



The Lake Guardian, an Environmental Protection Agency vessel, was in the 1000 Islands July 9 and 10.

The Laboratory on the Water

By Pamela McDowell, Staff Writer

Fifteen teachers from the Great Lakes basin, New York state included, spent a week on the Lake Guardian, a 180-foot vessel that monitors water ecology in all five of the Great Lakes. The vessel is owned and operated by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Guardian came to port at the Thousand Islands Regional Dock in Clayton on July 9 and 10 for an overnight stay and a visit to nearby Governor's Island, a College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry biology lab site.

While on the Lake Guardian,

teachers participated in the Shipboard and Shoreline Workshop and assisted in sampling and data gathering. By the end of their voyage, they created curricula to bring back to their schools.

During the voyage around Lake Ontario, the ship's staff and teachers took water and bottom samples from 20 to 30 sites. They also dragged nets to survey living aquatic life. They documented their findings.

The ship is like a floating science laboratory containing three different labs: biology, chemical and mixed use. A large classroom, galley, offices

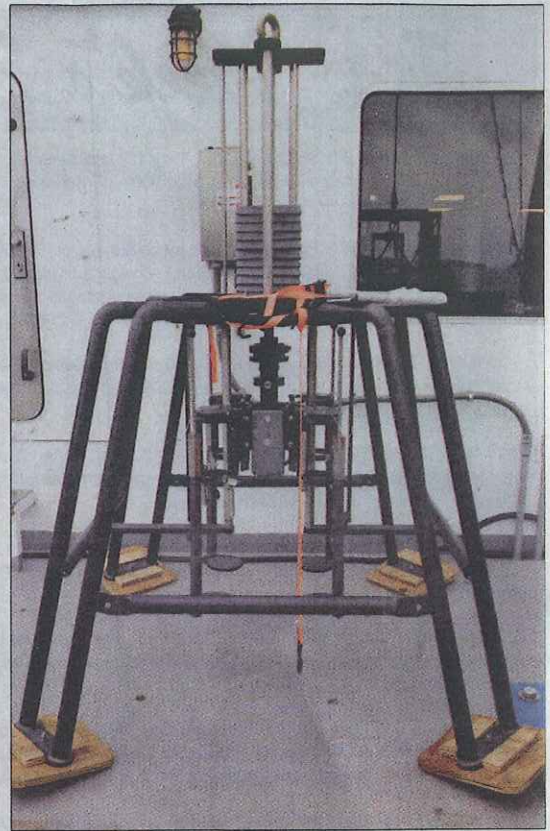
and lounge area are typical of what would be found in any land-based science building.

The program is associated with NY Sea Grant, an organization that concentrates on education about the state's waterways. Educator Helen Domske, Sea Grant's coastal educator, was also on board to lend her knowledge, as well as Environmental Protection Agency biologists.

Colleen Warner, a 4th grade teacher in the Fulton City School District and a 1000 Islands vacationer, praised the program.

"This is a great opportunity, not only learning science that you wouldn't typically have access to, but by exchanging ideas with teachers from all over, we can connect what we have learned to all subject areas in the classroom," she said. She noted that often curricula across the state have a concentration on New York

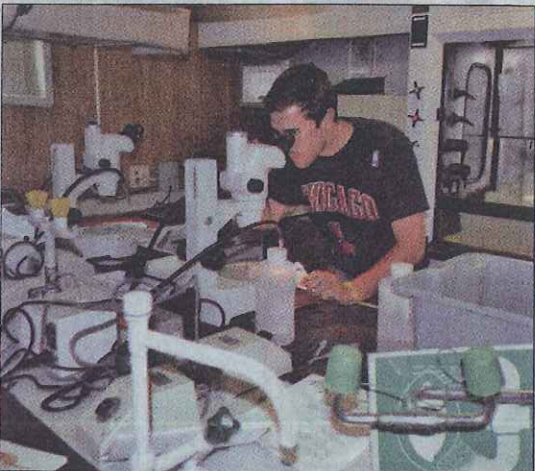
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Equipment to take samples from the bottom of the Great Lakes looks like moon-landing apparatus. The machine is lowered down with cables, sometimes as far as 600 feet under water.



The Lake Guardian became the teachers' classroom for a week in July as they helped with research that would help them educate their students.



Samples taken from the lakes are analyzed in a biology lab aboard the Lake Guardian. Teacher Alex Stavropoulos of a Chicago school district looks through a microscope.

...Lake Guardian

(continued from page 10)

waterways.

When asked what most surprised her on the voyage, she replied, "That they are building a hotel in Clayton."

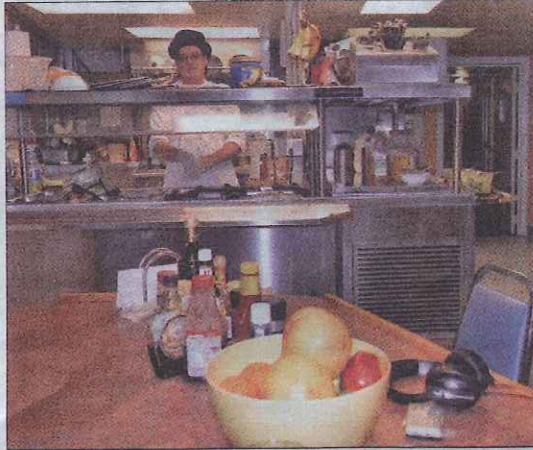
Teacher Kim Linkinhoker of Cicero-North Syracuse teaches biology and environmental science. She was a perfect candidate to be aboard the educational vessel. As she stated, "This is a great experience. We study both biology and environmental freshwater resources. Our water is such a valuable resource; we need to learn how to protect it."

Following a breakfast of eggs, bacon, sausage, whole wheat pancakes, oatmeal, grits, fresh fruit, yogurt, coffee and juice, prepared

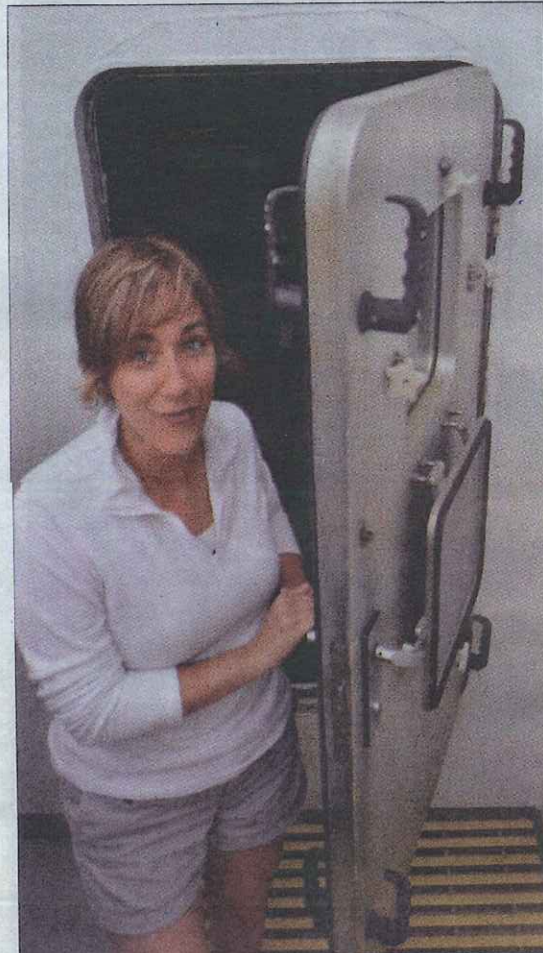
by "Cook Mark," the group headed to Governor's Island aboard Great Rivers, a Clarkson University vessel.

At the biology station, they learned about aquatic life in the St. Lawrence River. The group was addressed by Dr. John Farrell, director of the Thousand Islands Biological Station, and Dr. Michael Twiss, director of the Great Rivers Center of Clarkson University.

The Lake Guardian will continue through the other regions of the Great Lakes once the teachers disembark. It surveys between 20 and 30 points on each of the five lakes every spring and summer with 14 crew members on board.



Mark, the cook, prepared a feast for breakfast and awaits the arrival of the crew and teachers. The crew and teachers fill up three tables in the galley that resembles a typical restaurant.



Not your typical classroom door - Jennifer Slivka leaves the classroom for a walk out on deck.