



University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System

Research Vessels Operators Committee

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We are well along into the New Year, so I felt it was time to put out a newsletter. I am still encouraging input from all of you both in terms of articles you find of interest and experiences that maybe informative or of interest to all of us.

For those of you who rely on the list of attendees at the RVOC meeting for e-mail addresses, I would like to correct Bill Hahn's e-mail address. It is b_hahn@gsosun1.gso.uri.edu.

As a reminder to all, the annual RVOC Meeting is scheduled for 22, 23, 24 October to be hosted by Florida Institute of Oceanography/University of South Florida.

Best Regards,

Paul Ljunggren

FROM THE RVOC CHAIRMAN

I just attended the UNOLS Council meeting hosted by NAVOCEANO at the Stennis Space Center in Mississippi. In addition, we toured the Halter Marine Shipyard including a complete tour of REVELLE. These ships (ATLANTIS and REVELLE) are very impressive and will add considerable capability to the fleet. On the other side of that coin is the fact that along with many Federally supported programs we are facing the prospect of shrinking budgets in the coming years. The main focus of discussions at the UNOLS Council meetings for the past year have been around the

projected shortfall of funding for ocean science. This shortfall in science funding translates to less demand than necessary to fully utilize the UNOLS fleet. A committee formed by the UNOLS Council has conducted a study to determine the magnitude of the potential shortfall for science and ship operations funding. They have just published their findings and recommendations in a report titled "*Projections for UNOLS' Future - Substantial Financial Challenges.*" Most of us do not need to read a report to know that achieving a full schedule with adequate funding has become tougher in recent years, but to see the magnitude of the potential problem in black and white (and some color) is enlightening. The challenge for operators is clear, we must find new users to fully employ our vessels and we must find ways to control costs without compromising safety, crew competence and maintenance. Anyone with comments or recommendations can pass them to the UNOLS Council through me or directly to the council.

Anyone with suggestions for this year's RVOC meeting is encouraged to send them by E-Mail to me (PRINCE@MLML.CALSTATE.EDU) and to Paul (marsupt@ldeo.columbia.edu).

Thank you, Mike Prince

UNOLS OFFICE

SHIPBOARD DIVING SAFETY WORKSHOP UPDATE:

A small working group met in San Diego just prior to the Annual RVOC meeting to review the Shipboard Diving Safety Workshop Report of 1991. A brief report was provided at the RVOC meeting. The working group is now completing their work which should be published soon. The group recommends that the original report not be rewritten but that changes to the "Findings and Recommendations" section be made and forwarded to the community. The first draft of these changes is now being circulated for review and should be published in the next month or two. The plan is to publish a hard copy of the revised Findings and Recommendations along with a background and lead-in remarks. The original workshop report will be on the WEB along with the changes.

The main theme of the original report remains unchanged. Operators as well as divers must communicate effectively at all levels before diving operations begin. This is a complex problem in many cases particularly when divers are from institutions other

than the operators'. It is of paramount importance that complete dive plans are written and that all concerned are aware of the details of the plan. The marine superintendents become a control point in this process and are key to the safe diving procedures. All UNOLS ships involved in diving must scrupulously follow the procedures outlined in the Research Vessel Safety Standards, Chapter 16.

REVISED RESEARCH VESSEL SAFETY STANDARDS:

A 1996 revised version of the Research Vessel Safety Standards is now being distributed. If you do not get your copy(s) by the end of February please call the UNOLS Office (401-874-6825).

RVOC SHIP UPDATES

WHOI - R/V ATLANTIS - R/V KNORR:

As was announced elsewhere, an agreement has been reached to make the new AGOR, ATLANTIS, the support vessel for deep submergence operations - ALVIN plus ROVs. WHOI, ONR and NSF are sharing equally the incremental cost of very roughly \$2.6+M, with WHOI financing the entire amount up front to allow the government agencies to clear the funds without holding up the contract and work.

The design of the modifications was accomplished by Halter Marine, with help from Glosten Associates (who had worked with us on the design of similar mods to KNORR) with extensive input from WHOI. It will be a first class facility, as is the entire ship, without gold plating. The ship retains virtually all of its extensive general oceanographic capability.

ATLANTIS was launched on February 1, 1996. The official contractual delivery was extended by four months until 15 August, 1997. There is an expectation that the true delivery will be sooner. Trials will be in August and September 1996.

The debugging and refining of software on KNORR's SeaBeam is nearly completed. The final check out took place on the Mombassa to Durban leg (29 Jan. - 5 Feb.), with a full SeaBeam cruise beginning on 10 February.

Joe Coburn also reported that he had just received a copy of the short European safety video we talked about at the RVOC meeting from Ken Robertson and has now

converted it to the standard U.S. format. (I still haven't viewed it yet.) I'll send a copy to Tom Smith for review by the Safety Committee.

Included with the enclosures is a summary prepared by Joe of the February FIC meeting.

SCRIPPS - R/V MELVILLE - R/V NEW HORIZON:

R/V ROGER REVELLE - Work is progressing rapidly toward completion. Pierside testing of equipment and systems is in progress. Tests and trials are going well in preparation for sea trials. The Chief Engineer has been on site since September 1995. The Master will arrive in early March with other crew members arriving in April and May to participate in the Crew Familiarization program required by the contract.

Builder's Trials are scheduled for 7-17 March with Navy acceptance trials scheduled for 15-17 April. Delivery to Scripps remains planned for 8 June. After delivery, the ship will remain at Halter's facilities for a one month fitting out period. In July, ROGER REVELLE will sail to San Diego conducting tests of scientific equipment enroute.

R/V NEW HORIZON - Upon completion of final 1995 science operation, the ship was placed out of service on 7 December. In spite of not having received the Mid-Life Refit Grant from NSF due to government shutdown, work on the refit commenced utilizing the State of California's contribution and overhaul funds. The bid package was prepared, reviewed and released. In early January, bids were received and evaluated. Southwest Marine Inc. (SWM) of San Diego was the successful bidder for the shipyard work and a contract was awarded. Work continued at Nimitz Marine Facility until 1 February when the ship was moved to the SWM yard. Major structural work to resolve stability restrictions and for installation of a LIPS tunnel thruster will commence after dry-docking on 6 February. It is anticipated that shipyard work will be completed about 15 March. The ship will be moved back to Nimitz Marine Facility for additional dockside work before returning to service on 1 May.

MEDICAL STANDARDS

A medical standards work group has been put together and is headed by Bill Coste (UH). It includes Bill Hahn (URI), Fred Jones (OSU), Bob Flynn (WHOI), Jack Bash (UNOLS), and Paul Ljunggren (LDEO). Technical support from a medical and legal

perspective is being provided by Dennis Nixon, the Occupational Health Group at Duke University, and Dr. Ray Jarris of MHS.

The focus of the group will be to develop two sets of standards. The first is a medical examination standard which can be applied to current as well as new employees. The second is to develop a set of performance standards based on the physical requirements of a job on board an oceanographic research vessel.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Some items of general interest:

- - The Telecommunications Act has passed both the House and Senate and on 8 February was signed by the President. One significant measure in this bill eliminates the requirement for ships over 1600 gross tons to carry a Radio Officer, if equipped to comply with GMDSS. Also included in this act was a section permitting the FCC to privatize their inspections.
- - Oil Spill Contingency Plans are due for review. This review must occur within one month of the anniversary date of Coast Guard's approval of the plan and a letter must be submitted to the Commandant (G-MEP-6) certifying this to be the case.
- - Drug and Alcohol Program test data is due for submission to the Coast Guard by 15 March. (46CFR16.500).
- - NVIC 5-95 Guidelines for Organizations Offering Coast Guard Approved Courses - George Ireland had referred to this NVIC during his report at the annual meeting. I have included this in the enclosures.
- - Dolly Dieter provided a list of hotels /motels in the Arlington and Alexandria area which I have included in the enclosures. The list is a year or more old so that rates should be checked.

This newsletter also has many articles that were impossible to scan into WWW usable format. Copies of these articles are available from the UNOLS Office.