

RVTEC Items for UNOLS Council Meeting
July 11-12, 2007
By Bill Martin, RVTEC Chair

In 2006 the RF Spectrum Subcommittee created a spreadsheet to gather information from the UNOLS ship operators and technician groups. The spreadsheet was created to identify various frequency spectrums utilized by the UNOLS fleet. There were only 10 respondents to the survey but from the responses, 24 services were identified. The results of this survey were forwarded to Dr. Brown. The committee has not conducted any other surveys and has not received any guidance or requests to pursue other areas of interest. I believe originally the RVTEC RF Spectrum Committee was to gather and submit frequency spectrum use within the UNOLS fleet and from there move on to determining the use from the research community to include groups such as Neptune. It is safe to say that there is no current activity within this committee at this time.

The RVTEC annual meeting will be hosted by Moss Landing Marine Laboratories November 6-8, 2007. We have an open invitation for the UNOLS Chair (or representative) to attend the meeting to give a short presentation and address any thoughts, concerns and/or questions members of RVTEC may have. If the Chair could provide us, at her earliest opportunity, the best day/date and time she could attend, I can adjust the agenda to fit her schedule.

July 11 &12
2007 Teleconference UNOLS Council Meeting
SCS Report
Submitted by Rose Dufour (co-chair of SSC)

The large ship schedulers met in La Jolla on June 27 & 28 to work on 2008 scheduling. It was apparent from the onset that the double/triple booking of cruises was a sign of the scarcity of available work. The problems with ships ending the year displaced in far off regions, OBS shortages, and the timing of cruises because of Jason, weather, or IHA timelines exacerbated concerns. In general, the concentration of 2008 large ship work is in the Pacific, with barely enough Atlantic work to keep R/V *Knorr* operating a full year, and nothing newly funded in the Indian Ocean. This may require R/V *Roger Revelle* (starting the year off South Africa) to carry out a lengthy transit in order to enter the Pacific Ocean. On the flip side, there will be some funded cruises sidelined until OBS assets become available.

The Navy indicated a preference that the six ships (*Kilo Moana, Thompson, Knorr, Atlantis, Melville and Revelle*) take the mix of days and divide them so that no one (or two) ship (s) is actually laid up. The estimated number of operating days for each ship is approximately 200 days, well below the 275-300 day operating target. While this is helpful news for the operators, it may come with a price of not being able to efficiently string together cruises, i.e. more transits will need to be conceded. Furthermore, the agencies requested that the operator's keep the ship rates at \$30,000 per day or less, in addition to spending non-operational periods in homeport to carry out needed maintenance. Plus-up Navy funds have been requested once again, but the funding status will not be known until after the October congressional budget is passed.

Meanwhile NOAA charter requests are down. They have committed to scheduling a few cruises on the global/ocean class vessels for 2008. NOAA has been spending most of their charter funds towards outfitting the R/V *Okeanos Explorer*. They hope to continue to support cruises on the regional class vessels. Many of these cruises will remain in "pending" status until NOAA has their congressional appropriations approved.

Respective east and west coast institutions have worked together in development of their draft/LOI schedules. The regional class vessels are facing similar

challenges because of work shortages. The east coast regional scheduling teleconference meeting will be held on July 19th. The west coast regional meeting will also teleconference the week of July 16th, date to be determined.

This scheduling process will culminate in an all hands Ship Scheduling meeting in Arlington, Virginia on September 19th. 2008 schedules will hopefully be finalized during the meeting, but even before then consideration will need to be taken into account regarding potential ship lay-ups for the regional class vessels. The UNOLS subcommittee charged with formulating a recommendation will need to provide the schedulers enough time to prepare for the Ship Scheduling meeting.

The backdrop for the 2008 LOIs schedules has been the use of UNOLS's new Scheduling and Ship time Request System. Many of us were able to beta test the system, and have suggested minor adjustments. Overall, schedulers find this system user friendly, and a vast improvement with the integration of various sources of information brought together in this one format.

In this post 9/11 world, foreign clearances can be a full time job for institutions that work abroad. This year some of the UNOLS vessels experienced difficulty in obtaining foreign clearances or had a complicated time in securing clearances. For example, the Department of State was involved with expeditions at sea, helping scientist determine EEZs confusion in real-time (concerns with the British sailor's capture in Iran's EEZ/or territorial waters highlights this worry). In many instances changes were made in the cruise plans while at sea to accommodate the inability to work in foreign EEZs. A need for a thorough understanding at the pre-cruise stage of potential conflicted areas would help in avoiding last minute cruise adjustments. These changes can have a varying degree of inconvenience, from foreign observers onboard expecting data (R/V *Roger Revelle's* Bangladesh clearance) to cruises postponed all together weeks before the start of the project (R/V *Seward Johnson's* Venezuelan clearance). We have been asked by the Department of State to give our input and perception on past problems that may have been aggravated by support levels within the Department of State. If operators or the UNOLS council have any comments please send them along so we may provide them with insightful and constructive input.

RVOC Report to the UNOLS Council
July 11-12, 2007
by Matthew Hawkins, RVOC Chair

The RVOC held its 2007 annual meeting at the Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO) in St. Petersburg, Florida on April 24-26. It was an extremely productive meeting with many pertinent topics discussed. Detailed minutes will be posted on the UNOLS web site.

The following items were resolved:

1. Peter Zerr, OSU voted as Chair-elect of RVOC.
2. Todd Chlaupek, URI chosen as Chair-elect of the Safety Committee.
3. Except for licensed mariners, RVOC to seek fleet-wide exemption from the Transportation Workers Identification Credentials (TWIC) program with the US Coast Guard as “government-owned/non-commercial” vessels.
4. All operators to immediately begin formal wire testing program with the WHOI mooring group (Rick Trask) in order to develop a data base of actual breaking loads. This program will also include cyclical load testing of 9/16” wire rope, and purchase of an electro-magnetic (non-destructive) testing machine.
5. *RVSS Safety Training Manual* determined to be outdated and obsolete. Until revised, it will no longer be used or otherwise referenced by the operators.

Future action items from this meeting include:

1. Final review of the RVSS by the Safety Committee and the UNOLS Office. Target date for completion is the fall 2007 UNOLS Council meeting. A new “Personal Safety” Chapter has been added which includes such topics as drugs and alcohol, sexual harassment, and best practices for ADA. Additional discussion on the benefits of revising the *RVSS Safety Training Manual* will be undertaken.
2. Final review and approval of the draft *UNOLS Wire Safe Working Load Standards*. Target date for adoption is the fall UNOLS Council Meeting. A detailed comparison of “Sub-chapter U” and American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) design standards for over-the-side handling systems will be conducted by Glosten Associates as part of this effort. Final revision will also include comparison with towing industry standards for hawsers and a courtesy review by National Marine Facilities – Sea Systems (NMF-SS) in the United Kingdom.

Recent discussions among the RVOC membership have again identified recruitment and retention of personnel as a critical factor within the fleet. A separate joint letter from RVTEC and RVOC will be presented to the UNOLS Council which will outline the issues in more detail as well as a proposed way forward.

The 2008 RVOC Meeting will be held at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. The dates are yet to be determined.

**Arctic Icebreaker Coordinating Committee Report
July 2007**

USCGC HEALY completed her the first two cruises of the 2007 season: the BEST project in April-May (Sambrotto) and the Grebmeier/Lovvorn northern Bering Sea cruise in May-June. Both cruises were very successful, with both chief scientists offering high praise to the ship, the Captain, and the crew. Healy is presently in Seattle and will head north to conduct Law of the Sea mapping in August-September on the Chukchi Cap/Arctic Ocean (Mayer).

USCGC POLAR SEA is in Seattle following a successful Deep-Freeze cruise. POLAR STAR remains in caretaker status at the USCG Base in Seattle.

AICC will meet in Seattle in November, 2007. Until then, the Committee is working on our action items from the January meeting.

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

Report submitted by C. Ashjian.