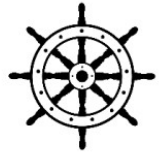




The Mizzen



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Student Staff: Mila Trager, Kiran Séqueira, Pasha Jones, M.S., K. Fawcett, Amélie Lynn, & Drew Cunningham. Teacher Sponsor and Editor: Eric S.



Beverly Schwendener

97 Kaulbach Street, P.O. Box 10, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Canada, B0J 2C0

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

DSST

Eric S.

The Alexander von Humboldt II is owned and operated by the non-profit organization, Deutsche Stiftung Sail Training (DSST). With 800 volunteer members, the organization's aim is to promote traditional seamanship, respect for the ocean, and personal growth amongst youth and those interested in sailing. Currently, there are 23 German mariners onboard the Alex II. While some DSST members will stay for the entirety of the voyage, others will be replaced at various ports as they return to their personal and professional obligations.



Image by Eric S.

One notable DSST member and Watch Leader is Basti, the "Wizard King." Students in Watch 1 & 2 describe him as being kind, patient, supportive, and generous. This is Basti's 5th voyage onboard the Alex II. He appreciates the adventure, community, and growth that comes with each journey. In his professional life, Basti is a computer programmer. You can find him aloft in the rigging, on Watch, or in the galley playing Wizard and Chess.



The Winds of Change

K. Fawcett

When you go to live on a tall ship you ask yourself if you can handle the harsh and unforgiving conditions of the world's oceans. You question your ability to comprehend, to deal with painful conditions, to adapt...

When you set sail on the sea,
Change is inevitable.

A queen sized, white fluffy bed
A single cramped bunk

8 hours of beauty sleep
Interval naps and restless nights

Soft hands with painted nails
Functional fingers and calloused skin

Strong, define muscles
Sea legs scattered with bruises

Picky eater
Rationed food and Nutella toast

Solid ground
Constant fluid motion

Local view
Worldly mindset

Dead silence throughout the night
Rocked to sleep by the crash of waves

6 hour daily screen time
Watching the horizon

Big city
Small, close-knit community

A number, an efficient employee
A name, an essential part of the crew

Born in a desert
Made for the water

Human on the outside
Sailor within

How do you know if you're ready to embark on a journey that will alter your perspective and challenge comfort zones?

If you're willing to put tears, strength, and soul into the lines you pull.
If you're willing to put the community first, to feel grateful for each of them.

If you're willing to listen,
To clear your mind of pre-conceived concepts,

To learn from everyone, no matter their status or language,
To become comfortable being uncomfortable.

If you're eager to experience the best moments of your life,
But it feels like they come with the worst.

If you're excited for the highest highs,
And some real lows.

If you are ready to change.



Mindfulness

Anonymous

Take a breath.

Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Take another breath. Situate yourself.

Let yourself become more aware of the environment you are in. Are you in the galley? Your room? Are you a parent or guardian reading this article on your computer at home? Are you alone or with company? Is there a ship moving beneath your feet? Are you on solid ground?

Embrace the present, and its transience. This moment will soon be in the past. Maybe this snapshot in time is pleasant and you will miss it. Maybe this moment is less than ideal, and you are eager for the next.

The Alexander von Humboldt II has cast off, and our life at sea has started since our last edition. We've sailed and motored, learned the names of lines and basic navigation. Crew members have come and gone.

We have only just begun and yet every moment brings us closer to the end. If you are with me on this tin can in the sea, enjoy these precious experiences. You won't get to eat in the galley in a few months, you won't have company with every step you take. You won't have the waves, ports, and adventures to the same extent. Embrace this experience and its offerings.

We are living in a dream like reality. We are living this dream together.

Don't forget to breathe.



Through the Lens: Lisboa

Amélie Lynn

Lisboa, a city with culture. A city with soul. A city with more music and dancing than anyone can imagine. After 18 days at sea, stepping onto land could have been compared to a small blessing; especially for poor Blanche who spent most of the first sail hanging onto an IV line. Taron the doctor aboard and her became close friends during that sail.

At first glance, the city was lit up but seemed very quiet. When we were finally set loose and got to the heart of the city, I realized it was anything but. The city was buzzing, electric even! Walking down the street with Valentina - who thankfully spoke Portuguese - I found the people so kind and inviting. There was a sense of welcoming warmth running through the core of Lisboa.

We met a restaurant owner named Fernando who enticed us to sit at his establishment. We sat outside and they brought out menus and blankets for our legs. The restaurant was situated in a busy alleyway close to a bakery where the smell of natas (a traditional Portuguese custard filled pastry) filled the warm air. The checkered place mats were fast filled with cheese, prosciutto, and some delicious food such as a Portuguese style steak with a sunny side up egg cooked on top. All of a sudden, Fernando brings out a bottle of Porto with small glasses. What comes next is a symphony of "oh no" and "that's very kind but we can't accept" we made him understand that we couldn't have the wine as our program wouldn't accept it. So instead of the wine, Valentina made us taste Guaraná, a kind of Portuguese Ginger Ale - it was delicious! I ended up ordering a lot more with my meals throughout the weekend.

Remember how I said Lisboa was a city with more music and dancing than you could imagine? Well, we got our first performance from three street dancers: they did flips and turns. From backflips to breakdancing, to technical fouéters, they did it all. Then, not 10 minutes later, a boy no older than 21, sat down in front of the crowd that was eating their meal, set up his guitar and mic and started singing. Leaning over to Valentina, I asked if she wanted to get up and dance with me. You didn't have to ask her twice... we were up and dancing to the rhythm of the tune. After the last song he started packing up, we thanked him for the music and got talking. He introduced himself, we shook his hand and he did the same. He explained that he was from Brazil - which made Valentina very excited, she started speaking Portuguese very fast, making

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me very confused for half the conversation. After talking for a few minutes, he invited us out to grab a drink with him and his friends – don't worry parents, I can see you sweating through the screen. We politely declined explaining the nature of our visit to Lisbon. He wished us a good trip and we went back to our meal.

That first night set the tone for the rest of the trip, which was filled with music, dancing, and natas – not tapas as Maëlle learned. The population of Lisbon has a great sense of soul and community deeply rooted in their values (they also have a great sense of party engraved deep in their bones). All and all, Lisboa was a colourful and beautiful first port in our journey.



Student Reflections

Pasha Jones

I wish I could make every minute of this experience last an hour. Because every challenge that tests my patience, strength, and sometimes my sanity is no competition to sitting at the front of a tall ship, bathing in the sun, staring into some part of the Atlantic Ocean all while attempting to complete a marine biology essay.

I wanted to collect a few stories about different moments that have made myself and other students happy. I enjoy hearing each of these stories, no matter how small or insignificant they may seem.

A Chemistry Test

A regular school day has never been more appealing. I watched my friends/roommates/classmates gather for their chemistry class. They had a test on something about covalent or ionic bonds. I could tell that they were dreading to begin and could not wait for it to be over. However, as they started their test, I started to lose my sympathy for them. Because if I could write every chemistry, math, or English test on the deck of a tall ship, no land in sight, on route to Morocco, I would write a million tests. Once their test was over, they got to see a turtle off the side of the ship, how could anyone complain.

Some Glowing Dolphins

Waking up at 1:30 a.m. to get ready for my 2 to 4 Watch is not always a fun time. I painfully get dressed still half asleep and remember I have homework to do tonight. At 2 in the morning, I had to collect a sample of bioluminescent plankton off the side of the ship. We look over the side and watch plankton light up in the water as we motor through the sea. Little did I know that this plankton also glows when anything stirs up the water, including dolphins. For a whole hour, we watched 3 glowing dolphins leaving sparkling green trails swim next to the ship. Underwater, I could see the perfect outlines of their bodies, seeing them better than I do in the day light, it looked like something from a movie.

Backshaft

Backshaft day: your one day a week where you skip your Watch and instead help prepare and clean up after mealtimes. This task is quite simple, setting the tables, serving some food, clearing dishes, not all that hard especially when done in a group. However, when 3-meter waves are hitting the side of your dining room, things become a bit more challenging. On a particular evening, as we sailed to Lisbon, these waves were unforgiving. We propped up our bowls on our forks so the soup wouldn't spill out, we slid back and forth bumping into each other as we ate, and the backshaft crew became our entertainment. We could hear the dishes clanging, some even breaking in the dish pit, serving food became a balancing act, and standing was now a challenge to not fall over. As annoying as this all might sound, I saw no one who wasn't having a fun time.

I am so happy to be able to remember stories like these, even if their minutes cannot last an hour, I am happy that they last a minute.



Night Watch

Mila Trager

My eyelid slowly opens, and a narrow rectangle of light becomes visible. Gradually I force my other eyelid to open. In front of me is a student saying my name to wake me up. "Yeah, awake" I mumble as I gather all my willpower, brace myself for what's ahead and eventually lift my back off the mattress that suddenly looks so soft, warm, and so far away. While suppressing a moan so that I don't wake up my roommates, I glance at my phone. 1:35 a.m. already! In the dark my hand reaches out to find something to wear, but it immediately bumps into the closet wall beside me. I pull my hand back and try a different direction. I grab something that feels soft but too small to be a shirt, when a strong smell enters my nostrils: a combination of perspiration and dinner leftovers. Slightly disgusted, I put the sock back where it came from and pray that it was at least my own. It was not until starting Class Afloat that I learned to appreciate doing laundry. I get as excited for laundry day as normal people do for Saturday.



Image by Pamela

With the lights still turned off to not interrupt the others' precious sleep, I put on my raingear, boots, and harness and head out onto the deck. Greeted by seven equally as puffy and sleepy faces, I stand in line for Watch exchange. After wishing my peers a "Gute Ruh," the 2 – 4 Watch begins. By now, I am awake and excited for a sail through the warm ocean and starry night sky.



Deeper Seeing Eyes

David Green

There are no footprints in the ocean for us to follow, no well-worn paths etched into the seascape by a history of other people's feet, but if a ship's hull could scratch a lasting groove in the water it glides through, we'd be sailing through channels deep enough to part the waves and ground us on the ocean floor. These oft-sailed channels reach out, root-like, from the ports of Europe, trunk towards the coasts of Africa, and then grasp out across the Atlantic to where the ancients once believed the sun went on its daily journey into the womb of the world. In the right season, you can't help it; throw up your sails on the coast of Cabo Verde and the winds will carry you to the New World. The North Atlantic is a gnarlier prospect, as we learnt last year when chased between the horns of two storms, but this leg completes the loop and takes you back home. We left Bremerhaven hoping the voyage would change us by deepening our understanding of ourselves and broadening our perspectives of the world; these same channels that we pass through changed the world.

At the Humboldt Forum in Berlin, we learnt how the wealth of colonial nations was purloined by the courageous and spirited pilots and captains of the Golden Age of Discovery. For decades, the booty of this mass theft was displayed in glass cabinets for our entertainment. The names of famous slavers have adorned libraries, theatres, and parks. My spiritual home in England still carries street-names like "Blackboy Hill" and "Whiteladies Road," and until a few years ago, there was a statue of Colston, one of the most flamboyant slavers in British history. There's a wind of change blowing through the world though; statues are being pulled down or defaced; names are changing; the Humboldt has started to tell a different story and a new and truer history of the world is being told.

In Lisbon, we walked the streets with deeper seeing eyes, aided by our charismatic and knowledgeable guide, Naky. Naky came to Europe from Togo, stopping first in Berlin for several years before moving on to Lisbon. When he tried to dive into the culture he ended up in murky waters. The way people talked about their nation's history seemed suspiciously myopic, and when he reached out to the black community, he met with the same, white-washed narratives that seemed to omit any influence of the infamous channels that were the bedrock of the nation's relative wealth. He dug deeper, studied the history of his new country and took some walking tours, expecting to hear echoes of what he was reading, but everywhere he went, he found the same stories about the glories of the Portuguese Age of Discovery. So, one day he went walking himself and he began to see a different city, one filled with ghosts and buried truth. This was the city he showed us.

What did we see? The square where slaves were traded as commodities, stripped as they had been of their humanity by legal documents and church decrees. The Well of the Black Man, where disused slaves were thrown from the lofty heights where the

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wealthy resided, down to the slums where the Tagus River washed everything into the vast ocean, people included. A sign on a café that appropriates a black caricature to sell coffee and a Chinese one to sell tea. We read descriptions of Africans written by the first navigators to venture into the commerce of kidnap, portraying them as bestial and sub-human. Naky explained how this forced narrative not only facilitated the mass transfer of wealth that has unbalanced the world, but also has a direct lineage to the systemic racism and implicit bias that is now prevalent. We learned what abolition meant and where it fell short of the freedoms it promised. And how echoes, reflections, and shadows of it all still colour these crumbling streets and filter our vision.

Surely the water has rushed in to fill these channels? Is it not time to forget such abysmal histories and abhorrent times?

When they pulled Colston down off his plinth in Bristol, they unceremoniously dumped him in the river. Days later they recovered the iron corpse and erected him once again, but not on his plinth (he had already been replaced by a bronze of a local, black, female, civil rights activist). Instead, they put him in a gallery and replaced his pomp with the ignominy that his legacy deserves. Finally, the old man of slavery who herded people like cattle and profited from the suffering of others is being cast in the kind of moral light that shines well from the will of ordinary people. Leaving him to rot in the river would have risked the erasure of this history, and with it, our memory of the seeds of so many of the ills of the modern world that younger generations are so urgently trying to heal.

When Alexander von Humboldt followed these same grooves to South America, he was at first awed by the explosive proliferation of life in the tropical jungles, but his delight turned quickly to horror when he saw the impact that the colonial projects were having on both the people and the places of the New World. There was nothing “new” about the dense web of interconnected life that had been steadily evolving there in millennial forests, teeming with wildlife and with an abundance of resources that the Indigenous people never dreamt of depleting. The slaves who were torn from their homes in another continent were sent to work tearing down the jungle and replacing it with monoculture cash crops which were then sailed through the Caribbean and back to Europe, turbo-charging the Industrial Revolution, triggering the slow collapse of the Earth’s biodiversity, and setting us on a path of ecological and economic ruin that now, in retrospect, seems inevitable.

“Every drop of sugarcane juice cost blood and groans,” Humboldt wrote about slavery and the “greatest evil that travelled in the wake of what Europeans call their civilization and their thirst for wealth.” But he also linked colonialism to environmental destruction, noting how the first colonist had “impudently destroyed the forest,” that “islands would starve” because of the cash crops, that soil was being exploited “like a mine,” and that the unwinding of the world would lead to climate change. Had he known where humanity was heading (70% of all the animal populations gone from the planet since 1970, irreversible climate change and the impending collapse of the biosphere), he may have been inclined towards stronger language or more direct action. One of the key questions we hope to engage with by the end of our voyage is this: in light of the realities of the existential threats that humanity faces, what should one do? The example of Humboldt’s life is symbolic of the first steps in answering this question: we must learn.

Soon we’ll be crossing the Atlantic and the ship will moor up in Suriname. We’ll step foot on a land radically transformed in the 200 years since Humboldt was there and we’ll venture into the jungle as he did in search of Indigenous culture. Along the way we’ll pass gold mines owned by Canadian companies and see firsthand how the natural landscapes have been altered to serve the unsustainable appetites of the Global North. From there we’ll follow the channels to the Caribbean, stopping first at Barbados, an island burdened with the infamous history of being the birthplace of the legal entity of “white” as described by the Barbados Slave Code of 1667, which also described the “Negroe as heathenish, brutish, an uncertaine [sic] dangerous people” that Masters needed to “protect as we doe [sic] many of other goods and Chattels.” As we turn North, we’ll stop for a while in the tax haven of Bermuda, one of many economic black holes built by colonial powers to shelter their wealth from civilised society and sequester it from the common good. Everywhere we go, we will pull on the threads of history and question the narratives we find and the ones we carry, digging for ghosts and rooting for channels.

Yes, we will dive in crystal clear waters too, canoe through lush forests, ride camels into the desert, dance the marimba, hoist sails, play soccer, sing, dance, play and explore cultures exotic to our own, but we will endeavor to do so with deeper seeing eyes.

As we turn back towards Europe and close the loop on the adventure of this wild year, I hope we will all come to realise that a history of feet does not necessarily make a path worth following, that maybe it’s the right time now to flood the channels and clamber up out of the inherited grooves that were left for us by less careful generations. To chart a course worth

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piloting we will need to engage with our history courageously and honestly, seeing it less as shifting sands and more like the strata of the seabed lifted up and laid bare, the lines of our impact on the world traced solid in the immutable folds of rock. Deeper seeing eyes. Ears that are unafraid of echoes. To reach a home worth reaching, we need new stories, stories that encourage us all to grow away from collapse and towards connection, stories that lead us to an indigenous kinship with the wild and a lessening of the drive to other ourselves from nature, stories that redefine the ideas of wealth and value and equity and inspire a collective engagement with a hopeful future. Who better to imagine this bright new world and write themselves into it than the students of Class Afloat?



The Street

Kiran Séqueira

I am on a street.

I am on a crowded street, people are flooding in from all directions. They all walk down the street in a singular flow, never stopping, never steering away. Their path is obvious, paved out in front of them, all they need to do is keep moving forward. Walking is tiring, but that's how it goes. How would you get to the end of the street if you refused to walk? How absurd would that be? I can't see the edges of the street.

All I can hear is their hoarse breathing, the incessant cacophony of their footsteps, the shuffling of their clothes.

All I can feel is the suffocating heat, the pain of their elbows stabbing my ribs. I can't stop, carried away by the current of their ever-moving procession.

Imagine the agonising despair that would overwhelm you if you couldn't walk anymore, if you fell behind, left alone, purposeless. So everyone keeps walking. Until they can't. Until they trip and fall, until they can't put a step in front of them anymore. Crushed by the unstoppable flow, their bodies lay motionless on the street, paving the way for the new walkers. Deep down, everyone knows this is the fate of the trippers. Everyone knows, no one wants to see. All they must do is keep their head up, and keep walking to the end of the street.



Surviving a Sailboat 101

Amélie Lynn

Let me throw a bit of knowledge your way. A little insider fact about life on a sailboat.

You get thrown around.

A lot.

The boat has no mercy for your poor bruised arms and legs; half of us spent the first two weeks looking like apples that had been dropped too many times on the floor.

When you are finally in your bed about to close your eyes for a few hours or minutes, depending on how daring and trusting you are with your sleep schedule, that's when the boat decides it's time to wake up and throw you around your bunk. Leaving you praying you don't drop down onto the hardwood floor. Getting into the foetal or starfish position holding onto the walls for dear life while the boat is tipping at a 45-degree angle. It's honestly an Olympic sport; a workout if you will.

Imagine this: it's two in the morning, you're already tired maybe a little grumpy, and you must wake up for your night Watch. You get up, walk over to your closet door, and as soon as you open it, a wave comes crashing into the side of the boat sending all your clothing, bottles, and shoes onto the floor. I can promise you, there is nothing more infuriating in the middle of the night than that. Picking everything up, swearing under your breath, trying to not wake up your roommates, shoving everything back in and quietly-slamming the door. Or, in other cases, you're sitting down for a meal and ... you guessed it, the boat tips, sending whatever plate you had in front of you flying to the fourth neighbor over. You also must hold onto your glass of water because if there is any slight movement to the boat, your water cascades into the plate of the person next to you, earning you a very well-deserved death stare. It's always funny when you see it happen to someone else, but when that happens to your precious food - after a hard day too - wow! Your world crumbles around you.

Now, don't mistake this as a complaint. It is absolutely thrilling to get thrown out of your bunk or having to eat wet food. Did you clock the sarcasm? Ok, all jokes aside, as surprising as this may sound, these instances have brought more laughs, and bruises, than anyone could imagine. But we still need to get a good night sleep; so, the crew gave us a little insider tip. Stuff your life jacket under your bunk so our mattress is tipped; trapping you between the mattress and the wall, creating your own little corner that is impossible to get out of elegantly, I might add. You can decorate it with lights, stickers, and photographs, making it as homey as desired; or you can leave it plain, whatever floats your boat - no pun intended. Now you understand why we are always falling asleep in the most random and most uncomfortable looking places; at this point, we're used to it. Most of us have **continued**

now experienced the: let me close my eyes for a few minutes and then I can get back to work... that is the biggest mistake you could make! You wake up four hours later, wondering what time it is, what your name is, and which universe you're in! It's like waking up from a mini coma! You now also understand why I'm never at breakfast; I'm too busy trying to get out of my top bunk, tilted mattress cocoon without falling on the floor.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have some sleep to catch up on.



Image by Liv



Image by Rob



Image by Rob



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