea flows  
With grace and beauty  
It may go high and low  
And has it's duty



We see it upon the mast  
It's ebbs and flows are really a catch  
The sea is like life and goes by quite fast  
The sun lights it up like a newly lit match



Photo credit: Felix Hampe

We forget that life is like the sea  
And its swells will end  
Just wait and see  
What's around the bend

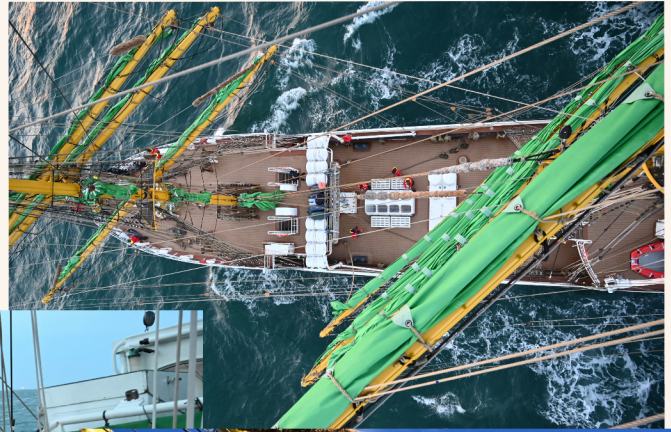


If life is the sea  
Then you are its ship  
Climbing up highly  
And bending at the lip

Even though not all ship are strong  
They all can make it with a good team  
If the trip is way to long  
Each day is a gift and and should be see.



Art done by Luna



## Oh how it passes

By: Esabella Strickland

Oh how life passes  
Like a piece of paper in the wind  
Or how the snow melt after the warmth  
becomes to much  
how every moment is new and old at the same  
time



Oh how it passes  
Like each tick of a clock  
Is it beneficial to think about all this time  
passing?  
Does it make it pass faster?

Oh how it slips by  
Like ice on the ground  
After that snow has melted and froze again  
Sliding away with no retire

Oh how the time passes  
Like sand falling through the cracks  
Making its way down  
Dwindling through its supply

Oh how do you make it stop?  
You can't  
It keeps going  
But saving it is the only way to keep it from  
leaving completely

