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Aboard GSO: A Newsletter for Alumni and Friends of the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography for Fall 2012

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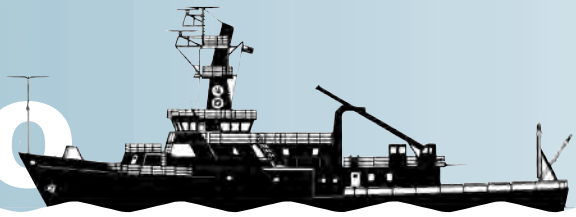
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ABOARD GSO



A Newsletter for Alumni and Friends of the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography

Corliss Takes the Helm

To GSO Alumni, Friends,
and the University Community:

I am very pleased to inform you that Dr. Bruce Corliss accepted the position of Dean of the Graduate School of Oceanography at The University of Rhode Island and joined us in September. Dr. Corliss brings a wealth of knowledge and extensive administrative and management experience in academia and a superb record of research and education in the field of oceanography. He is the former Director of the Duke/University of North Carolina Oceanographic Consortium and also served as the Chair of the Department of Geology, the Interim Chair of the Division of Earth and Ocean Sciences, and the Senior Assistant Dean of the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University. In addition, he currently is Chair of the University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System (UNOLS), which is an organization of 61 marine science-focused institutions that advises federal agencies on oceanographic research infrastructure facilities and the national fleet.

Along with a wealth of varied experience in oceanography, Dr. Corliss is familiar with URI and the New England region, having received his Ph.D. and M.S. in Oceanography at URI. He was also engaged in post-doctoral work at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and was an Assistant Scientist there for five years.

I know many of you may have met him during the search process and have had the opportunity to interact with him during his first weeks at URI. Please join me in continuing to welcome him and assist him in every way possible. Thank you all for your patience and support throughout the search process. I also want to publicly express my gratitude to the search committee, led by Dean Ray Wright, and our alumni and friends who participated in the search.

Best wishes for a productive and peaceful year.

Donald H. DeHayes
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs



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Boat Burning 2012

Luke A. Logan

The annual Graduate School of Oceanography Boat Burning took place on September 7, 2012. Continuing the tradition of welcoming new students to GSO, Chowder and Marching hosted the yearly barbeque on the GSO beach at sunset. The weather was perfect and the turnout excellent. This year's boat burning was highlighted with an extravagant fire twirling demonstration to kick off the evening and a speech from new Dean Bruce Corliss.

In a slightly new twist to this annual tradition, Mistral Dodson, a friend of current Blue MBA student Anupa Asokan, performed a fire twirling demonstration prior to lighting the boat on fire. Everyone seems quite entranced with the performance. Grills were sizzling and drinks being enjoyed shortly thereafter.

Before the fall semester started, Bruce Corliss was announced as the new dean for GSO. The Chowder and Marching student committee then decided it would be a perfect opportunity to break the ice with Dean Corliss and have him stand atop the boat and feel a little heat as he began his role at GSO. He graciously accepted and during his speech shared experience of his time as a student at GSO attending



Courtesy of Chowder and Marching Society

the very same boat burning some 40 years ago. Of course no speech is complete without a bit of spontaneity and the rapidly growing fire seen below put an end to his speech.

Students, faculty, staff and friends and family then enjoyed the rest of the cool fall evening socializing and forgetting about what stresses may lay ahead with the upcoming academic year. In addition to the welcoming of new students, about two dozen current students did the "last year leap" over the fire indicating their hopes to graduate before the next boat burning. ■

ABOARD GSO newsletter is funded by the GSO Alumni Association, Friends of Oceanography, and the Dean of GSO to keep friends, alumni, and the community informed of what is happening at GSO.

For more information about the Alumni Association, contact Walter Berry, Chair (berry.walter@epamail.epa.gov). To learn more about Friends of Oceanography, contact Deb Coty (debim@gso.uri.edu).

ABOARD GSO is published twice a year by the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography.

Send news and correspondence to:
Deb Coty, URI Graduate School of Oceanography, South Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI 02882-1197



Courtesy of Chowder and Marching Society

URI Oceanographer Returns from Arctic Expedition

Matt Smith

A University of Rhode Island marine scientist has returned from a six-week research cruise to the Bering Sea and Chukchi Sea, the first time oceanographers have studied this Arctic region in winter during modern times.

“The area is a big black box in winter; what goes on there in the marine environment is unknown,” said Robert Campbell, a marine research scientist at the URI Graduate School of Oceanography and a resident of Saunderstown. “We need to have a basic understanding of the ecosystem so we can predict how climate change may affect it.”

The expedition was conceived by Campbell and co-principal investigators Carin Ashjian (Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute), an alumna of the Graduate School of Oceanography, and Steve Okkonen (University of Alaska), and funded by the National Science Foundation.

Campbell, who studies tiny zooplankton that are an important food source for fish and whales, traveled with a team of other oceanographers aboard the Coast Guard icebreaker Healy, the only currently operating U.S. Arctic icebreaker, to the waters north and west of Alaska to conduct a wide range of measurements and collect plankton samples.

“I’ve been out there a number of times in spring and summer to try to understand what might happen if the ice conditions in the region change and how those changes will affect the growth and development of the zooplankton,” he said. “But before we can predict what might happen with climate change, we have to understand what is happening today. And we don’t know much about what’s happening there in winter.”

Day after day, Campbell and colleagues deployed a system of nets to collect copepods and krill to conduct studies of their physical condition and activity levels. They also used a video plankton recorder that took pictures of the plankton in their natural environment and a number of other instruments to measure various chemical and physical water properties.

“Certain species go into a resting stage like hibernation in deep water during the dark winter and don’t return to the surface to grow and reproduce until spring when conditions are better,” Campbell explained. “But in this area, because the continental shelf is so wide, it may not be possible for them to move to deep water and still recolonize the shelf in spring. We assumed they would just stay on the shelf through the winter.”

His first impressions suggest that this may be true. “They were feeding, they seemed to be very active, they had normal respiration rates, and they had plenty of lipid, which makes them well suited to get through the winter,” Campbell said of the zooplankton he collected.

Krill, which travel northward on currents from the Bering Sea to the Chukchi Sea, are an especially important food source for bowhead whales. Copepods in the genus *Calanus* are also a vital link in the food chain between marine plants and fish.

“But not all copepod species are created equal,” said Campbell. “Some have a large lipid sac that makes them a good source

of food, but others don’t have that lipid reserve. If changes are happening and one group does better than the others, that might have a cascading effect across the ecosystem.”

According to Campbell, the Arctic is one of the regions that scientists know the least about, and it is also where the biggest changes are likely going to occur due to global warming.

“We’re already beginning to observe changes there, so it’s important to get a good understanding of the ecosystem now before the changes become too great,” he said.

The conditions that Campbell and the other oceanographers aboard the ship endured were quite extreme. In the Chukchi Sea, wind chill temperatures were sometimes below -40 degrees, and those working on deck had to ensure that no skin was exposed to the elements for fear of frostbite.

“In the Bering Sea we had a different problem,” Campbell said. “It wasn’t as cold, but the seas were so rough that it made it difficult to do our work. One time the water was so rough that our nets were trashed and we had to pull them in and repair them.”

The URI scientist said that there is a great deal of analysis still to be done of the data he collected from the Bering and Chukchi Seas. He also will return to Barrow, Alaska again this year as part of the Arctic Observing Network, an effort to conduct the same measurements year after year to monitor for signs of climate change. ■



Nets were employed to collect copepods and krill. When working on deck no skin could be exposed for fear of frostbite.

Alumni News

Stuart Allison, M.S. 1986

Stuart has written a new book and this is some background from him.



I wrote the book while on a Fulbright Scholarship funded sabbatical at Cranfield University in the UK during the 2010–2011 academic year. But the book is the result of 20 years of work in ecological restoration. Most of my research has been in the restoration of tallgrass prairies and midwestern oak savannas found in Illinois—a long way away from the zooplankton I studied while at GSO. One thing I have noticed over the years is the increasing development of so-called ‘novel ecosystems’ which arise due to a combination of climate change, land use change (usually generated by human disturbance) and the arrival of non-native, frequently aggressively invasive species. All those factors contribute to environmental change. We must try to preserve as much biodiversity as possible while also restoring ecosystems that provide ecosystem functions and services. Ecological restoration is already one of our major tools for dealing with human impacts on the environment and it will only become more important in the 21st century.

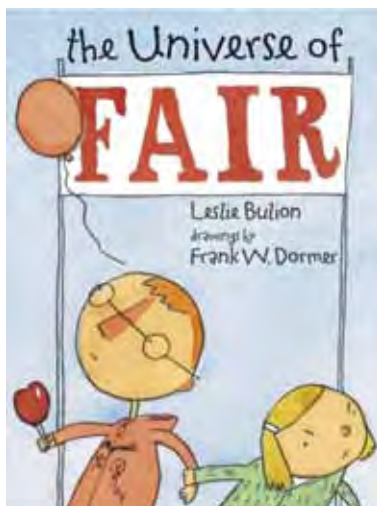
What is a natural habitat? Who can define what is natural when species and ecosystems constantly change over time, with or without human intervention? When a polluted river or degraded landscape is restored from its damaged state, what is the appropriate outcome? With climate change now threatening greater disruption to the stability of ecosystems, how should restoration ecologists respond?

Ecological Restoration and Environmental Change addresses and challenges some of these issues which question the core values of the science and practice of restoration ecology. It analyzes the paradox arising from the desire to produce ecological restorations that fit within an historical ecological context, produce positive environmental benefits and also result in landscapes with social meaning. Traditionally restorationists often felt that by producing restorations that matched historic ecosystems they were following nature’s plans and human agency played only a small part in restoration. But the author shows that in reality the process of restoration has always been defined by human choices. He examines the development of restoration practice, especially in North America, Europe and Australia, in order to describe different models of restoration with respect to balancing ecological benefit and cultural value. He develops ways to balance more actively these differing areas of concern while planning restorations.

The book debates in detail how coming global climate change and the development of novel ecosystems will force us to ask new questions about what we mean by good ecological restoration. When the environment is constantly shifting, restoration to maintain biodiversity, local species, and ecosystem functions becomes even more challenging. It is likely that in the future ecological restoration will become a never-ending, continuously evolving process.

Leslie Bulion, M.S. 1984

I’m thrilled to say my news is a new children’s novel due out in August!



The Universe of Fair
ISBN: 978-1561456345
253 pages
Author: Leslie Bulion
Illustrator: Frank W. Dormer
Peachtree Publishers
peachtree-online.com
August 1, 2012

An engaging eleven year old science whiz tries to show his parents he’s responsible enough to enjoy the town fair without parental supervision, but events conspire against him. Instead of a freewheeling, fun day, Miller is drawn into a mishap-filled fair day he never imagined involving a string of tag-along first graders, lemon meringue pie, witch pumpkins and flying death heads!

Leslie Bulion mines her interest in string theory and chocolate-covered bananas for her newest middle-grade novel, The Universe of Fair. Leslie’s other books include the Bank Street Best Books 2007 middle-grade novel Uncharted Waters, The Trouble With Rules, the Children’s Africana Book Award Best Picture Book winner, Fatuma’s New Cloth, and her two gruesomely funny, award-winning science poetry collections, At the Sea Floor Café and Hey There, Stink Bug! A former school social worker with a graduate degree in oceanography, Leslie has written and edited books in the education market and has been a contributing writer to national magazines and on the internet. She gives writing workshops and presentations to students, educators and writers throughout the US. Leslie lives in Connecticut with her husband, Rubin Hirsch, and at the youth exhibit of her town’s agricultural fair, come fall.

Mark Brush, Ph.D. 2002

Mark was awarded tenure with promotion to Associate Professor at VIMS.

Lee Cone (Douglas B. Cone), M.S. 1974

Lee retired from teaching after 36 years as an AP Biology, Honors Biology, and Oceanography teacher for Greenville County (South Carolina), and is currently an instructor of Evolutionary Biology at Greenville Technical College. He runs (5 and 10k events), scuba dives for SC fossils, and is working on a 12 million year old baleen whale that he found in Aurora, NC. After removing thousands of pieces, it is 70% reconstructed, and he is entering the final phase of this four-year project.

Stephen Dickson, M.S. 1986

Steve said, "Thanks for checking in. I've been at the Maine Geological Survey for 26 years since leaving GSO in 1986. My wife Lisa is Vice President of Sustainability at Kleinfelder.com. Our two sons, Mitchell and Nate, are in grade school."

Karen Johnson-Young(formerly Foster), M.S. 1982

Karen is on a temporary assignment in Battelle's newly opened Anchorage Office. Karen is working with Ted Rockwell, a new hire from EPA Region 10, to develop Battelle's work in Alaska and the Arctic. She has been at Battelle for approximately 23 years and is currently a Program/Project Manager working on environmental issues.

Dean Dunn, Ph.D. 1982

"I'm at the American Chemical Society in DC; we administer the Petroleum Research Fund, an endowment that supports "advanced scientific education and fundamental research in the petroleum field." The Petroleum Research Fund (www.acsprf.org) came from a 1944 settlement of an anti-trust lawsuit brought against seven oil companies by the U.S. Government, and the PRF Trust has been administered by ACS since then. The PRF Trust was dissolved in 2000,

and all the assets transferred to the direct management of ACS (so we don't pay a bank large administrative fees to manage stocks, bonds, and investments). ACS PRF has supported university research since 1954, and in the current year, our grant budget will be about \$17 million (about 180 total funded research grants). Since 2004, I've been the sole geoscientist at ACS, so I arrange for peer review of all the research proposals in geochemistry and geology/geophysics, and manage all the funded research grants awarded by the PRF Advisory Board.

The American Petroleum Institute (www.api.org) is the lobbying arm of the petroleum industry, and they do a lot of TV commercials and "white papers" on why America needs the petroleum and natural gas companies."

Robert Dwyer, Ph.D. 1980

Bob just returned from a three-week trip in Asia, where he initiated a major project to assist governments along the length of the Mekong River in developing and adopting water quality standards for copper and other trace metals. In cooperation with local universities, they are beginning metals chemistry and aquatic toxicity studies from the delta in Vietnam upstream into Yunnan Province in China, and ultimately, at the headwaters in Tibet.

His role is as Associate Director for Environment for the Copper Alliance and he also continues work with the US EPA, the US Navy (including Bob Johnston, GSO Ph.D. in 1999), and Battelle (including Carleton Hunt, Marine Scientist at MERL during the '80s) in developing the science for a revision of the US saltwater quality criteria for copper. He's also working with the Alliance's Technology Team to develop new copper alloy materials for use in offshore aquaculture, to help solve some of the problems with current polymer net mesh materials (like predator penetrations and non-native fish escapes).

He wrote this in Tuscany, where he will shortly be participating in a Society

for Experimental Biology Woodstock workshop on comparative animal physiology. He now has projects running on four continents, so he spends a lot of time traveling. In between trips, Kathy and he have fully relocated to Pocasset on Cape Cod, in a "destination" house that their grown kids actually WANT to visit. Both live in Washington State: Tim (34) is a staff marine ecologist at the University of Washington's Friday Harbor Lab; Beth (30) is a mechanical engineer at a division of L'Oreal at present, until her husband Dave defends his dissertation in Structures (C.E.) at UW.

Michael Fine, Ph.D. 1976

Mike wrote, "We had a cool paper on the evolution of superfast sonic muscles that came out in *Frontiers in Zoology*. It may answer a question that has bugged me for decades. The paper was picked up by a creationist web site that said we were clearly wrong and that fish are fish. Kind of got a kick out of that. For more information, go to <http://www.frontiersinzoology.com/content/8/1/31>."

Miles Furnas, M.S. 1975, Ph.D. 1982

Miles wrote about Scott Nixon, "It's very sad to hear of Scott's passing. He was somebody we all very much admired and respected. Please add my respects to the general list, and to Virginia, in particular. We will miss him greatly. I was just adding one of his papers [Nixon, S. W. (1988) Physical energy inputs and the comparative ecology of lake and marine ecosystems. *Limnology and Oceanography*, 33(4) Part 2, 1005-1025.] to a reference list for a paper I've been working on the other day. The classics survive."

Timothy Fox, M.O. 2008

Tim works for the Maryland Department of the Environment in the Environmental Assessment and Standards Program as a Natural Resource Planner.

Alumni News



Toby Garfield, Ph.D. 1990

Toby said that his news is the changes having to do with planning for the next segment of the journey, only right now there is no plan. Maintaining two residences gets very old, very quickly.

He also added, “The news about Scott was very sad. One of my colleagues here remarked, “Scott didn’t publish much, but what he published always had an impact.”

Jason Krumholz, Ph.D. 2012

Jason just completed his Ph.D. and has started a new role as the NOAA fisheries liaison to the Long Island Sound Study. Jason will be working out of Stamford CT, but hopes to continue his stints between the goalposts for the Bay Blades, above.

Benny Loebner, M.S., 1982

Benny said that there is not much new on the work front (which can be considered a blessing). He is finishing his 23rd year as an environmental geologist with the same group of people, even though the company name has changed over the years as companies swallow each heritage company (RUST, Earth Tech, and now AECOM). He has spent the last

year commuting each week to southern California, conducting investigations at Edwards Air Force Base.

His home front is a little more interesting. His son Keith graduated last year from MIT with a B.S. in aero/astro engineering, and is currently pursuing his Ph.D. at Stanford in high temperature plasma physics in the materials engineering department. He and a fellow MIT graduate share an apartment in Palo Alto, just 10 minutes from their house, which is comforting for his wife since he is gone most weeks Monday through Friday.

Their daughter Sarah is entering her junior year at Scripps College in Claremont CA, majoring in Human Biology (biology plus psychology plus sociology).

His wife Pam continues to teach second grade in the local school district at a school just a mile from our house in Los Altos.

Robert Lorens, Ph.D. 1979

He retired from the Naval Oceanographic Office in September 2011. He’s now a full time farmer raising Katahdin sheep on 400 acres in southern Mississippi.

Jamie Maughan, Ph.D. 1986

Told Walter Berry, “Thanks for doing this! I hope you have a succession plan because pretty soon you will be as old as I am.”

Bill McCluskey, M.S. 1980

Wrote, “on the work front, I’ve swapped out my job as Assistant Director for the NATO Research and Technology Agency, and begin work as the Special Advisor to the NATO Chief Scientist on 1 July. Fortunately, that does not entail a move out of Paris - which would cause widespread wailing by wife and daughter. My son Michael is at JMU and more focused on other pursuits, academics, I hope being one. I have one more year here before cycling out. The hunt for another position will begin this fall, an excuse to bring me back through New England where I hope to see lots of old friends.

I managed to pull off a fantasy vacation in May, joining a few other guys on a boat trip to surf the Mentawais in Indonesia. World class waves, almost as good as Point Judith or Monahan’s on a hurricane swell (opposite).

Colleen Mow, M.S. 2003, Ph.D. 2009

Colleen has moved to Houghton, Michigan and starting in the fall of 2012, will be an Assistant Professor at Michigan Technological University in the Department of Geological & Mining Engineering & Sciences.

Faustino L. Orach-Meza, Ph.D. 1978

Greetings from Uganda. My contract with Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project as the National Executive Secretary ended in 2006 before I joined Nkumba University (NU) as a Senior Lecturer in the School of Hospitality and Environment Sciences in September 2006. In December 2009, I was appointed Head of Department for Tourism and Environment Sciences which is now the School of Sciences (SCOS). I was elevated to the highest academic position, a full Professor, in October 2010. My Inaugural Professorial Lecture took place on 11th March 2011 on the topic, “Towards Sus-



Patricia Ritacco, M.S. 1990

Wrote that she works at Christ Church in East Greenwich, Rhode Island (which has nothing to do with oceanography, other than learning more about the One who created all the incredible animals, etc that we study :). Her son, Daniel, is married to a wonderful young woman, Jill, and they have a son (yes, she's a grandma!) - Grey, who is 2 1/2 and just the most wonderful thing in her life! Her daughter, Erika, is still at home.... studying and working.

Jeff Rosen, M.S. 1983, M.S. 1986

Jeff is getting ready to semi retire at least for a few years. He will be starting to work part time in July. He is doing very well here in Scituate Mass, and writes that "Life is good."

Peter Sampou, Ph.D. 1989

Pete wrote, "Well, I have finished my first year at another teaching job (switched schools). I now don't cross

the bridge and stay on Cape with my teaching at Sturgis Charter School in downtown Hyannis. This school has a pretty high standing in the ratings; #1 public school in MA and 46th in the nation (Newsweek) and # 1 in MA and 15th nationally by US News and World Report. It has been a pleasure for me as I teach Intro. Chemistry to all the sophomores and then I have two Environmental Systems and Society IB (International Baccalaureate) classes that I teach students for two years (junior through senior year). Some of my students in the IB class rise to college level aptitude (at least compared to students in my past life at the university level down in Maryland). Family is also good; Rosalie (that fair flower I picked back in 1983 from the GSO gardening crew) is still healthy and is the #2 person at the Cape Cod Organic Farm. Ella, my eldest is into her last year in high school and interned with a

tainability of Renewable Exploited Living Resources." Following the transformation of the former School into SCOS, I was appointed Dean effective from 1st February 2012.

Mary Rapien, Ph.D. 2004

Mary will be joining the full time faculty of Bristol Community College in the fall, as Assistant Professor of Biology.



Alumni News

WHOI artist/illustrator this past spring earning recognition for her artwork that is being shown this summer in the MA State House up in Boston. My youngest, Ari, finished her freshman year at Sturgis West with an accolade for being the top art student in her grade.

I'm still fishing (fin and shell) and eating my catch on a regular basis and am always open for GSO'ers to come for a visit; I can promise a catch from the sea of some kind! Have had the good fortune of bartering beer for oysters these past few years though I also brew my own. Life is good."

Jessica Shaffer, M.S. 1999

Jessica married George Shaffer this year so her new name is Jessica Shaffer (formerly Jessica Ward). She also started designing sterling silver ocean inspired jewelry as Blue Sea Jewels (you can find her on facebook/BlueSeaJewels). Her jewelry can be found at Jamestown Designs and on etsy.com. She is still working for the Naval Undersea Warfare Center studying beaked whale bioacoustics for the Marine Mammal Monitoring on Navy Ranges program.

Terry Smith, M.S. 1980

Terry summed up his career this way: "Consultant, US Dept of Justice, Exxon Valdez oil spill damages, 1990 Fishery Management Coordinator, NMFS

GSO alumnus Robinson W. Fullweiler (Wally) just received a 2012 Sloan Research Fellowship ((\$50K). She earned an M.S. in 2003 and PhD in 2007 working with Scott Nixon. This is the first year that these fellowships were open to applicants in marine science.

Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Woods Hole. 1993-2005 NMFS liaison and program director for fisheries, National Sea Grant Office, Silver Spring, MD, 2005-present"

Stephen Smith, M.S. 2010

Stephen moved from Baltimore, MD to Raleigh, NC. The move is a result of his decision to leave his position as an environmental scientist in Baltimore in order to pursue a doctorate in geology at North Carolina State University this upcoming fall semester.

David K. Stevenson, Ph.D. 1976

David is still working in the Habitat Conservation Division at the NOAA/NMFS NE Regional Office in Gloucester MA, living there during the week and going home to Gardiner, Maine for the weekends. He works with the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, making sure that all the fishery management actions in the NW Atlantic (Maine to North Carolina) comply with the statutory requirements to "minimize the adverse impacts of fishing on essential fish habitat (EFH) to the extent practicable." He spends a lot of time working with the Councils to develop new EFH designations and lately has become involved with the Councils, the NE Fishery Science Center, and NOAA's Deep-Sea Coral Research and Technology Program in developing coral protection measures and planning research activities on the outer continental shelf and slope on Georges Bank and in the Mid-Atlantic. He enjoys his job so much that he may never retire!

Sandra Sutherland, M.S. 1996

Sandy is still working for NOAA in Woods Hole, as a Research Fishery Biologist. She broken her ankle in 2008 but it has healed quite well, and she's

not limited in what she can do (well, she never wanted to take up running anyway!). She's making new friends and doing well.

Melissa Swanson, M.S. 1997

Melissa bought her first home last year, a condo in the Seattle suburb of Bothell, an easy 10 minutes from Nancy Friday and her family. She's still paddling and racing outrigger canoes, and was recently voted in as club president for Seattle Outrigger Canoe Club.

Alina Szmant, Ph.D. 1980

Alina remembered Scott Nixon: "I was in his and Candice's lab in the mid-1970s and he became a good friend / mentor over the years although I didn't see him all that often recently. He gave a seminar about his Nile/Mediterranean work here at UNCW at my invitation back in early 2000s. I haven't seen Scott for a few years, but we had dinner together at Mike Pilon's house a few years back and he was as sharp and special as always. Thanks for letting us all know."

Robert Thunell, Ph.D. 1978

He has just finished his 33rd year at the University of South Carolina and is currently serving as the Senior Associate Dean for Science. For the past 15 years he has been one of the PIs for the Cariaco Ocean Time Series, located offshore Venezuela.

Edward Van Vleet, Ph.D. 1978

Edward wrote, "I received my PhD at GSO in 1978 (under Jim Quinn), and then Post-Doc'd at Scripps for 1-1/2 years with Dr. Peter Williams. I became an Assistant Professor in the College of Marine Science (CMS) at the University of South Florida in 1979. I am currently a Professor and Director of Academic

Programs and Student Affairs at CMS-USF. After 33 years at USF, I will be retiring in August 2012. It's been a great ride, and I have URI to thank for my success.

Michael Prager, 1984

Juanita and he moved to Portland two years ago, after he retired from NOAA, and they are enjoying it. On their occasional visits to RI, family needs have always taken precedence, so he never got to look up Scott. When he came to GSO in 1979, hoping to study Biological Oceanography but with no background in biology, he canvassed the faculty, and Scott gave him a job. He wrote, "I remember his penetrating intelligence and exceptional humanity. I miss the thought that I could visit him someday."

Mary Baker-Wiley, M.S. 1986

Mary's only news is that she will have two children at URI next year. Henry will be a senior majoring in Marine Affairs and Frank will be a freshman. Frank will be on the URI football team, reporting to camp August 12th :).

Ewa (Eva) Wlodarczyk, M.S. 1988

Eva is still a free-lance translator of scientific literature, working from home. Her latest achievement was crossing the Atlantic in April-May 2011 from Bermuda to the Island of Faial (The Azores) on a 39 ft Shannon with a findacrew skipper who didn't reef on time. She's still looking for more sailing opportunities, but of a more relaxed and enjoyable kind. She is over 50 and said, "for god's sake. I don't need to prove anything to anybody anymore!"

She also said of Scott, "I met Scott Nixon at the personal level only once while studying at GSO. It happened at Veronica's house, at the big party (does stuffed cabbage ring a bell?). He was a good man with lots of compassion. Why do the good ones have to die young?" ■

In Memoriam

Professor Gordon T. Wallace, Jr., an internationally-recognized geochemist whose work explained the processes controlling the fate and effects of trace metals in the marine environment, died suddenly on August 7, 2010. Professor Wallace's intelligence, integrity, honesty and passion for new challenges inspired his colleagues, students, and other young scientists for over 35 years. He was perhaps proudest of his mentorship of graduate students, and reveled in his students' many successes after earning their degrees.



Gordon started his research on trace metals during his Ph.D. studies at the University of Rhode Island GSO under the guidance of Professor Robert A. Duce. He then accepted a post-doc research scientist position at Skidaway Institute of Oceanography in Savannah, GA and the project manager for the NSF-funded CEPEX program located on Vancouver Island, BC. In 1982, Gordon became the founding member of the Environmental Science Program, the University of Massachusetts Boston's first doctoral program. Over his career Gordon expanded his research program with extensive analytical and modeling work with radioisotopic tracers in order to quantify the rates at which metals are transported in the region's rivers, Boston Harbor, Massachusetts Bay and the Gulf of Maine. He developed novel methods for measuring aqueous trace metals, and novel numerical models of trace metal transport. Although retiring in December 2009, he continued his active research program right up to his death.

Gordon was a leader at the interface of policy and science, advising Secretaries of Environmental Affairs on issues related to the cleanup of Boston Harbor, impacts of the new offshore sewage outfall on MA Bay, and sources of mercury contamination to the regions rivers and coastal waters. He was the founding chair of the Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine and was active in NEERS, ASLO, and AGU. Gordon was honored for his many service accomplishments with the UMass Presidential Award for Service.

Gordon always had an open-door policy with his colleagues and students, welcoming questions and a good debate that everyone knew he would probably win. He is greatly missed by all, and especially by his wife, Debbie, of 41 years, two daughters and their spouses, two grandchildren, and their Newfoundland puppy.



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In Memoriam

A Brief Review of a Full Life GSO's Scott W. Nixon

Veronica M. Berounsky, Ph.D, 1990

The oceanographic and coastal ecology community is strong and close so by now you have probably heard the sad news that we have had a death in the family: Dr. Scott W. Nixon died of an apparent heart attack on the evening of Monday, May 21, 2012. On the previous Friday, May 18, Scott had attended the GSO graduation and reception (see photo 2) and many of us talked to him there. Despite some previous heart problems, he seemed to be in good health, was working actively as usual, and his death is still a shock to us all.

Scott came to GSO in September of 1969 as a research associate (see photo 1), having been recruited by GSO faculty member Nelson Marshall and they worked together on several projects, including one in Malaysia. GSO Dean John Knauss saw Scott's potential and made him an assistant professor as soon as Scott received his Ph.D. in Botany (Ecology) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1970. Scott was a couple months shy of 27 at the time! Soon Scott accepted his first Ph.D. candidate, Patricia Kremer, and then his next student Jim Kremer. The Master of Science's candidate, Stephen Hale, was Scott's first student to receive a degree in 1974 and then both of the Kremers received their Ph.D. degrees in 1975. In July of 1975 Scott received tenure at GSO and was promoted to associate professor. In July of 1980, Scott was promoted to full professor. Scott remained at GSO for the rest of his life but he continued to take on new roles. In March 1984 he became Coordinator of the Rhode Island Sea Grant College Program and in 1986 Scott became the Director and continued in that position until 2000. He often mentioned that one of the best parts of being Sea Grant Director was being able to fund people to investigate an idea so they could gather evidence for a larger proposal. In 2004 he was appointed UNESCO/Cousteau Chair in Coastal Ecology and Global Assessment and was still in that position at the time of his death. In Scott's own words, his area of specialization throughout his professional life was coastal ecology, with emphasis on estuaries, lagoons, and wetlands; ecosystem-level experiments using mesocosms; comparative and historical ecology; and numerical simulation models. Despite, his untimely death, Scott was an active and vibrant member of the local and international scientific community for over four decades.

Scott was respected worldwide for his knowledge and his studies of how coastal and estuarine ecosystems work. He investigated ecosystems that were as far away as Kenya and Malaysia

Too Short:

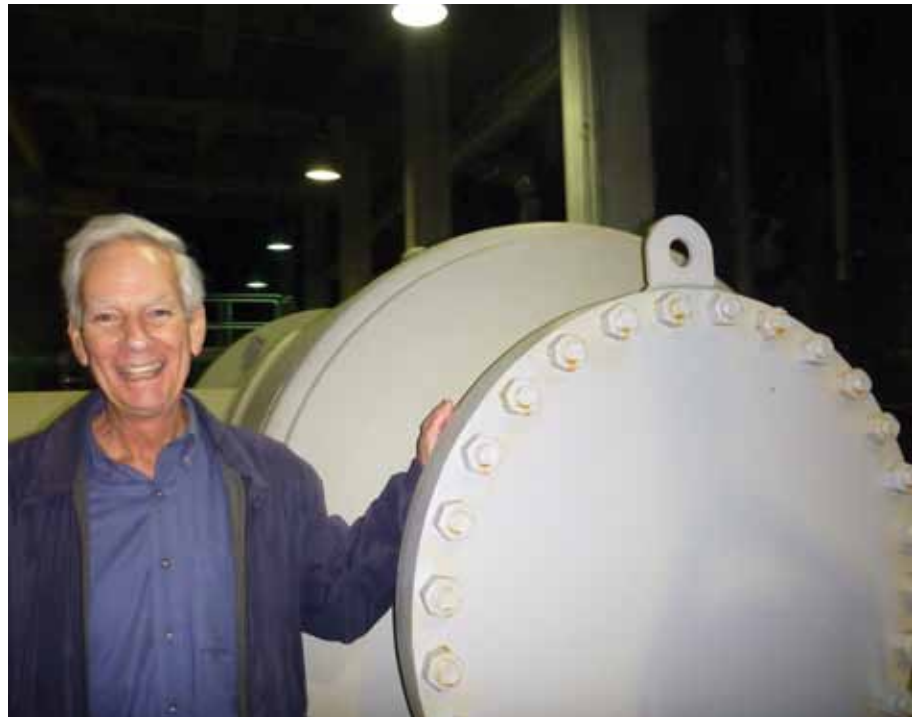
and as close as Rhode Island. He studied or served on the panels investigating ecosystems and their problems that were as varied as the lagoons of Venice, the restoration of the Everglades, algal blooms in the Potomac Estuary, the fisheries of Egypt's Nile, and nutrients in the Massachusetts Bay Wastewater Outfall. He was a member of the National Research Council (NRC)'s Ocean Studies Board, a national associate of the National Academies of Science; the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography, and was very active in the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation, previously serving as co-editor-in-chief of their journal, *Estuaries and Coasts* for many years. Narragansett Bay and the R.I. Coastal Ponds (Lagoons) were his professional "home base" and currently he served on the Scientific Advisory Committee of the R.I. Bays, Rivers, and Watersheds Coordination Team and the R.I. EPSCoR Steering Committee.

In addition to his huge amount of research and numerous professional talks, Scott also taught official classes at GSO. These were not your standard lecture classes, but were discussion-based and usually required the students to research and present a scientific paper or research topic. Scott asked probing questions and also chimed in with facts and knowledge about whatever ecosystem was under discussion. For the past several years, Scott and Candace Oviatt co-taught a course on the "Ecology of Narragansett Bay." As part of that, there was a field trip on April 5, 2012 to the Fields Point Wastewater Treatment Facility to help understand inputs to the Bay. Photo 3 is of this class, taken underground in the "pump room" where Providence's newly completed 3-mile long combined sewer overflow (CSO) tunnel ends and where water is pumped to the facility. In photo 4, Scott posed at the very end of the tunnel and at the time we joked that he might need it to add it to one of his talks about the Bay and being at "the end of the line."

Over the years, Scott gave numerous talks ranging from "Seminars over Beer (SOB)" in the Mosby Center at GSO, to invited talks at institutions and many talks at the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) and other professional societies, to this past April when he was the plenary speaker at the International Association for Landscape Ecology, and he gave what we now know was his last scientific talk. In 1992, he gave a lecture called "Could Verrazzano See His Toes?" when he received the B.H. Ketchum Award for outstanding coastal research from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Scott



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A Tribute To and Remembrance Of Scott Nixon, Our Fearless Leader

*Lindsey Fields, Leanna Heffner, Brita Jessen,
Courtney Schmidt, and Laura Windecker*

When news that Scott Nixon, our “Fearless Leader,” adviser, mentor, and friend had suddenly passed away, it felt as if a giant hole had opened up in the Earth. But with the seemingly impossible reality that a world now existed without Scott in it, we have found that in fact, Scott is still in the world everywhere we look. In books and journals, in his ideas and revelations, in the hearts and minds of his friends and family, and in the legacy he left behind in his work and in his students.

The five of us that formed the cohort of Scott’s most recent students, Leanna Heffner, Laura Windecker, Courtney Schmidt, Brita Jessen, and Lindsey Fields, wanted to remember and commemorate Scott together, in the spirit of family and comradeship that, with Scott, we have always reveled in. The following vignettes are our way of doing so – to celebrate the mentor we loved and respected, and to honor the impact he had on our lives.

As all GSO Alumni know, when conducting a research cruise or field experiment it can be nearly impossible to set aside time for quiet thought. So this day I have brought my laptop to my field research site in the heart of a mangrove forest to remember Scott Nixon while sediment collars “breathe” before being measured for carbon dioxide flux and two indefatigable undergraduate students maneuver the tangle of mangrove roots to take chlorophyll samples.

Like any relationship that spans several years, the connection between advisors and students continuously evolves. From his four decades of mentoring experience, Scott proudly claimed he could write a step-by-step manual of the graduate student’s path: This is the point where you think you don’t belong in this field or program, then you come around. This is the point where you despair that all your efforts are wasted and the data are meaningless. This is the point where you take another look and say, “Huh, that’s interesting...” This is the point where you have made an achievement, a publication or an award, and you feel like you have something to contribute. This is the point where you graduate; Scott makes a point to address you as Doctor; and you have taken your place within the Nixon academic family tree. This is the point where Scott puts in a phone call to ask if you can spare some time for one of his current students. You know he would do the same for yours.

My four years as a Ph.D. student with Scott barely took us beyond the first step of the graduate student’s path. But my peers and I know we will be guided by the examples of our academic kin and the way that Scott counseled them through

updated this landmark talk, discussing the impact of historical and present nutrient inputs to Narragansett Bay and the resulting water clarity in the Bay, and presented it in April. As always, Scott took a complex scientific issue and discussed it in terms understandable to most everyone.

Scott was my major professor and served also as such for 36 other GSO students and four present students. He was on the committee of many GSO students, and mentored one post doc and a slew of lab technicians. I actually started in the Nixon lab in 1979 as then-student Jonathan Garber’s lab tech and I remember how inspiring Scott was. Scott continued to be a source of advice, scientific expertise, and “whole picture thinking” for many of us through his last day in the office. I am tremendously grateful that I had the opportunity to work with Scott and his entire lab.

A memorial service was held in honor of Scott on a brilliant sunny morning, Friday June 8th, at The Towers, a historic stone building that spans Ocean Road in Narragansett, R.I. It was attended by approximately 200 people, and we could look out over Narragansett Bay as we listened to speakers talk about different aspects of Scott’s life. The morning’s schedule was introduced and moderated by Stephen Olsen and speakers included Scott’s son, Carter Nixon, speaking on Scott as a father, Wally Fulweiler speaking on Scott as an advisor, Michael Pilson speaking on Scott as a friend and GSO colleague, and Walter Boynton speaking on Scott as a friend and colleague beyond GSO. This was followed by stories of Scott by anyone who wished to speak. The talks were a blend of memories and humor that helped us appreciate how full Scott’s life was. Scott also had an active life outside of work. For example, he designed his second home in Nova Scotia, loved to walk on trails and paths (particularly along stone walls), and was also a doting grandfather to three granddaughters. Scott’s daughter, Beth Nixon, provided the perfect ending to the memorial with a reading from Thoreau’s *Walden*.

There will be several opportunities to continue to celebrate Scott’s life. At GSO, there will be a scientific symposium in August 2013 in honor of Scott’s 70th birthday. There will be a symposium in honor of Scott on this coming Oct. 11 at the New England Estuarine Research Society (NEERS) meeting on Block Island, and several dedicated sessions at CERF 2013 in November in San Diego, CA.

To honor Scott’s lifelong and broad contributions to the knowledge and stewardship of our coasts and estuaries, his family asks that contribution be made to the Scott W. Nixon Memorial Fund at the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF). See www.erf.org for more details. Scott was a long-time supporter, member and leader of CERF. To honor his service, CERF will use all funds contributed in memory of him to support student participation in CERF meetings and events,

such as its biennial conferences. Any student, presenting or not presenting, will be eligible to apply for a scholarship to attend any CERF conference, workshop or other such meeting. Alternatively, contributions can be made to Trustom Pond National Wildlife Refuge, a place Scott loved to walk: <http://www.fws.gov/refuges/profiles/index.cfm?id=53545>

A website has been put together by Scott's family and students for information and tributes: <http://scottwnixon.blogspot.com>. Also, the GSO website has a section on Scott: <http://www.gso.uri.edu/narragansett-bay-campus/passing-scott-nixon>.

As one of the speakers mentioned at Scott's memorial service, there is a folk saying that "you are not truly gone until no one speaks your name anymore." Because of Scott's remarkable intellect and willingness to share his expertise with others, that will not happen for many, many years—if at all.

The statement below is from Alan Desbonnet, Interim Director of R.I. Sea Grant, and I think one cannot better describe Scott and his influence so I include this verbatim:

"Early in his career at GSO, Scott pushed the envelope of science—using Narragansett Bay as the laboratory—by employing mesocosms to measure respiration and production at a community level. This began a long and detailed exploration of Narragansett Bay, particularly with regard to nutrients and their impacts on Bay ecology.

While his findings helped define our understanding of marine ecosystems locally, Scott applied his knowledge at broader scales, too, exploring marine ecosystems around the world, comparing and contrasting them to shape a global view that he then used to challenge himself to think in new ways and to challenge the scientific dogma of the times.

The list of significant accomplishments and accolades for Scott would go on for pages, though he would humbly tell us they were based on nothing more than the observations of a modest, inquisitive marine ecologist who was building upon the work of others who really deserve the credit.

Scott also was the director of Rhode Island Sea Grant from 1984 through 2000, during which time he built a robust yet diverse program, all the while continuing a tradition of excellence in scientific research. Rhode Island Sea Grant's indebtedness for his building and leaving behind a rock-solid organization focused on making marine research understandable and usable in the decision-making process goes beyond what words can express.

Because of his thoughtful and challenging nature, Scott played a significant role in the lives of many, many graduate students who have since gone on to grand careers in the sciences, where they continue his tradition of exploring new avenues of thought and understanding.

At his passing, a gaping hole is rent in the field of estuarine ecology; the void left here in Rhode Island is tremendous."

their trials and achievements. I am grateful for Scott's network of colleagues, friends, and former students who have taken on the charge of leading us through. Even here in Puerto Rico, a thousand miles from the desk-side chair in Scott's office that was offered to me so often, I can feel his counsel and experience charting my way.

Brito

Through the six years I knew Scott, he always reminded me that I didn't take the easy road to anything, but I always got where I needed to be and I was a better person for the journey. Under his guidance and support, I learned that I could survive a lot - rejected research proposals, being frustrated by data, working towards my Ph.D., and so much more.

Scott and I often talked about family. It took him a few years to realize that I am an only child, like him. Soon after, through discussions we would have in the lab while I was processing samples, we realized we shared a very strong bond - our childhoods were quite similar. And then he knew the adviser I needed, and he became that adviser. He understood my independence, and knew that when I needed him, I'd move Heaven and Earth to find him. I didn't need day-to-day encouragement, but support when seas got rough. He knew I needed confidence in myself and my abilities as a scientist. One of our last conversations was Scott telling me that our next challenge was to make me believe that I belonged in science, that I had the intelligence and drive to be successful. I never found the words to say that knowing he was behind me, guiding me when I needed it, means more to me than the Ph.D. I am working towards. The confidence he had in me was more sustaining than he'd ever know. And now I'm steering my own ship through rough seas.

I'm learning to live with the pain and the hole his death has left in me. At this point, the pain is not any less, it feels more natural. And when I forget it, I get worried, like a child who momentarily can't find his blanket. The panic subsides when I find him there, pressing me to complete challenges and take on new ones. It's his confidence in me that enables me to keep going.

Country

I've been struggling to write this piece for many weeks, because attempting to capture Scott, even just a bit, in a few paragraphs feels like an insurmountable task. I think one of the reasons for this is the many different roles he played for me - mentor, sounding board, advice-giver, motivator, and leader (to name a few). One of my favorite things about Scott was the way he treated his lab like a family, always keeping track of his former students and forming bonds between different cohorts of lab mates. Having met many of his students, I've noticed that each one of us could give a slightly different account of the person they knew. This is because Scott was, in a way, a chameleon; he adapted to each of us and mentored us in the specific way that we, as individuals, needed.

For me, Scott was a rare kind of mentor...one who gave you the privilege of making your own mistakes, and had endless patience with you while you made them. He knew when to give me space, and when I needed to be pushed. He always saw the best in me, even when I didn't see it in myself. Part of seeing the best in his students meant treating all of us with the utmost respect and trust. Scott never questioned our judgment, always encouraged us to take the lead during field and lab work, and tenaciously supported all of our endeavors. And somehow, Scott managed to be this inspirational, incomparable advisor; all while convincing his students on any given day to spread around and photograph horse manure in the name of science...yet another thing that only Scott Nixon could accomplish.

It is because of Scott's unwavering confidence in my ability and his uncanny talent for knowing exactly what help I needed (sometimes even before I did) that I feel prepared for what lies ahead. I have always strived for a grin and a "well done, Lindsey," because I admired Scott both as a brilliant scientist and a mentor who genuinely cared about me. I will continue to strive for that smile as if he were still here cheering me on for the rest of my career.



When I first joined Scott's lab 6 years ago, I knew that this was a person I wanted to impress – someone whose respect I wanted to gain. Yes, admittedly a part of me was mesmerized by Scott's academic and scientific prestige. But with Scott, there was more to it. After only a few interactions together, I could tell that Scott was a good person and a great mentor – with integrity, high standards, warmth and a tremendous amount of character. He was someone full of "greatness", but it was clear that he cared deeply about his students and how they fared academically, and more importantly, in life. Six years later, and I like to think that to some degree, I made Scott proud. And that means the world to me.

Through these years together as mentor and student, we've seen each other through some major highs and lows. When I hit an extremely low point in school a few years ago, another person may have given up on me. But not Scott. He took it all in stride – with grace and kindness, but with a firm hand to give me guidance. Scott never left my side. Through all the challenges and triumphs of graduate school, Scott always managed to strike a balance between brutal honesty and holding me to a high standard, while giving me a wealth of support. "I'm a big Leanna Heffner fan", he used to say (a common Scott-ism that he loved to repeat to his students). His unwavering support is something that will never leave me. And when Scott went through tough times himself, it meant the world to me and to the rest of us Nixon students to know that our care and support, and the daily chats, teasings, head scratchings, mutual grumblings, and celebrations we shared together were, in large part, what kept him going through it all.

Scott was always the proud parent with his students, and he loved to "bask in the reflected light of our successes". I wonder if Scott ever realized that for all that we gave him, he gave us back so much more. He gave us leadership and guidance, wisdom and knowledge, humility and grace, laughter and comradeship, accountability and integrity, support and encouragement, and friendship and love. Though a part of me feels cheated to have lost him so early in what I had hoped to be very long friendship and mentorship, I am extremely grateful for the time I did have. Scott will always be a part of me. I miss him tremendously.



In the weeks since Scott's passing, I have found myself deeply saddened -- but also feeling incredibly grateful to have been one of Scott's students.

Being in Scott's lab was like being in a kind of safe haven where one had the space to make mistakes, to learn an incredible amount, and to grow as a scientist. Scott was very professional – but also cared deeply about the well-being of his students. Ever the ecologist, he felt it was incredibly important to "understand his animals" (i.e. students). While Scott was a brilliant scientist, he was not an intellectual bully; I always felt that my ideas were worthwhile and mattered. He respected his students, pushed us, and treated us like colleagues. We knew he would be in our corner no matter what – and that made us fiercely loyal to him.

These days, when I think of Scott, I see him on the 3rd floor of the Coastal Institute Building – wearing some kind of blue khaki pants and a blue or purple-ish plaid shirt – on the phone, walking between all of our offices and the lab, keeping so many balls in the air, always trying to find a few quiet minutes to give a manuscript, a proposal, or one of his students, his undivided attention. Some of my best memories are walking into Scott's office to ask a simple question and him saying with a grin, "I just learned something that I think will make your tail wag..." This was one of his favorite expressions that invariably spurred a conversation about some neat aspect of Narragansett Bay, or ecology in general, or some particular aspect of my research.

The legacy that Scott leaves, at least to me, includes thinking of scientific problems broadly – and presenting those ideas both humbly and clearly both in writing and in presentations. Scott was a curious person who steadfastly followed his interests wherever they led him. He treated people with respect and tried to navigate sticky situations with care and humanity. His advising philosophy was to treat his students as colleagues-in-training and pushed us not only to work on our thesis research, but also to explore other interesting projects; he also encouraged us to start reviewing papers and writing proposals as early as possible. Not just during our time at GSO, but afterwards as well, he was always checking in, always available for last-minute advice. He was a true mentor.



Olsen Honored in Spain and Rhode Island

Todd McLeish

Stephen Olsen, director of the Coastal Resources Center at the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography, returned from Spain last week where he accepted an award for his pioneering efforts at coastal management in Latin America. This honor follows on the heels of a lifetime achievement award he received last month from Rhode Island Sea Grant for similar efforts in Rhode Island.

"Coastal management is really about social justice," Olsen said. "It's about how natural resources and access to those resources get allocated. It's about how to institute a stewardship ethic and not just rape, pillage and plunder our coastlines."

Olsen joined the Coastal Resources Center in 1972 to help Rhode Island's newly formed Coastal Resources Management Council develop policies and plans for managing the state's coastlines. He became the Center's director in 1975. The initial plan became one of the first approved by the federal government, and a revised plan adopted in 1985 remains in force today.

"That second plan may be my biggest achievement because it forced us to go through the state and federal approval process again and rethink it to make sure it would function effectively," he said. "It included a scheme for zoning the waters of the state, and on the basis of that, controlling the degree of development that occurs along the shoreline. That proved to

be a successful strategy, and it's the reason why our coastline looks very much the same today as it did 30 years ago."

Olsen led the team that prepared a special area management plan (SAMP) for Rhode Island's salt ponds, an early expression of the ecosystem approach to the management of lagoons (salt ponds) and their watersheds that resulted in the development of collaborative management agreements by the Coastal Council, towns and several government agencies. That success, and special area management plans for six other parts of the state, led to last year's Ocean SAMP, the first federally approved marine spatial plan.

"Here in Rhode Island, Olsen has pioneered the development of the state's coastal program, which has resulted in systemic changes in the way the state has managed and regulated its rivers, lagoons, and especially Narragansett Bay. No other individual or organization has had such a broad and sustained track record in this field," said Barry Costa-Pierce, Rhode Island Sea Grant director, in presenting Olsen with the lifetime achievement award.

When the U.S. Agency for International Development saw that the problems occurring along coastlines around the world were similar to those being addressed in the United States, it turned to Olsen to transfer what had been learned to developing countries. An initial four-year coastal management program Olsen led in Ecuador, Sri Lanka and Thailand was

renewed for 10 years and was followed by a 10-year effort in Mexico, Indonesia and Tanzania. The Coastal Resources Center has received more than \$75 million in USAID funding for these and other projects.

The award Olsen received in Spain recognized him and a Brazilian colleague as having had the greatest influence on the practice of coastal management in Latin America and the Iberian peninsula. The honor was bestowed at a symposium hosted by Ibermar, the leading coastal management organization in Spain.

Olsen, who also serves as president of EcoCostas, a non-governmental organization he formed in Ecuador in 1995, said that while the coastal issues are similar from country to country, the context in which those issues play out differ radically.

"In much of Latin America, coastal people are living in great poverty, the institutions of government often don't work, and the goods and services flowing from healthy coastal ecosystems are rapidly being depleted," Olsen said. "It is much the same in Africa and, to a lesser degree, here in the U.S."

"My main message is that the practice of coastal management is above all a social process, which is quite different from those who say that it is the business of government or only concerns the application of science to the problem," he added. ■



Dr. James A. Yoder, M.S. Oceanography URI 1974, Ph.D. Oceanography URI 1979, has been named a fellow of The Oceanography Society "for his innovative and visionary application of satellite ocean color technologies to interdisciplinary oceanography and his extraordinary service to oceanography." Yoder, currently the Vice President for Academic Programs and Dean at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, was on the faculty of URI's Graduate School of Oceanography from 1989–2005, serving as Interim Dean from 2000–2001. The Oceanography Society Fellows Program recognizes individuals who have "attained eminence in oceanography through their outstanding contributions to the field of oceanography or its applications during a substantial period of years."

***Endeavor* supports research in Gulf of Mexico & Bahamas**

Tom Glennon, Interim Director of Marine Operations

The R/V *Endeavor* returned to her home port on October 6 after a very successful two-month trip to the Gulf of Mexico and the Bahamian Islands. The following descriptions, highlights of EN 515 and EN 517 (EN 516 was a transit), are from the PIs of these cruises.

Dr. Ray Highsmith, University of Southern Mississippi

Cruise EN515 was the first water-column cruise of the ECO-GIG consortium, which is funded by the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative. The central research questions focused on the impact of oil and gas on the water column and benthic communities of the Gulf of Mexico. Using cold seeps as natural analogs of human oil releases, and our cruise focused on sampling three such seeps as well as a control site and a site with persistent surface slicks of oil.

Our station operations centered on a combination of hydrographic and water column sampling with a CTD/rosette system. We also carried out MOCNESS tows to sample zoo-

plankton, and used a floating sediment trap array to sample particles sinking out of the mixed layer. We used an MC-800 multicorer to collect sediment samples for experimental and geochemical characterization. At the start of the cruise, we deployed a time-series mooring comprised of two sediment traps, a camera system, and an ADCP at OC26, a station south of the Deepwater Horizon site.

We accomplished the primary goals of our research program by sampling a total of six stations in the Northern Gulf of Mexico. The geochemical, biological, and molecular samples we collected, and the suite of experiments we carried out, will provide us with our first assessment of the ways that oil and gas released at depth enter the pelagic food web. Although we were able to sample our key sites, the loss of time due to Tropical Storm Debby cost us the opportunity to explore new sites. On balance, this was a very successful cruise.

Dr. William Johns, University of Miami

The EN 517 cruise studied the flow regimes in the Straits of Florida and in the Antilles Current and Deep Western Boundary Current east of the Bahamas. The RAPID/MOCHA program is a joint research effort between the National Oceanography Centre (Southampton, U.K.), the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science (RSMAS), and NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML). The objective of this program is to continuously observe the strength and structure of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation at 26.5°N using a trans-basin observing system. The objectives included CTD/LADCP stations, drifter deployments, and mooring recoveries/deployments involving both tall current meter moorings and inverted echo sounders. The ship provided excellent support for all of these activities. ■

