

RESEARCH VESSEL OPERATORS COMMITTEE REPORT:
by Tim Askew, RVOC Chair
March 2, 2006

The April, 2006 meeting is finally taking shape. The University of Washington in Seattle is hosting thanks to Dan Schwartz, Manager of Marine Operations. Hotels have already been blocked for the meeting and the registration forms have been sent out.

There will be many interesting special reports this year. The *R/V Alliance* grounding, *R/V Weatherbird II* replacement, *R/V Hugh R. Sharp* and *R/V Marcus G. Langseth* updates. The new University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) research vessel and the new NOAA fisheries vessels not to mention the Regional Class research vessel design effort (NSF) and the Ocean Class research vessel effort (ONR).

A presentation by Morgan Turrell, National Transportation Safety Board, Marine Accident Section on "What to Expect if Ship has an Accident" should be very informative to all the operators.

The dates for the meeting are Tuesday, April 25 through Thursday, April 27. The RVOC Safety Committee will be meeting on Monday, April 24, 2006.

The agenda is close to being finished and we (RVOC Membership) are all anxious to get back on an annual meeting schedule.

SCOAR Report

March 8, 2006

John Bane, SCOAR Chair

The Scientific Committee on Oceanographic Aircraft Research (SCOAR) completed its third year at the end of 2005. A significant aspect of SCOAR turning three is that new committee memberships have been established (the charter members were each appointed for an initial term of three years). In order to maintain continuity and to establish an orderly staggered membership rotation, three of the five SCOAR members have been reappointed for some fraction of the next three years. The new membership makeup is as follows:

- John Bane, reappointed through 02/08 (committee chair through 02/07)
- Charlie Flagg, reappointed through 02/07
- Carl Friehe, appointed through 02/09 (Carl is replacing retiring member Ken Melville)
- Dan Riemer, reappointed through 02/08
- Dick Zimmerman, present appointment runs through 02/08

The Fall 2005 SCOAR meeting was conducted as a web-telephone conference on November 4. This was the second time SCOAR has used this meeting format, and it has worked so well that it was decided in future years to have one annual in-person meeting and one or more web-telephone meetings. The intention is to have each web-telephone meeting be focused on only one or two specific issues. Following reports from agency and CIRPAS representatives, the discussion turned to the topic of a white paper on the use of aircraft in ocean science. This has been an ongoing discussion during recent meetings, and the purpose of the white paper is to continue the effort of promoting the use of aircraft platforms in modern oceanographic research programs. This will be the specific focus of one of our upcoming web-telephone meetings.

The Spring 2006 SCOAR meeting will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of ICCAGRA (the Interagency Coordinating Committee for Airborne Geoscience Research and Applications) at the Moss Landing Marine Laboratories on May 23 and 24. Beginning on Wednesday evening May 24, the first UNOLS-sponsored Airborne Ocean Science Conference will be held at MLML. It will continue throughout the day on Thursday the 25th. An email invitation was sent in early March to over 100 invitees, and positive replies regarding planned attendance are already being received. The conference will bring together scientists, students, engineers and program personnel who are involved in the use of aircraft and other aerial platforms for observations of the oceanic and marine atmospheric environment. The overall goal of this meeting is to promote the use of aircraft in marine research, and specific objectives include: increase communication among aircraft users and operators; familiarize attendees with various sensors, platforms and techniques used by the research aircraft community; provide input to SCOAR and UNOLS on future uses and needs for aerial facilities for ocean science.

Arctic Icebreaker Coordinating Committee Report March 2006

USCGC HEALY is preparing for the summer 2006 field season. Before the summer programs begin the ship will be making an unscheduled visit to the dry dock to fix a bow propeller. This is likely to push the start of the summer season back by a few days. The first trip will begin in mid-April with an oceanographic program to the Bering Sea. This will be the last trip for CAPT Daniel Oliver, who has sailed as the HEALY's CO since 2003. Dan will be replaced after the Bering program by CAPT Douglas Russell, who previously sailed as XO on HEALY. CAPT Russell will guide HEALY through three additional field programs including a seismic survey in the Canada Basin, additional EEZ mapping for the United States and testing an autonomous underwater vehicle for use in ice-covered waters.

The 2006 Deep Freeze operation did not go as planned this year. While breaking a channel into McMurdo Station, the Russian icebreaker KRASIN suffered a lost blade on one of its three screws. Although the channel to McMurdo was successfully opened by KRASIN before the propeller failure, escort of the supply ships and additional grooming of ice around the channel were still required. In January, NSF requested that the POLAR STAR, which was on standby in Seattle to assist KRASIN if necessary, be deployed to Antarctica, and the USCG sent the ship south. In the meantime, the Russian icebreaker KAPITAN KHLEBNIKOV assisted KRASIN with escorting the supply ship and oil tanker into McMurdo. POLAR STAR reached Antarctica shortly after these operations were completed in February. Bottom line is that DF06 re-supply costs will include participation by three icebreakers.

Short-term repairs on the POLAR SEA continue, and that ship is expected to support Deep Freeze in 2007. A potential complication for DF07 operations is the movement of iceberg C16, which as of March 6, 2006 was grounded in the middle of McMurdo Sound. The good news is that the same strong winds that moved C16 into this potentially problematic position also blew all of the annual ice out of the sound.

The next AICC meeting will take place at the National Science Foundation in Arlington, VA on April 18th and 19th. The second day of this meeting will occur in conjunction with a meeting of the Antarctic Research Vessel Oversight Committee (ARVOC) to allow AICC and ARVOC to discuss mutual interests with respect to the POLAR-class icebreakers and ongoing support of science in ice-covered waters at both poles.

In 2007 three of the eight AICC members will rotate off the committee: Robert Bourke, Margo Edwards and Peter Minnett. An announcement soliciting potential new members has recently been circulated by the UNOLS office and is already generating some response.

The AICC can be reached by writing to the Chair (margo@soest.hawaii.edu) or to the UNOLS Office (office@unols.org).

Report submitted by M. Edwards

Current RVTEC Activities

1. INMARTECH 2006

The INMARTECH symposium is a biannual meeting where marine technicians from around the world meet and discuss issues and procedures common to all. This year the United States, more specifically, Barrie Walden and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution will be hosting the symposium. The dates are Oct 17-19, 2006. The agenda is still in the planning stages as we wait for “topics of discussion” input from the attendees. The INMARTECH Planning Committee is working diligently to finalize the agenda and you can monitor the progress from the link provided on the UNOLS web site.

2. 2005 and 2006 RVTEC Meetings

The annual RVTEC Meeting will be conducted Oct 16, the day before the INMARTECH 2006 commences. RVTEC general business to include agency report and election of the chair are scheduled to be completed during this one day meeting.

The 2005 RVTEC meeting included a half-day session for the RVTEC Managers. We were able to discuss issues important to all of us. Items discussed included personnel training and retention, group funding to procure spare components for fleet-wide specialized instrumentation (to reduce the overall cost of support) and UNOLS Goals and Objectives. This group will meet Oct 15th, 2006 as we intend to meet on an annual basis.

3. Committees

Stewart Lamerdin was elected as the RVTEC vice-chair.

Mary Lynn Dickson was elected to the Post-Cruise Assessment Committee

Joe Ustach was elected to the ADA Committee

In response to the Council’s request for RVTEC to assist with the radio frequency spectrum issue we created the Radio Frequency Subcommittee. This committee will work in conjunction with Dr. Brown to obtain the information he requires. Members of this subcommittee include; Richard Perry (chair), Steve Hartz, and Toby Martin.

4. Regional Class Science Outfitting group

A small subset of technicians were assembled to address the technical specifications associated with the Statement of Requirements (SOR) issued by PEOShips for the Regional Class Research Vessels (RCRV). The group had representatives from across the fleet as well as a representative from FIC and UNOLS. After numerous conference calls and emails we met as a group at the National Science Foundation to review our conclusions with representatives from NSF, PEO Ships, JJMA, and others. The outcome of this meeting was very positive and resulted in a number of significant changes to the RCRV SOR. It was also determined that more work/time was needed to finish the technical review. Additional conference calls were held and further recommendations were

made to NSF and PEO Ships. All parties have responded well to this review and we feel that the time and effort spent now, revising the SOR, will result in a more cost-effective and useful Regional Class vessel.