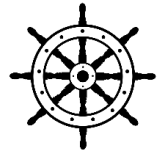




The Mizzen



Class Afloat 2022 – 2023 Student Newspaper. Volume 3: December 15

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



Beverly Schwendener

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

The Chess Championship

Eric S.

Since its inception in Heino, Netherlands, the Chess Club continues to foster a healthy intellectual, competitive, and friendly environment for its members to play, socialize, and refine their game. The combination of members' tactics, skill sharing, and mentorship has advanced the overall quality and sophistication of matches. In addition to regular chess strategy, some players even employ less conventional methods, like mind games to weaken their opponent's concentration. In the ladder system, members could challenge competitors up to two levels above them. Frequent matches occurred, with players' magnetic name tags ascending and descending the leader board.



Image by Eric S.

Before arriving in Tenerife, registration for the tournament opened and attracted a powerful group of chess enthusiasts. From November 28th to December 4th, competitors fought fiercely to secure one of four positions in the finals. On December 11th, with eagerness, excitement, and sportsmanship, the finals unfolded. Congratulations to the winners of Class Afloat's Semester 1 Chess Championship: Kiran – 1st place, Drew – 2nd place, Andrea – 3rd place. Thank you to the DSST for generously sponsoring this tournament with prizes.



A Sandy Night

Mila Trager

She opens her eyes when the wheels of the heavy bus growl as they come to a stop on the dusty road. Apparently, she fell asleep, her forehead leaning against the window, staring out at the dry hills of Morocco. From here, the bus can't go any further, so the next three hours of the journey proceed on foot or by camel. Thirsty and with aching feet, the group arrives at its destination: tents in the Sahara Desert. Her legs feel like giving in and her eyelids have turned to narrow slits, but there is no time to rest when they are welcomed by the locals with music and dancing. Amazed by how her legs still have the power to jump around, she joins in on the dance and feels its contagious exhilaration. The music fades out, but that doesn't mean it's time to rest. Together with the group, she climbs up a sand dune. They must be fast to make it in time for the sunset, but her bare feet sink deep into the sand with every step she takes, making her slide back several inches. Once at the top, she lets herself fall back into the sand and takes a deep breath. No one speaks while the biggest star in the universe turns red and slowly lays down to rest after having shared its light with the world for another day. During the sunset, she thinks about big life questions as well as small and irrelevant events. However, there is one thought that keeps creeping to the front of her mind: I am the luckiest girl in the world right now! As soon as the last sun ray disappears behind the wide horizon of sand, the first students immediately start to jump down the sand dune, headfirst. This is Class Afloat, the program that never rests. Students are boundless in their energy and enthusiasm. With clothes full of sand and a heart full of joy, she makes her way down again, where a quick shower (a rinse with droplets – water is treasure) awaits before dinner. After every single bite of traditional Moroccan tagine is scraped out of the pot, the community heads out for another round of dancing until everybody's feet and lungs hurt. Warming up by the fire, she looks up at the sky and the corners of her mouth rise when she sees the clear night sky. The stars are her home now, they accompany her wherever she is, whether that is on the ocean, the shore of an island or the desert. Determined to sleep beneath the stars, a small group of people equip themselves with blankets and pillows before they head out into the vast sand dunes once again. As beautiful as the starry night sky is, after a while the sand begins to burn in her eyes and the cold sets in. A bit defeated but still happy, she tiptoes back to her tent, where she snuggles up next to her roommates and drifts off into a world of dreams.



The Impermanent Ocean

K. Fawcett

We live on a giant tall ship named the Alexander von Humboldt II, but truly our home is the ocean. It's the ever-changing vessel that transports us to numerous countries around the world. I've come to realize that every continent has one thing in common: the ocean. It's a constant in all our lives whether we live next to it or not, it affects us either way. After visiting the Oceanarium research center in Mindelo, Cape Verde, I felt like I'd come to understand a few more aspects. The way temperature can affect the entire food chain, how winds bring dust into the sea which provides the nutrients for life. The more I learn however, the more I realize how little I know...how little we as humans know about our ocean. In our perfect cities and pretty homes, it's easy to forget that we are a part of this planet, just like every other living organism. Our activities do have impacts, we just don't see them as easily when our water comes from a tap and light comes from the flick of a switch. With the ocean connecting us all, it's the first to absorb our negative actions. When you live on the ocean, you can easily feel irrelevant; you're a tiny speck in an endless sea. I used to look out into the ocean and think of its emptiness. Now, after being here for almost 2 months, you come to realize the life it sustains. Everyday there's new mammals swimming and playing off the bow, seaweed floats on the surface, jellyfish can be spotted and even the odd sea turtle. In the evening the water turns into a replica of the night sky as bioluminescence and plankton light up the waves. The ocean is alive and although it doesn't have a mind of its own, it contains a secret, living, breathing world that we are connected to. It's so easy to be ignorant, to not think about our affects as humans. Even though you cannot see it, doesn't mean it's not there. The ocean doesn't actually have a mind of its own. When you're on the rudder and the boat won't stay on course, sometimes all you want to do is curse the ocean. But we must remember that the ocean sustains us. Our oceans are changing; inevitably, we will experience the results of this change unless we recognize this reality and act accordingly.



The Puzzle

Kiran Séqueira

Once upon a time, a sage told his apprentice that he had come to the end of his formation, and that the time had come for his final teaching. He led him to the highest temple, where his student had seen him disappear every night after their lessons. Inside the temple, awaits a puzzle, which we will assemble together, said the sage. The puzzle is sacred, and to enter the temple, you must surrender your sight. The sage blindfolded his apprentice and together they stepped beyond the heavy gates of the temple. The sage guided his apprentice to the heart of the temple, where they sat down and began their search. At the first rays of dawn, master and apprentice both walked down to the village, from where they would climb back up to the temple on the following night to continue their work. As the days passed with no end in sight to their silent labor, the student grew increasingly unnerved. What madman would think of putting together a puzzle blindfolded, he thought to himself. Why wouldn't his master let him look at the puzzle? Did he not trust him? After all these years spent at his side, had he not earned the right to know? What cruel game was the old sage designing, bringing him so close to the ultimate secret of his teachings, yet so stubbornly out of reach? Every night, the student's impatience took on more and more the accents of desperation. He felt abandoned, reduced to the purposelessness, vain shuffling of pieces. He felt ridiculed in his ignorance. Where he had searched for meaning, he had only found chaos and emptiness. One day, after countless nights spent alongside his master in the temple with no sign of progress, the apprentice gave in to his devouring curiosity and took off his blindfold. What he saw horrified him. Around him were piles upon piles of puzzle pieces, covering every inch of the temple's floor. In front of him sat his master, calm and peaceful, eyes closed, meticulously arranging pieces around him, tracing along the shape of each piece with the tip of his fingers, with the look of one trying to transcribe the words of some lost language. Master, what is the meaning of this, cried the apprentice. How could we ever defeat such chaos? I was in the dark, but now that I see, I seem to be lost even beyond the world of shadow and light. My dear boy, replied the sage with a sad tenderness in his voice, it doesn't take sight to feel a piece fitting the shape of another as you unveil its natural place. Now that you have glimpsed at knowledge, it is only by learning to be blind again and to listen to the quiet rumors of life that you will find the truth you were searching for.



Prose

Nikki Davidson

Blue,
is the color of the ocean so brightly
surrounding us.

A light, clear, shallow blue,
makes the perfect swimming pool for the
dolphins playing below.

Dark blue,
rough waters,
crashing waves.
We sway as if we are on a ride,
as the darkness below controls our motion.
The color of the water changes so quickly,
the darkness creeps around accompanied
by winds so strong the sails cannot bare to
take them.

Bright blue,
the ocean is calm,
the water is deep,
a whole world of mystery below,
there is nothing in sight other than blue.
Guiding us along, sharing its beauty in all its
stages.



The Crossing

Pasha Jones

Think about this: for 16 days you're stuck on a ship with 45 teenagers your age, 20 crew members, and... your teachers. The first days are easy, breakfast, classes, lunch, classes, dinner, classes, and your Watch somewhere in between. However, as you sail further into the middle of the ocean, crossing the Atlantic, things might get a little more difficult. You've run out of ideas to pass the time, you've watched all your movies, and have eaten all your snacks. Tensions rise, snacks are bargained, and you've lost track of the days. Hopefully, you foresaw these events and prepared yourself for any situation before leaving port.

Our first sail to Lisbon prepared us all too well for the Atlantic crossing. I remember the nerves I had before departing that day, I worried about seasickness, school, and my Watch had the honor to start with the 2 – 4 Watch. Therefore, sleep was another one of my concerns. However, when I think back on that sail, I start to feel a lot better about what's ahead of us. I mean, we are all pretty much professionals at this by now. Therefore, I wanted to ask around about what the Floaties have done to prepare for the Atlantic crossing.

To start, we arrive in Suriname on Christmas day, and we have many holiday activities planned throughout this sail. Secret Santa is one of them. Before departure day, many searched far and wide for the perfect gift. I've seen holiday pyjamas, a bag of \$70 worth of Christmas decorations, even a mini-Christmas tree, and music playlists all prepared on our final days in Cabot Verde.

Now we must discuss snacks. When I say that people's closets have become pantries, I am not joking. I'll admit, I have become a victim to a scarcity mindset and have stocked up on some of my favorite snacks. One of the most popular purchases is ramen: delicious, curly noodles cooked in boiling water, seasoned with the flavor of your choosing. I believe that soon this will become the currency on the ship along with some other treats. Many bought chocolate and cookies; however, I am not sure how long they will last. I've heard that some have already eaten their whole advent calendars.

In port, wifi cafes were used to download holiday movies. I believe I have heard someone watching Elf at least 4 different times since we've been at sea. Movies are traded with hard drives and you can never go wrong with too many. However, music on the other hand, needs to be carefully prepared. Hearing the same playlist repeatedly will drive you mad.

I believe each Floatie has prepped themselves quite well for the crossing, although only time will tell. I can't wait to see what's to come, but for now, I hope everything will be smooth sailing until Suriname.



The Photography Club: The Animals of Our Journey



Image by Basti



Image by Liv



Image by Beverly



Image by Sophia



Image by Drew



Image by Pam

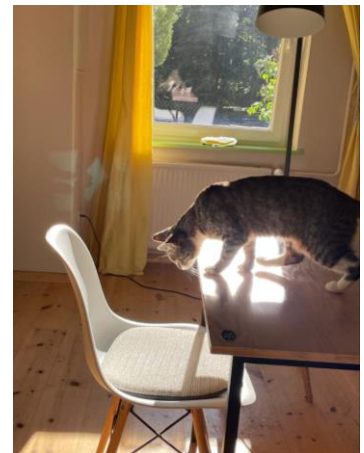


Image by Raf

A Sweet Life on Deck

Naomi Blackadar

Dolphins on deck!
Leaping, jumping, splashing,
diving playfully out of the crystal blue waves
as we watch; smiling and laughing.

Finally, the call comes to go back to class
and so begrudgingly we trek
back down below to science or math.
It's a sweet life on deck.



Poetry Under Pressure

Beatrice Ivanovici

You may look down and see my shoe
And that may not mean much to you

But those shoes have seen the mightiest heights
And trekked upon some treacherous hikes

They've ran and they've tripped
They've moonwalked down our beautiful ship

They've creased in Morocco
They've ripped in Mindelo

They've been thrown into the Sahara sand
They've been to many lands

Although they stand before you like a piece of muddled up shoe
They've probably seen much more than you

They've seen the ocean encircle its midst
Its rushed to chores to do the backshaft blitz

They've served and served
Of course their perfect state would not be preserved

And as you look down at my muddled up shoe
I know they mean very little to you

But in my eyes, the beauty lies
Within their sweet demise

The browned up shoe means much to me
Not for the beauty for others to see

But for the stories that lie beneath the bruises.



Christmas Reflections

David Green

It'll be lonely this Christmas, lonely and cold. So sang Mud in 1975. Not in the tropics! But there's a side to Christmas that we tend to turn away from when we're simply having a wonderful Christmas time. In the midst of a holly jolly Christmas do we consider those who have to ride the festive tide alone or in the midst of break-ups or break-downs? When we're dreaming of a white Christmas and appealing to the Gods of weather to let it snow, let it snow, let it snow, do we spare a thought for those of us who wake on the 25th without a roof?

I was lucky to have been born into a family where Christmas was the most wonderful time of the year and I probably did, as a kid, wish it could be Christmas every day. It was the eighties. From a kid's perspective everything seemed to be on the up, the future shiny and bright and the stockings, year on year, filled with a gradually improving stream of gadgets and toys. The tape Walkman I got in 1984 evolved into a CD Walkman, then a mini-disc Walkman, an mp3 player, an iPod. I was the first generation of human to expect a hifi-system in my room, from which I could tape the Radio One chart show, waiting eagerly to strike at the record button when a good song came. Transformer toys were the pinnacle of toy-making genius, and they kept appearing in my stocking, which was a pillowcase. On Christmas Day the family gathered for the customary Turkey feast and then the extended family would come round and, with the exception of a few inconsequential arguments inspired by Uncles and Aunties drinking too much sherry, we consistently had ourselves a merry little Christmas. Naturally, I thought everybody was doing the same, because that's what you think when you're a kid. I also didn't think twice about all the junk we filled our house with and then threw away afterwards. And, as far as I remember, I never saw Mommy kissing Santa Claus.

Last Christmas I was at sea with Class Afloat. We celebrated in the middle of the Atlantic. The closest humans were astronauts whizzing around the planet every 90 minutes in the International Space Station above and Santa had to use GPS tracking to find our chimney. An error of twenty feet in the dropping of gifts would have been disastrous. The year before, I spent Christmas in a half-built tower block in Lubumbashi, a dusty city in the South of the DRC, where I was helping grow a school. I've had Christmases in Bhutan, in Thailand, in Kenya, in Australia (where all the Christmas cards have snow and its 35 degrees outside). All of these were without my family. But on this big ball of blue we call home, you can find family wherever you go if you step with an open heart and an open mind.

If you happen to be lucky enough to catch a ride as an astronaut on the space station and go whizzing round the Earth you will return, as all the astronauts do, with your perception of categories and boundaries blown apart. There are no countries on Earth. No borders, no boundaries, no seas with their own names, no separation of anything from the whole. Even the idea of a discrete species falls apart when you try to isolate it - we are, scientifically, literally, actually, all connected - seemingly discrete cells in a global organism. So if you find yourself far away from home, in a place where the language is strange and the traditions unfamiliar, take comfort from knowing it's a mere coincidence of time and space, an illusion of circumstance, a mere limit of our humble minds, that makes us feel like we're apart when we're together.

This year I'll be spending Christmas at anchor off the coast of Suriname on the Alexander von Humboldt II after crossing the Atlantic with 47 of the most amazing humans you could hope to meet. The decorations are all up. The doors are wrapped. The cabins are festooned with fairy lights. There's no snow, but it's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas.

<https://davidgreenmusic.bandcamp.com/track/born-at-the-right-time-xmas-in-the-80s>



The 12 Days of Christmas

M.S. & Liv

On the twelfth day of Christmas, the Alex II gave to me:

12 extra student gangways,

11 movie hard drives,

10 blistered fingers,

9 "ping the bell rings,"

8 bowls of cornflakes,

7 dolphins leaping,

6 backshaft fill-ins,

5 gold rings (not allowed on Watch),

4 broken mugs,

3 wake ups,

2 focksheets,

And a crew member shouting "An di!"



Andy Munar