

August 1998

New Millennium Observatory Comes to the Public Wing

Thanks to the concerted efforts of Bob Embley and Andra Bobbitt of the NOAA VENTS Program, Vicki Osis and Bill Hanshumaker of Extension Sea Grant, the NeMO 1998 Cruise will be made available to the public and school students. The mission of NeMO is to establish a geophysical, geochemical and microbial monitoring and sampling program on an active segment of the mid-ocean ridge system to examine the relationship between seafloor magma movement, faulting, and changes in the biologic, chemical and physical properties of the subsurface biosphere. The site selected for this "observatory" is on the Axial Volcano, the most active site on the Juan de Fuca Ridge, a key study site for the VENTS group.

Andra Bobbitt works on NeMO Web page.

There has been a great deal of public interest and many "hits" on the NOAA VENTS Web site about their activities on the Juan de Fuca, and Bob Embley wanted to make access to this information easier for the public. He had seen the University of Washington's REVEL Project that placed a group of teachers on a research vessel to develop curriculum on cutting-edge science and later give workshops using that curriculum. Working on a smaller scale, Bob contacted Vicki Osis to set up a similar program for this summer's NeMO cruise. Vicki recruited two Oregon teachers, Eugene Williamson and Mike Goodrich, to work with the scientists and prepare a similar program.

Gene will be going out on the NOAA *R/V Ronald Brown* and Mike Goodrich will stay ashore and serve as the link with the public. Gene will send two images a day from the ship to Mike, who will collect questions from the public for Gene to answer. There will be a special station in the Public Wing projecting these images with collections of VENTS minerals and self-guided activities on plate tectonics and forms for questions to be submitted. The movie "Fire Under the Sea" about this undersea research will be shown in the auditorium and the computers in the Personal Resource Room will default to the NeMO Web page. Daily dispatches from Gene with the photos will begin August 24 and continue until September 20.

You can check out the ever-expanding Web page at newport.pmel.noaa.gov/nemo_cruise98.

Kate Stafford Returns from Maldives

Where in the world do people chop up beached whales, place the pieces on the tin roofs of their homes, and collect the fat that melts off the pieces for fuel? If you guessed the Maldives, you were

right. The Maldives are islands to the southeast of the tip of India, across from Sri Lanka. Kate Stafford learned many interesting things about the Maldives on her recent cruise there with the National Marine Fisheries Service Southwest Fisheries Science Center. She was along on the cruise to record the calls of pygmy blue whales, while other scientists were doing biopsies, in the hopes of determining if pygmy blue whales are a separate species or just a sub-species of blue whales.

Although the weather was not very good with lots of squalls and rough seas, the team had 267 sightings of just about every species of tropical whale: sperm, beaked, Brydes, pilot and blue, but only 4 of them were pygmy blue whales. The Maldivian boat's maximum speed was 7 knots and the owner didn't want to stay out overnight, so Kate and the crew spent nights moored beside inhabited or uninhabited coral atolls. The Maldivians subsist on a diet of tuna and rice, with occasional canned vegetables because there is no arable land available. They use the beached whale oil for fuel because there are few trees on the atolls. Most Maldivians have been fishermen, but now many are working in the tourism industry, necessitating long periods away from their homes.

One of the highlights was being there for the Muslim Eid Festival, which marks the end of the month-long fast of Ramadan. There were parties and everyone had new clothes. Several planeloads of pilgrims fly from the Maldives to Mecca every year, despite their small population. Kate will long remember the sound of the early morning call to prayer.

Bradley Robbins, Detective

Bradley Robbins joined EPA in March of this year as an ecologist; specifically an estuarine landscape ecologist. Brad is using historical data to decipher large-scale spatial patterns. He uses old aerial photographs from a variety of sources to determine shoreline development and its impact on estuaries. These impacts can come from urban development, oyster farming, forest practices, fallow agricultural land, timber mills, dairy farms and others. Because he is dependent on photographs, he will be looking back no more than 50 years.

Brad earned his B.S. from the University of Missouri, Columbia; his M.S. in Zoology from the University of Auckland where he studied marine invertebrates in rocky reefs; and his Ph.D. from the University of Southern Florida, with work on hermit crabs and gastropods. This has been a big year for him as he completed his doctorate, accepted this EPA position, moved to Newport and is starting a family. Brad and his wife Mindy are expecting their first child in late August or early September.

For recreation, Brad and Mindy enjoy the outdoors (even if it is a lot colder here than Florida), fishing, golf, beach combing and day hikes. True Buccaneer fans, they are exploring the possibility of learning to root for the nearest professional football team, the Seattle Seahawks, instead.

NMFS Continues to Expand

Julie Keister has joined the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center staff as a research assistant for Bill Peterson. Julie works with identifying and mapping the distribution and abundance of zooplankton off the northern California and Oregon coast. She is comparing data from current surveys being taken aboard the *R/V Wecoma* with information from the late '60s and early '70s. The data comes from trips from San Francisco, California to Newport, Oregon. Julie earned her B.S. in biology from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her M.S. in fisheries ecology from the University of Maryland. She comes to Newport most recently from Seattle. Julie enjoys hiking, gardening, cooking, skiing and antique shopping.

Cascade Sorte by her microscope

Cascade Sorte is a summer intern who is also working with Bill Peterson and Bob Emmett. Instead of zooplankton, she is studying the distribution of sand and Dungeness crab larvae off the Oregon coast. Samples were taken every two weeks between January and August 1997 from a spot five miles off the Oregon coast. This involves counting larvae under the microscope from samples and determining the species and life history stage of each. Cascade is planning on a future in research and is using the internship to sample different kinds. She will be a senior at Whitman College in Washington and spent a term abroad in France. She enjoys camping, hiking, travel, tennis and plays the piano.

Angela Lawton

Another musician, Angela Lawton, is working for NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center this summer. Angela has completed her B.S. from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, with two majors: Biology and Music Education. This eclectic combination enables her to teach music or explore biology. She plays the trombone and has taught 5th and 8th grade band. She would love to play with a group here in Newport, if anyone has connections! She would also enjoy giving trombone lessons. Her research work here is with Cliff Ryer and his studies of predator-prey interactions in low light. This means she counts lots of brine shrimp, puts them into the tank and then counts how many are left at the end of the experiment. In the fall she will be going to graduate school on a Rotary scholarship at the University of New South Wales (Sydney, Australia) to study tropical biology. Her swim team skills will get quite a workout in sunny Australia.

Paul Will

NOAA VENTS Adds New Faces

Paul Will joined the VENTS program in May and works as a data analyst for Chris Fox, locating earthquakes and whale calls. He comes to the Center after twenty years in Alaska, although he worked in this area 22 years ago as a tree planter. He earned his B.S. in biology from the University of Alaska and worked for six years in intertidal studies with the Institute of Marine Science in Fairbanks. At one time he worked with Gayle Hansen.

His wife Beth is looking forward to teaching and they have two children, Forrest and Mika. For fun Paul enjoys surfing, wind surfing, mountain biking, skiing and photography. In his spare time he volunteers at the Oregon Coast Aquarium.

Jonathan Klay

Jonathan Klay has also been with NOAA since May and will be replacing John Graham as systems administrator. Jonathan is a NOAA commissioned officer and is off the NOAA *R/V Rudy*, stationed out of Norfolk, Virginia. This was the NOAA ship that located the wreckage of TWA Flight 800 that crashed off Long Island two years ago. He earned his B.S. from Southern Illinois University and his M.S. in Geology from the University of South Florida, though he was originally from Washington. His wife Fredricka is Swedish and enjoys translation work and teaching. Jonathan plays bass guitar, enjoys hiking, gardening and travel.

Christi Sheridan Keeps Sea Grant Leader Afloat

In the summer of 1996 Jay Rasmussen came to the HMSC to serve as the new Sea Grant Program Leader. At that time he managed to run his office with the part-time assistance of Maureen Collson. However, with the acceptance of responsibility for the HMSC Public Wing in November of 1997, he really needed a full-time support person.

Christi Sheridan came on board in April 1998 to meet that need, leaving her former position at Pacific Communities Hospital as medical staff coordinator. (This position is like being the secretary for the Faculty Senate.) She has over twenty years of secretarial experience, including work for the Idaho State University Math Department. For a number of years she and her husband were "gypsies," living the wandering lifestyle required of an industrial radiographer. Unlike medical radiographers, industrial radiographers take X-rays for industrial purposes, such as seeing faults and cracks in nuclear reactors, ships and pipelines. Tiring of this traveling life and wanting to settle down in a small town near the ocean, Christi and her husband moved to Newport to seek work. They enjoy camping, biking and gardening in their home in Siletz. A careful listener can detect Christi's faint accent acquired in her native state of Texas, where she lived in both Amarillo and Dallas.

Sharon Nieukirk Returns to HMSC Full-Time

Four years ago this month Sharon Nieu Kirk and her husband Ted DeWitt left the HMSC to move up to Sequim, Washington, where Ted was working with Battelle. While she was gone she worked on numerous projects as a consultant. One of those was working with the Coast Guard on the Atlantic coast and the Gulf of Mexico to study the effects of their operations on marine mammals. She also worked as the Marine Mammal Stranding Network coordinator for the Olympic Coast Marine Sanctuary. Before landing the full-time position in VENTS, Sharon also worked as a consultant to create the acoustic Web site with Andra Bobbitt. In short, she kept very busy. Now, however, she has taken a full-time research assistant position with Chris Fox and Kate Stafford. Using her experience as one of Bruce Mate's RAs, she is now working on whale acoustics.

She is currently working with data from the 1996-1997 Haruphone data from the Eastern Pacific Rise, listing all the different whale calls picked up by the hydrophone. She is breaking them down into typical blue whale calls, atypical blue whale calls and "other." This is the first acoustic information from the East Pacific Rise and early indications show seasonal trends in the number of calls. Woods Hole and the National Marine Mammal Lab in Seattle are in the process of creating a database of marine mammal calls to be put on the Web and Sharon plans on using this to help identify the "other" calls.

A future goal is to place a Haruphone off Alaska that is able to sample at higher frequencies (above 40 mHz). This would pick up a wider variety of whale calls and is made possible by increased memory capacity.

Michele Holman

USFWS Gains Natural Resource Specialist

Michele Holman has joined Roy Lowe, Dave Pitkin, Eric Nelson and Carrie Phillips in the beautiful USFWS building. She adds a new dimension to the staff there, as she is part of the Planning Branch's Division of Realty out of Portland (Roy, Dave and Eric are under the Wildlife Refuge Division and Carrie falls under Ecological Services). She is a Natural Resource Specialist who writes environmental assessments for proposed additions to existing refuges or for new refuges.

Michele is a native Oregonian, raised in Aloha and a graduate of OSU in Forest Management. She has worked in northern Idaho and most recently in northwest Montana (Libby) as an environmental affairs coordinator for the Forest Service. She did environmental assessments and worked in public affairs as part of her responsibilities. Libby has the highest rainfall in Montana, reaching 35-40 inches a year, so the jump to the Oregon coast is not as traumatic as it might be.

A true outdoorswoman, Michele enjoys hiking, fishing and camping and is an avid golfer. She also enjoys reading and is the proud owner of a beagle.

The Changing of the Library Guard

As Kyla Ryan and Karin Lamberson head off to exciting college experiences, two new Guin Library aides have arrived to take their place. Sarah Creech and Jennifer Kalez are best friends and are both juniors at Newport High School. Sarah spent ten days in Paris, Nice, Avignon and Monaco early this summer as part of the NHS French Club excursion. She anticipates going into either art or international business. Her artistic nature is also expressed in her years of balletshe is a demi-soloist for the Oregon Coast Ballet Company. She enjoys camping, walking the beach and hanging with her friends.

Jennifer is also linguistically talented and she looks forward to the NHS Spanish Club's trip to Costa Rica next summer. She is an athlete, having played JV softball for the last two years. She plans on becoming a doctor, possibly a pediatrician. Both girls, when asked why they had applied for the library positions, responded that "it was a more interesting job than flipping burgers!"

Jennifer Kalez and Sarah Creech
