

Arctic Icebreaker Coordinating Committee Report March 2007

USCGC HEALY completed her dry dock period in February and conducted sea trials March 1-3 and a shakedown cruise from March 8-16. Healy will sail in early April for Dutch Harbor to start the 2007 science missions. Three cruises have been scheduled: the BEST project in April-May (Sambrotto); the Grebmeier/Lovvorn northern Bering Sea cruise in May-June; and Law of the Sea mapping in August-September on the Chukchi Cap/Arctic Ocean (Mayer). The first two cruises will be supported out of Dutch Harbor and the third cruise will be supported out of Barrow. The gap in the schedule has not been filled to date and Healy is scheduled to return to Seattle between the 2nd and 3rd cruise.

USCGC POLAR SEA supported Deep Freeze in 2007, together with the Swedish icebreaker ODEN. The POLAR SEA departed Seattle Nov. 18 and arrived at McMurdo on January 1, 2007, a few days after the ODEN. The ODEN made the first pass through the first year ice and POLAR SEA followed, widening the channel. Favorable offshore wind conditions blew ice out of the ship channel, making operations easier. After the break-out, ODEN was released at the end of January and POLAR SEA departed McMurdo in mid-February. POLAR SEA was diverted to assist a Japanese whaling boat that had caught fire; no assistance was required. POLAR SEA is enroute back to Seattle via New Zealand and Hawaii with an anticipated arrival in Seattle in April, 2007. POLAR STAR remains in caretaker status at the USCG Base in Seattle.

Both the AICC and the USCG recently worked to communicate the upcoming Healy science plans with local Alaskan communities. Capt. Ted Lindstrom traveled to Barrow in mid-February to meet with local community leaders, whaling captains, scientists, the chair of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC; Harry Brower), and the president of the Barrow Whaling Captains Association (Eugene Brower). The visit was very successful. On February 28th, scientist representatives from each of this year's cruises (Sambrotto, Cooper (for Grebmeier), Mayer), Dave Forcucci (USCG Healy Science Liaison), and Carin Ashjian (AICC Chair) attended the AEWC Mini-Convention at the invitation of the AEWC chair to present plans for Healy's science activities in 2007. The meeting went very well. Our efforts to meet with the AEWC were appreciated by the meeting attendees and there were no objections raised by the AEWC to the science plans.

A small (AICC/science, USCG, and NSF) "Icebreaker Retreat" was held December 7th and 8th, 2006 at the USCG Base in Alameda, CA. The goal of the retreat was to continue to strengthen interactions between USCG and the science community, especially in light of the recent NAS icebreaker report and the last summer's tragedy onboard HEALY. Unlike AICC meetings, which focus on the detailed operations of the HEALY and POLAR-class icebreakers, the discussions at the retreat were geared toward "big picture" issues such as the future of the CG fleet of icebreakers, integrating science and CG missions and how to improve communications at all levels within science and CG hierarchies. Several recommendations resulted from the retreat, the most relevant to UNOLS being that a workshop be held to identify science priorities on polar icebreaking needs in response to the NAS report.

AICC met in Seattle January 9th and 10th 2007. Plans for the next AICC meeting are not finalized to date. Robin Muench replaced Robert Bourke on the AICC. Kate Moran will replace Margo Edwards in June 2007. Margo Edwards received the USCG Distinguished Public Service

Award, that service's top civilian public service award. Carin Ashjian replaced Margo Edwards as Chair of the AICC.

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

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