

INFORMATION AND AWARENESS
IN
THE NATIONAL SEA GRANT COLLEGE PROGRAM - FY82

by
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(From an Office of Sea Grant
Retreat Report for FY82)

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INFORMATION AND AWARENESS

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Introduction

The Information and Awareness (I & A) arm of the Office of Sea Grant set one goal for operations during FY 82:

"To portray the National Sea Grant College Program as a network of institutions pursuing marine resource development goals of benefit to the nation as a whole."

This "nationalization" concept reflects a need felt in recent years to accurately describe the Sea Grant program in terms of its contributions to the marine sectors (industry, government, academia, and the public) at large, rather than to segments of those sectors isolated by geography or political boundaries. To do this has required everyone connected with Sea Grant, at the Federal level and in the field, to examine Sea Grant endeavor more broadly. As a result, Sea Grant communications over the past year have reflected the total scope of Sea Grant.

During FY 82 I & A continued to maintain the OSG working collection of publications, coordinate publications distribution within the Federal government, provide communications review to OSG management, act as liaison with the Sea Grant communicators network, handle public information requests, advise Sea Grant Today staff, maintain Sea Grant Accomplishments/Benefits files and produce periodic reports of Sea Grant activities for OSG management.

This year I & A operated with a Director (Ryck Lydecker in the second year of an IPA contract with the University of Minnesota) and a part-time (30 hrs/wk) Communications Specialist (Dorothy Stewart). In that time the I & A Secretary, Barbara Rotondi, transferred to the Living Resources Division. Her position was filled by Cecilia Ross who joined OSG in March. The Communication Specialist position terminated at the end of August.

There has been no Assistant Director for I & A this fiscal year as in past years, necessitating that some I & A functions be curtailed (for example, routine compilation of grant announcement fact sheets is no longer feasible) and some initiatives postponed (profile of Sea Grant communications nationwide and development of a series of public information sheets covering all facets of the program).

National Media Attention

Again this year, Sea Grant activity has been reported in all segments of the press; local, regional and national media. The following national publications carried one or more Sea Grant stories:

Industry Week

Sports Afield

Technology Illustrated

Science (news section)

The Ensign

Oceans

Marina Magazine

Christian Science Monitor

Sail

Chemical & Engineering News

In addition, regional and national wires of AP, UPI and Knight-Ridder carried Sea Grant stories as did major dailies such as the Washington Post, Houston Chronicle, and San Diego Union.

Sea Grant coverage is fairly common in National Fisherman, Sea Technology, Soundings, Seafood America and Aquaculture Magazine, and continued through FY 82.

Sea Grant Today

Now in its 12th year, Sea Grant Today continues to be the national voice of the Sea Grant network reaching an estimated 55,000 readers* bimonthly. It is produced under a grant to Virginia Tech. In line with the "nationalization" emphasis, Sea Grant Today changed its editorial focus to include topical articles of broad regional or national significance while continuing to cover specific, localized projects as well. Articles ran during this fiscal year on the following: cholera in the marine environment, the problem of beach erosion, basic research versus applied, Law of the Sea, practical uses of satellite oceanography, and water safety.

In addition, the magazine continues to be a useful means of disseminating new publication information and reporting news items of interest to marine resource users in general. In accordance with Sea Grant's mandate from Congress to effect "broad and prompt dissemination" of Sea Grant information, the magazine has been available free to anyone requesting a subscription. However, a stipulation was included with this year's grant extension requiring the magazine to move to paid subscriptions in FY 83 in order to recoup publishing costs. With that in mind, the Sea Grant Today staff worked through the latter part of FY82 to phase-in a paid subscription system with the least possible disruption to production schedules. (Based on standard publishing industry projections, the magazine has adopted a \$6/yr. subscription fee.)

* Based on a survey taken in FY81 that showed 2.5 readers/issue.

OSG Publications

I & A continues to be responsible for preparing two internal publications for the Sea Grant network. COMINGS AND GOINGS is a monthly "newsmemo" that reports staff accomplishments, personnel changes in the National Office and in the network, OSG staff travel plans, and other items of interest to the staff and the network.

UPDATE is a periodic "newsmemo" for Sea Grant Communicators to keep them informed of Sea Grant exposure in the media, public affairs opportunities (such as the founding of a new magazine), activities and needs of I & A, and accomplishments of individuals in the network (awards, etc.). UPDATE was distributed four times during the year.

During the year the Administrators Weekly Report was revised to become a more useful information tool within NOAA. It is now titled NOAA Weekly Report and it has been expanded to include a calendar of NOAA-sponsored or NOAA-related events around the nation, including Sea Grant events. I & A continued to provide the OSG entry during the year and was also given the task of supplying items on a monthly basis to the Director of OSG for a Monthly Management Review. Sea Grant provides that information under two RD "bins," Marine Advisory Services and Marine Resources.

Items collected for the above reports are gleaned from Sea Grant program reports, newsletters, OSG subject specialist referral and from the Accomplishments/Benefits files.

Grant Announcements

Because of the prohibition on Sea Grant publicity in the Department of Commerce, Sea Grant programs have been announcing their annual grant awards independently. (There has been little adverse effect from this procedure in that grant awards are primarily of local interest in a state, the Sea Grant Communicators doing a far better media relations job in their areas than we could.)

The exception this FY was an announcement of the designation by Secretary Baldrige of three new Sea Grant Colleges: Maryland, Michigan and Mississippi/Alabama. I & A coordinated release of the story with the three programs, each of which received favorable press coverage locally.

Sea Grant Week

The Sea Grant network held its second annual "Sea Grant Week", July 18-22, again in Washington, D.C. This year I & A took an active role developing the communications segments of the conference in cooperation with the planning committee. Overall objective of the event for communicators was to provide training in communications program planning and to develop a national communications strategy for Sea Grant.

Sea Grant Week attracted 36 Communicators representing all but six programs. I & A played the following specific roles in Sea Grant Week:

- Assisted the Program Planning Committee (for Communications) to focus program activities toward the "nationalization" goal.
- Together with a field communicator (Rhoda Votaw, UNH) thoroughly briefed the workshop leader (Don Perkins, Director of Public Relations, Wittenberg University) on the concept and operations of the Sea Grant program in general and on Sea Grant communications in particular to ensure maximum benefit from his session.
- Gave a presentation to the group to introduce I & A policy and procedures in light of changing program priorities and to describe initiatives for the coming year.
- Designed a field trip to Baltimore to learn, first-hand, how the city used communications planning to gain national attention for its newly redeveloped Inner Harbor and waterfront visitor attractions. (The trip included presentations by the Director of Promotion and Tourism aboard the USS Constellation, a special tour of the World Trade Center visitor galley and a tour of the National Aquarium arranged by its education and marketing department.
- Planned a Communicators' dinner at the National Press Club to kick off the week, with Ocean Science News Editor, Jack Botzum as the featured speaker.
- Conducted media relations for Sea Grant Week with the Washington press corps. The very competitive nature of the news business in Washington made the effort marginal but possibly worthwhile later on. The somewhat discouraging results include: attracting four reporters (Washington Post, Science News, Ocean Science News, and National Geographic News Service) to events, securing listings on the local wires of AP and UPI, and arranging a telephone interview with a featured speaker's local paper, Washington bureau.

Exhibits and National Meetings

In line with the operating goal for the year I & A worked to have Sea Grant represented as a national network at three major annual meetings: Offshore Technology Conference (Houston), Oceans '82 (Washington, D.C.), Fish Expo (Boston).

Texas Sea Grant has exhibited at the Offshore Technology Conference for many years, the event always being held in Houston and the industry -- much of it Texas-based -- being an important constituency of the program. Therefore it seemed inappropriate to compete and impractical to attempt to piggyback on the Texas effort.

Oceans '82, sponsored by the Marine Technology Society and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, has had Sea Grant participation in the past. This year Maryland Sea Grant coordinated the Sea Grant exhibit, assembling a simple, yet effective "national" exhibit on behalf of the network. (Twelve programs chose to support the exhibit financially.) Attendance at Oceans '82 was the highest it has ever been, both in the technical sessions and in the exhibits, with some 2,200 people registered in all. (Sea Grant's presence was particularly important, it turned out, because many visitors were under the impression that the Sea Grant program had been terminated.)

Although Fish Expo did not occur until early in FY83, planning for participation in this important annual event began in March, 1982. MIT Sea Grant took the lead in coordinating the Sea Grant effort by putting together the exhibit plus compiling and publishing a bibliography of publications for this audience. (The bibliography, while proving an effective, useful and apparently well appreciated hand-out, also served the "national" image in that it avoided the clutter of publications from many programs that is usually displayed at such events.)

I & A represented the Sea Grant network and, more specifically, the Sea Grant Depository, Sea Grant Today and the Marine Education Materials System, at the annual meeting of the International Association of Marine Science Libraries and Information Centers in November, 1982. The other major activity was participation on the planning committee for Coastal Zone '83, cosponsored by OSG and to be held in June, 1983.

In March I & A also coordinated activities with the NOAA Coastal Hazards Program for Sea Grant regional participation and media support at its first regional Coastal Hazards Conference in Charleston, SC. I & A worked through the South Carolina Sea Grant communications program to develop the Sea Grant presence there.

The Sea Grant programs around the nation participated in a wide variety of conferences and other public events in their states and regions. The recent Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service Survey determined that, nationwide, the network had participated in 624 public programs and exhibitions, with a total attendance of more than 3.5 million people.

Accomplishments/Benefits System

The formal Accomplishments/Benefits reporting system (AB) was implemented in October with I & A responsible for collecting and filing reports and putting them to various uses (NOAA internal reporting among them). This hard copy system was intended to serve until a complete Sea Grant Data Base system could be brought on-line.

The hard copy AB system, after an initial flurry of reporting through the beginning months of calendar 1982, languished. The system received 75 reports from 12 programs.

The Sea Grant Data Base System, developed by a committee headed by Dean Horn (MIT Sea Grant Director) was inaugurated during Sea Grant Week. Although the system is used for some inter-program reporting, it had not been used for AB reporting at all by the end of the fiscal year.

Once the system is completely debugged and all programs have the proper equipment available, the Data Base System will be used to routinely report Sea Grant ABs.

Public Information Requests

During the first six months of the 1982 calendar year, I & A received 356 requests for information from the general public as follows:

Sea Grant Information	- 24	(general questions about Sea Grant)
Financial Aid	- 67	(student requests for direct financial aid)
Grant requests	- 9	(individuals seeking project grants)
Education	- 21	(post-secondary schools offering marine science)
Employment	- 7	(seeking jobs with Sea Grant)
Specific Subjects	- 49	(details, publications on projects)
Careers	-179	(seeking job info. and educational requirements for marine fields)
Total	356	

This does not include telephone requests, requests passed on to or received directly by other OSG staff.

It is interesting to note, and perhaps a sign of the times, that half the requests asked for career information. Requests came from 41 states and 10 foreign countries.

At the close of the fiscal year requests appeared to be running at approximately the same level, with late summer seeing a slight increase in financial aid requests, as might be expected.

Other Communications Activities

New England's Fishing Industry; From Sea to Supermarket -- NEMAS sponsored this, its second conference for the news media, in June. Thirty reporters -- from the Christian Science Monitor and The Boston Globe to small coastal weeklies -- attended the one-day session designed to assist them in understanding and covering this important regional industry.

Three Sea Grant Colleges Designated -- In September, Secretary of Commerce Baldrige designated three new Sea Grant Colleges (Maryland, Michigan and Mississippi/Alabama). I & A coordinated the press announcements with NOAA Public Affairs and the local releases with the three programs.

The Kids' Whole Future Catalog, released by Random House in September, included brief descriptions of Sea Grant projects at Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Earthwatch, Wisconsin Sea Grant's weekly radio series, celebrated its 10th anniversary in September. In all 2,600 Earthwatch programs have been produced and it is currently heard by an estimated four million listeners each month over 92 commercial and public radio stations in four states.

In cooperation with the Marine Technology Society and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, New Hampshire Sea Grant communications produced a marine careers booklet, Ocean Opportunities.

EDIS/Sea Grant Recreational Climate Guides -- During the fiscal year New Jersey added the latest to this joint series: "Southern New Jersey Recreational Climate; Cape May to Pennsville." There are now 10 booklets in the series with five more in press.

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Sea Grant MAS Communications Activity(1)

This information was provided based on each program's total MAS program (state office plus field agents) for calendar year 1981 or most recent 12-month reporting period.

1. Number of counties (townships, parishes, etc.) served.

No. of Counties Served Nationwide: 566

Avg. % Counties Served/State: 47.7% (Range: 3% - 100%)

2. Meetings/Conferences/Public Education.

a. Workshops, meetings, short courses, etc.:

Number: 3,827 nationwide Attendance: 174,997

Average: 127/program Range: 2 - 650

b. Public Exhibits/Programs:

Number: 725 nationwide Attendance: 4,219,697

Average: 21/program Range: 0 - 196

3. Publications/Periodicals.

a. Newsletters (see attached list of published Sea Grant/MAS newsletters) - 64

b. Publications Produced:

Number: 516 nationwide Average: 16-17/program

Range: 0 - 62

c. Publications Distributed:

Number: 533,749 nationwide (not complete because some respondents did not understand the question and repeated their answers to 3b.)

Average: 16,000/program Range: 1,500 - 100,000

e. Size of MAS Mailing List:

Statewide Lists: 67,801 (18 programs responded)

Field Office Lists: 98,710 (21 programs responded)

(1) Excerpted from the Cato Committee Report, Aug. 1982
Data compiled by Linda Weimer, Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute

MAS SURVEY RESULTS - cont.

4. Electronic Media.

a. Films/Slide Shows:

Number Produced: 19 nationwide

Number of Showings: 737 Est. Audience: 41,000

b. Radio:

Number Programs Produced: 2,350 (one Sea Grant Program produced
1,350 radio programs)

Number of MAS Appearances on Radio: 418

Total Estimated Radio Audience: 49,000,000

Total Airtime: 118 hours (This figure does not include the University
of Wisconsin's Earthwatch radio program
which has 884 hours of airtime/year.)

c. Television:

Number of Programs Produced: 133

Number of MAS Appearances: 325

Total Estimated TV Audience: 30,000,000

Total Airtime: 70 hours

