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Anyone interested in SCUBA certification (NAUI) should contact Brad Penta (penta@ecos9.marine.usf.edu)

The Squid's Ink

Notes From the Editors

Once again, it's time to talk about empathy. There have been several candidates interviewing for the Biological Oceanographer position recently. However, there have only been 3 physical and 2 biological oceanography students showing up to the student-candidate meetings on a regular basis. The faculty candidate interviews are important. The chosen faculty member will impact all of us and will also reflect on the strength and caliber of the department. **Faculty:** please encourage your students to take part in the process. **Students:** make and effort and get involved with YOUR department.

Speaking of empathy, you might have noticed that the last few issues of *SI* have only been two pages, as opposed to the usual four. This is because we have not received many submissions from you. We already have several surprises in store for next month's issue, but you can help us make it even better. Start working on those articles!

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Katrina and Brian Bendis. Their daughter Grace Anne was born last month. She weighed 7 lbs. 5 oz. and was 19.25 inches long.

Congratulations to Flo Cole, who was recognized by the University for excellence in service.

Congratulations to Bob Jolley, Tracy Christner, and the numerous volunteers who worked so hard to help make the recent SUPERSTARS event such a success.

In other good news, Al Hine took 20 people to Cuba this past spring break as part of a course (taught with Skip Davis of the Geology Dept) on "The Geology

of Cuba and the Caribbean." This was a rare event, and it took a lot of planning and effort. They all made it back in one piece!

Fellowship Awards

By Dave Naar

Applications for the 2000-2001 Fellowship Awards are now available. They can be picked up along with the Guidelines from Barbara Daugherty. Applications are due by April 14 at 4pm to Barbara Daugherty 553-3938. Voting will be during the last two weeks in April with an expected announcement of the winners in early May.

Student Symposium

By Jose Torres

The 21st Graduate Student Symposium will be held on the 7th of April. This year's symposium is particularly important for a variety of reasons. First, it is the first of the millennium. Second, our keynote speaker is Dr. Debbie Steinberg, a candidate for our zooplankton position and a terrific speaker. Third, Dr. Rita Colwell, internationally acclaimed microbiologist and director of NSF will be speaking at the end of the symposium. Events will be taking place all day in the FMRI Joint Use Auditorium.

WEB SHORT: For a satirical interview of Dr. Theo Colborn, author of "Our Stolen Future", go to <http://www.junkscience.com/jan00/osf.htm> (Submitted by Terri Slifko)

Upcoming Events

Apr 1, April Fools Day

Apr 2, Daylight Savings Time begins

Apr 6, Blood Drive, 8am-4pm, FWCC Circle. Everybody receives a t-shirt, a cholesterol screening, and a pass to the JFK exhibition. Plus, get entered in a drawing for AMC movie passes.

Apr 7, Graduate Student Symposium

Apr 16, Palm Sunday

Apr 18, Full Moon

Apr 19, Passover begins

Apr 21, Good Friday

Apr 22, Earth Day

Apr 23, Easter Sunday

Science Demystified

Submitted by David Mallinson

The US standard railroad gauge (width between the two rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England, and the US railroads were built by English expatriates.

Why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

Why did "they" use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons which used that wheel spacing.

Okay! Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So who built those old rutted roads? The first long distance roads in Europe (and England) were built by Imperial Romans for their legions. The roads have been used ever since. And the ruts in the roads? Roman war chariots first formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels. Since the chariots were made for (or by) Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. The US standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches derives from the original specification for an Imperial Roman war chariot. Specifications and bureaucracies live forever! So the next time you are handed a specification and wonder what horse's ass came up with it, you may be exactly right, because the Imperial Roman war chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the back ends of two war horses. Thus, we have the answer to the original question.

Now the twist to the story.....When we see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah. The engineers who designed the SRBs might have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory had to run through a tunnel in the mountains. The SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track is about as wide as two horses' behinds. So, the major design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's ass!

Airport Appreciation

By Gene Olson

AIRPORT APPRECIATION DAY will be held at Albert Whitted Airport on April 8th from 10:00 to 4:00. Following the conclusion of the Festival of States Parade there will be an airshow. 25 skydivers will open the festivities at the airport in our own backyard at 1:00 pm. There will be antique and unique aircraft static displays and free airplane rides for kids 8 to 17 (Young Eagles Flights). There will also be model airplane static displays, radio controlled model B17 demonstration flights, Coast Guard Helo Air-Sea Rescue demonstrations, Coast Guard ships open house, food vendors, plus many other activities. The USF Suncoast Flying Club will have a table set-up selling soft drinks. For additional information email golson@seas.marine.usf.edu

Culture Club

Submitted by Sudsy Tschiderer

In an effort to expose you to the many cultural activities in the area, here are some upcoming events at the Tarpon Springs Performing Arts & Cultural Centers (for more information call 942-5605)

*SPJC Opera Workshop and Performance, April 7, 7:30 pm.

*Chamber Music by Phoenix, April 9, 7:30 pm.

*Art Exhibit: *It's Knot Art* by Bonnie Burdick, April 15- May 27.

*Folk singer Rachel Bissex, April 22, 8:00 pm.

Additionally, the Caladesi String Quartet will be holding a concert for children on April 29 at 10:30 am at the Palladium Theater. Call 820-9093 for details.

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Have you published anything lately?
Let us know so we can print it here.

Klungness G.D. and R.H. Byrne. 2000.
Comparative hydrolysis behavior of the
rare earths and yttrium: the influence of
temperature and ionic strength.
Polyhedron 19, 99-107.

Masserini Jr, R.T. and K.A. Fanning.
2000. A sensor package for the
simultaneous determination of
nanomolar concentrations of nitrite,
nitrate and ammonia in seawater by
fluorescence detection. *Mar. Chem.*,
68, 323-333.

For May issue:

Publications

the text box shading to improve the print quality. Can that be done?

A: Yes. To change the shading or color of a text box, select it and double click its borders to open the Format Text Box dialog box. Click the Colors and Lines tab and then choose the new color from the Color drop-down list in the Fill section.

Q: What's the best way to print this newsletter?

A: Print page 2 on the back of page 1. Fold in half and mail with or without an envelope. For best results, use a medium to heavyweight paper. If you're mailing without an envelope, seal with a label.

Q: I would like to use my own clip

Q: I would like to change some of