ROSENSTIEL SCHOOL WINS $6.3 MILLION FOR NEW CENTER TO STUDY LINKS BETWEEN THE OCEANS AND HUMAN HEALTH

The lure of the sea is irresistible. Over 110 million Americans live near the coast, and more than 70 percent of Americans visit a coast every year. We are having a love affair with the ocean, but how often do we think about its effects on our health?

The Rosenstiel School has been awarded $6.3 million over 5 years from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) to establish an innovative research center to explore how the oceans affect human health.

The Oceans and Human Health Center teams oceanographers with biomedical scientists to study the potential for the oceans to both cause and cure human diseases and to deepen our understanding of the links between marine processes and public health. The director, Dr. Lora Fleming, is a distinguished environmental/occupational health physician and epidemiologist, and the Center’s co-director, Dr. Sharon Smith, is a world-renowned biological oceanographer.

Drs. Lora Fleming and Sharon Smith
Oceans and coastal areas are sources of organisms and toxins that can profoundly affect human health. Recreational waters polluted by human and animal waste, contaminated seafood, and harmful algal blooms such as “red tides” are some examples of serious potential health risks. Current OHHC research is aimed at improving water quality monitoring of recreational beach waters and predicting

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harmful algal blooms that cause respiratory disease in humans as well as massive fish die-offs. In these studies, researchers utilize advanced sensors to monitor ocean conditions and contamination, and conduct genetic studies of toxic algae in state-of-the-art facilities.

According to Dr. Fleming, sixty percent of Americans live within 75 miles of the coast. “Clearly, we have a strong relationship with the marine environment. One challenge to that relationship is the steady increase in the number of beach closings due to the threat of water-borne human disease. The fact that 62 percent of the more than 12,000 beach closings in 2002 were attributed to unknown sources is just one reason why the work of OHHC is essential.”

OHHC is based at the Rosenstiel School campus on Virginia Key, where many of its researchers are located. Scientists from the University of Miami School of Medicine, the University of Miami College of Engineering, Florida International University, the University of Florida, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Miami-Dade County Department of Health are all collaborating in this unique interdisciplinary project.

ARTIST CREATES HIS OWN JEWELS FROM THE SEA

Rosenstiel School Library Hosts Unique Exhibit through October

Living the adage that one man’s trash is another’s treasure, Capt. Honk aka Thomas Bintz, has turned seaside refuse into a unique style of 3D art. Literally hundreds of visitors have viewed his exhibit at the Rosenstiel School Library since June.

The former Florida State University art student started beachcombing for art medium approximately 15 years ago, transforming tire treads into artistic eels, tossed coolers into blowfish and abandoned ironing boards into dolphin fish.

“I begin by collecting all kinds of objects and shapes of assorted materials,” Honk said. “Most of these I gather while walking the shoreline and beaches at different times of the year, mainly after storms.

Indeed his artistic way of building fish, though he describes it as “crude,” produces artwork that is realistic enough that he’s able to tell a visitor the specific kind of snapper or grouper his materials have portrayed.

“I enjoy having accidents!” he exclaimed. “I paint with screwdrivers, sticks, brushes and actually whatever is within my reach. Everything I use is found, recycled and represented to you the viewer.”

It should come as no surprise that Honk is a big proponent of recycling and reusing. “The main inspiration for doing all this is living and being on the water. Whether it be out in my boat on the shoreline or on the ice in the shanty, actually seeing and catching fish – travel takes me to favorite beachcombing areas, including St. George Island, Florida, and Zihuatanejo, Mexico, where I make fish under a straw hut on the beach.”

Capt. Honk’s exhibit will be on display at the UM Rosenstiel School library through the month of October.
Rosenstiel School Makes a Presence at the 10th International Coral Reef Symposium

Dozens of Rosenstiel faculty, post-docs, students, and alumni attended The 10th International Coral Reef Symposium, held June 28-July 2, 2004 in Okinawa, Japan. The abundance of UM associated attendees and presentations at the symposium were a testament to the University's prominence in coral reef science on the international stage. Presentations by UM scientists covered a broad range of topics, including reef recovery and restoration, population modeling, coral bleaching and resistance, and fish/reef interactions, to name a few.

In the late afternoon on July 1, the Rosenstiel School attendees gathered at the beach near the conference site for a pre-banquet beach party, complete with ‘Canes cheers, drinks, and Japanese snacks. This “beach mini-reunion” was sponsored by the Rosenstiel Alumni Association and graciously hosted by Dr. Peter Glynn. The party gave UM scientists past and present the opportunity to socialize and network with other members of the Rosenstiel School family.

Article by Carolyn Margolin

MEDICAL BENEFITS TOWN HALL MEETING
Monday, October 4 at Noon in the Auditorium to learn about the health plans from Humana for 2005. The Annual Benefits Fair is Wednesday, October 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Commons.

Back Row: Dana Williams, Peggy Fong, Howard Lasker, Andrew Baker (A-MBF '99; Wildlife Conservation Society, NY), Peter Glynn (F-MBF; reunion host), Jorge Cortes (A-MBF '90; Univ of Costa Rica), Bill Precht (AMGG '93; PBSI, Miami, FL), Tyler Smith (S-MBF), Mark Eakin (AMBF '91; NOAA, CO), Bernardo Vargas (AMBF '00; Nova, Dania, FL).

Middle Row: Iliana Baums (A/R-MBF '04, RSMAS), Ruben Torres (A-BIO '03; Dominican Republic), Aletta Yniguez (S-MBF), Nohora Galvis (A-MBF '92, Colombia), Monica Medina (A-MBF '98; Joint Genome Inst., CA), Mary Alice Caffroth (AMBF '88; SUNY Buffalo, NY), Alina Szmaht (previous F; UNC, Wilmington, NC), Joshua Feingold (A-MBF '93; Nova, Dania, FL), Peter Swart (F-MGG), Susan Colley-Theodosiou (R-MBF), Zelinda Leao (A-MGG '82; Univ. of Bahia, Brazil).

Front Row: Erik Stabenau (A/MAC '03; NOAA/AOML, Miami, FL), Carolyn Margolin (S-MBF), Derek Manzello (S-MBF), Marilyn Brandt (S-MBF), Jonathan Kool (S-MBF), Alison Moulding (S-MBF), Harold Hudson, Felimon Gagznilo, Wade Cooper (S-MBF).

In addition to those pictured, about 8-10 RSMAS folks were unable to attend due to previous engagements (including, David Gillian, Patrick Colin (AMBS '73), David Obura (A-MBF '95, Kenya), Hector Reyes-Bonilla (A-MBF '04; Univ. Aut Baja CAS, La Paz, Mexico), Ken Lindeman (AMBF '97, Miami, FL), Dan Baden (previous F; UNC, Wilmington, NC), John McManus (F-MBF), Michelle Lupei (S-MBF) and Michelle Paddack (S-MBF).