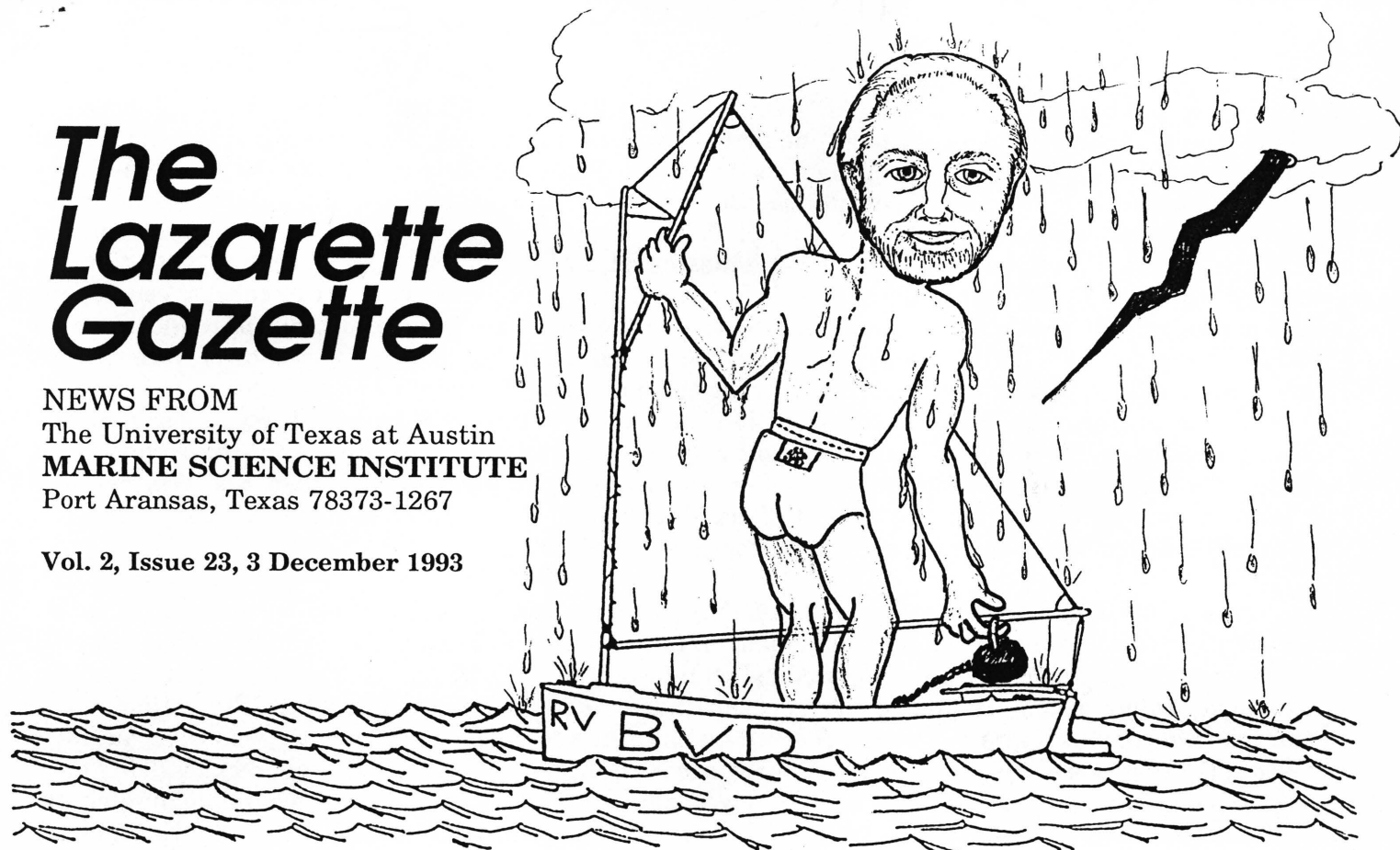


The Lazarette Gazette

NEWS FROM

The University of Texas at Austin
MARINE SCIENCE INSTITUTE
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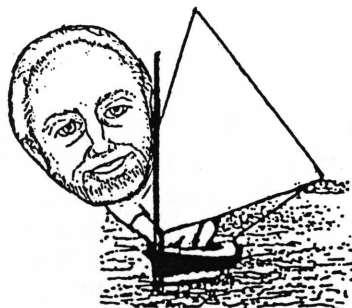
In this issue of *Lazarette Gazette* —

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Egabrag Wocs



More misadventures on the VAGABOND — The recent VAGABOND stories brought back more than a few memories. The initial *fueling* was not the only time there was gasoline in the bilge. On one of my many many many many trips to Baffin Bay, Don Nutt and I pulled into Williamson's one afternoon to refuel, and when I lifted the hatch on the back deck I told Don that there seemed like too much water in the bilge. He took one look, threw his cigarette overboard and hollered **EVERYONE ASHORE!** Since I was the only other person on the trip, disembarkment took little time. Don then procured a plastic hand pump and proceeded to pump the bilge into Williamson's boat basin — which the old man (Williamson) thought was a pretty good idea, at least after considering the possibility of having a boat with a bilge half full of gasoline explode at his dock. Don found and repaired the faulty line, and we were off to Port Mansfield, that oasis in the south Texas desert, where it sometimes rains.

In fact, it was one night while the VAGABOND was dockside in Port Mansfield that I learned about the true buoyancy of Boston Whalers. We had one tied astern when, in the middle of the night, the sky opened up and about 45" of rain came down in the first half hour. Someone noticed that the Boston Whaler was acting like a bathtub, and sinking with its load of rain water. It was decided that would be bad for the outboard motor on it; and the solution to the problem was to pull the drain plug so the rain water could run out. In the middle of the night this logic was unquestioned, so I decided OK, I'll do that. Then I thought about how wet I'd get. Well, I could just towel off when I got back — except for my clothes, of course, but I could minimize that problem by minimizing the clothing I wore. So, in only my fruit-of-the-loom briefs I headed for the dinghy. There was an ever so brief second thought as the first 50 gallons of water hit me 3 inches out the door, but by that time it was pretty obvious that the point of no return was well past. I can't really remember more details of the operation itself, except I'm very sure that there were several *OH S---s*, or probably *HOLY S---*, as those zillion volt bolts bounced all around turning everything from black to white. That was almost as much rain as fell on the Redfish motel when Pat Parker, Ken Winters, and I trailered a whaler and our families down to Port Mansfield and beyond to do some collecting. But the VAGABOND wasn't there; and that's another story.

I often use a VAGABOND trip experience to teach my students about suspended sediment and light in sea water. We were coming back from Port Mansfield on the outside, Pat Parker, Elgie, and me, following the 40' contour, and every so many miles we stopped while I put on SCUBA gear and went down and took an undisturbed sediment sample by shoving an open-ended cafeteria-sized tin can into the bottom. The memorable stop was at high noon on a clear, sunny day. Although the surface water was clear, at 40' it was so muddy that there was not only no visibility (zero distance), but no light — total blackness! My tools were in a bucket at the end of a rope; and I enjoyed discovering how the sense of feeling dominated my perception of the world. That is, until the seismic boat started shooting! It's rather amazing the tendency one has to *look* around, especially over your shoulder — even when nothing can possibly be seen. It also stimulates scientific curiosity about the sensory perception of marine organisms who live in such a world — a speculation distinctly intensified by thoughts of sharks.

I recall that we had a small diving platform on the stern of the VAGABOND — just at the level of the wet exhausts. The platform wasn't visible from the wheel, so I don't know how Elgie managed to time starting the diesels just as I was hauling up onto the platform (his skill was shown by the repeatability of this timing); but I did learn that you could take deep breaths of diesel fumes and survive.

Of course, the VAGABOND took part in many of our joint chemistry-geology summer class field trips to beautiful Baffin Bay. It was the towboat for the FLATCAT on its ill-fated final and next to final flings. This is the vessel about which John Thompson, in an earlier issue, so inadequately said she *finally began to fall apart*. Her demise was really much more involved, interesting, and especially adventurous than that. After successfully acquiring a few cores under the trying conditions for which Baffin Bay is so well noted, we spudded her in, transferred to the VAGABOND and went to see something else for a while. When we returned, the monstrous waves had partially detached the two hulls from the spuds, and she sank. Well, being basically a plywood deck over two plywood pontoons, she sank down to where the wood floated. So set, her deck was awash, and she could be spotted from a distance only by the spuds and the two step ladders which were the *coring tower* of the day. The next day, after a heroic, mostly nighttime trip back to Port Aransas and back down to the VAGABOND — anchored on the back side of Padre Island (long before the Padre Island National Seashore days) by Dick Watson for — ? — I can't seem to remember, but it was surely important to someone at the time — we broke the FLATCAT free from the spuds and towed it into Williamson's boat yard, except for two hatch covers — and we took the VAGABOND down to tow her back home. We planned to tow back to the swing bridge (also gone, replaced by the high causeway bridge) one day and cross Corpus Christi Bay the next, or when weather permitted. We got back to the swing bridge before dark, and it was such a nice day that we decided we'd just finish the trip back home right then — one of the worst decisions to which I've been party. But then again, without it, there would be an alternate course of history and this saga. Anyway, about half way across Corpus Bay the wind picked up,

and flail as we might, we couldn't keep water out of the open hatches. The *FLATCAT* metamorphosed from a neat little barge to one of the most effective sea anchors ever designed (albeit inadvertently) by man or beast. Well, this slowed things down considerably, but progress, although painful, was made — pretty steady — until we got to the ship channel. Just making the turn was tough, and when Elgie started saying *big ship's commin* we had to start steering out of the way while, of course, staying in the channel. Normally, this is straightforward, but with the *FLATCAT* sea anchor, the *VAGABOND*'s maneuverability seemed to be zero or less. We hadn't quite realized it yet, but by assisting in maneuvering the *VAGABOND* so far — by lengthening or shortening the two ropes — one from each side of the *VAGABOND* to the corresponding pontoon of the *FLATCAT* — we had actually done most of the steering. By trying to assist some more, we finally realized that tow rope adjustment *WAS STEERING*. And so up the channel we went, somewhat impressed with ourselves at having *discovered* a whole new method of navigation and very busy practicing it! I was in even more awe that Elgie could figure out where we were and which way to go relative to the channel margins and the tankers bearing down on us. I actually never saw any of the tankers and freighters that night until they throbbed, almost subsonically, past us. Thereafter, I never hesitated to put my life in Elgie's hands; he earned his **old salt** status many times over that night. Along about 4 am we voted that the city boat basin was far enough for that *day* and nosed the sea anchor up onto the shore. Later, the *FLATCAT* did get back to the MSI boat basin, but I'll let John Thompson scratch his memory for the downhill details of the *FLATCAT*'s further resurrections. —Bill Behrens

Trip Reports & Travel

Travel ending between November 20 and December 3

→Philippe Douillet, November 18—20, Cicese in Ensenada, Mexico, invited seminar speaker at the Centro de Investigacion Cientifica y de Educacion Superior de Ensenada.

→Rick Tinnin, November 19—20, Los Fresnos/Port Isabel, conduct teacher training as part of SEDL—Blue Planet Grant.

→Paul Montagna, November 20, Harlingen, present paper *Benthic communities and dredging* at the Lower Laguna Madre Conference.

→Tony Amos, November 29—December 1, Washington D.C., invited participant at workshop sponsored by the Committee on Marine Conservation.

Safety

Second half of Radiation Safety Training — If you took the first half of radiation safety training, you will want to be sure to mark your schedule for the second half, which will be **on December 6 and 7**.

Material Safety Data Sheets — Beginning with this issue, the *Lazarette Gazette* will list the MSDS forms received and distributed during the preceding two weeks. Material Safety Data Sheets are distributed to each main research program or service department. A master file of all sheets is maintained in the administrative office, but MSDS forms for materials in use in a particular research program or service department are also maintained in those areas and available for inspection by employees. Everyone should know where to find MSDS's in their own area and review them for materials they handle.

MSDS Sheets — November 20—December 3 :

AMOS: Starch Indicator Solution, Alkaline Iodide-Azide Reagent, Sulfamic Acid Powder Pillows, Manganous Sulfate, Sodium Thiosulfate, Pentahydrate, Sodium Thiosulfate 0.2000 ± 0.0010N.

ARNOLD: Ethane, P-Iodonitrotetrazolium Violet, Potassium Bromate-99.8%, A.C.S. Reagent, Glutathione Reductase type VII from Bovine Intestinal Mucosa, 2-4-Dinitrophenylhydrazine, Thiourea.

BENNER: Guanosine, Silicon Dioxide.

DUNTON: Potassium Persulfate, Potassium Borohydride.

SUTTLE: Phenol-Redistilled-99+%, YO-PRO™ -1 iodide (491/509).

THOMAS: Acetonitrile 2-Vinylpyridine-97%, Metaphosphoric acid, chip, A.C.S. Reagent

VILLAREAL: Lasso Sudsy Ammonia.

Seminars

■ Dr. Hudson DeYoe, The University of Texas at Austin Marine Science Institute, *The Texas brown tide alga: its inability to use nitrate-nitrogen and further comparisons with the east coast brown tide alga (Aureococcus anophagefferens)*, Auditorium, December 3, 3:45 pm.

Fiscal Office Facts...and foo-fa-raw

In today's modern, computerized purchasing office, most normal purchase order summaries are processed the day they are submitted. EPO's, or Emergency Purchase Orders, are no longer necessary due to the speed at which orders can now be processed. We assume everyone wants their stuff quickly and make every effort to process in one day. Most telephone orders, if the items are in stock, are received within ten days.

If you have a genuine emergency or need an item in one to two days, check the appropriate *shipping* box on the *Purchase Order Summary* as illustrated below:

SHIPPING:	Date Needed By	
Standard....	<input type="checkbox"/> UPS	
2-Day.....	<input type="checkbox"/> UPS	<input type="checkbox"/> FEDEX
1-Day.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UPS	<input type="checkbox"/> FEDEX

The purchaser (Faye or Erin) will deduce from this information that the order is a high priority item and process accordingly, understanding that you are willing to pay additional shipping costs to expedite the order. All orders checked *standard* in the shipping box on the Purchase Order Summary will be processed promptly and in the order they are received. Thanks.

—Purchasing Trauma Center

Irish Pennants

■ **KOIBITO is for sale** — Want your own beautiful, classic, wooden sailboat, and maybe at a bargain? MSI's KOIBITO, a 1961 40' Lapworth, is being sold by sealed bid. Pick up your bid forms at the office and see Mark McGarity for an inspection.

■ **My first sail** — I left the dock at 12:40, November 23, 1993, and with shop on-lookers jeering at me motored into the channel, where I proceeded to raise my mainsail. After five minutes of yanking and pulling lines, the sail *almost* went to the top of the mast. As the slight breeze filled the sail, I watched the bottom of the sail slowly slide down the boom. Finding a piece of line, I tied the sail in place and the boat began to move under wind power. I was already moving with the current, which *seemed to flow straight towards the Channel View pier*. Shifting the rudder sent me sailing across the channel.

I laid back in the cockpit pulling on this rope and really sailing. I had been told there was nothing to it. I heard myself saying, *now I "are" a sailor*. **Sniff, Sniff!** *Is that gas I smell?* Looking back I see this tiny slick following my boat. I pull the cover on the 4 hp. outboard, and gas is running out this little hole. I turn off the gas, and **yikes**, I'm going the wrong way. Hunting for another piece of line, I tie off the tiller.

Now panic strikes. I don't want to go that way. I turn. I still go that way. I swing the boom; the sail fills, and **I still go that way!** By now I'm having second thoughts about sailing.

I start the engine. Wrong. It's fully flooded and I pull and I pull. I watch as another sailboat speeds by me and waves *good afternoon*. Maybe for them.

I sail into the Aransas Channel. In the distance I see an old piling to tie up to. What a relief! *I can walk from there*. But after three shrimp boats pass, I am also past the piling. There is only one thing to do. I cross the channel and sail her aground. Just to be sure, I set the anchor. I lower the sail.

Now it's either the motor runs or I walk. I grab the pull rope and give a jerk. I hear what sounds like a hit. A few more pulls and the motor is running. When I look up, I am again in the channel with my set anchor dragging behind. After 45 minutes of motoring against the current, passing speed boats, shrimp boats, and one *huge* ship, I pull up into my welcome slip. It's coffee time, and I stagger to the cafeteria.

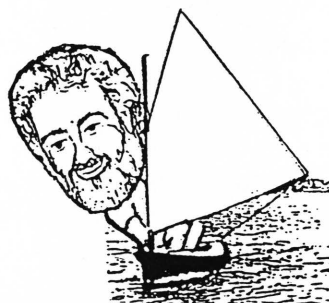
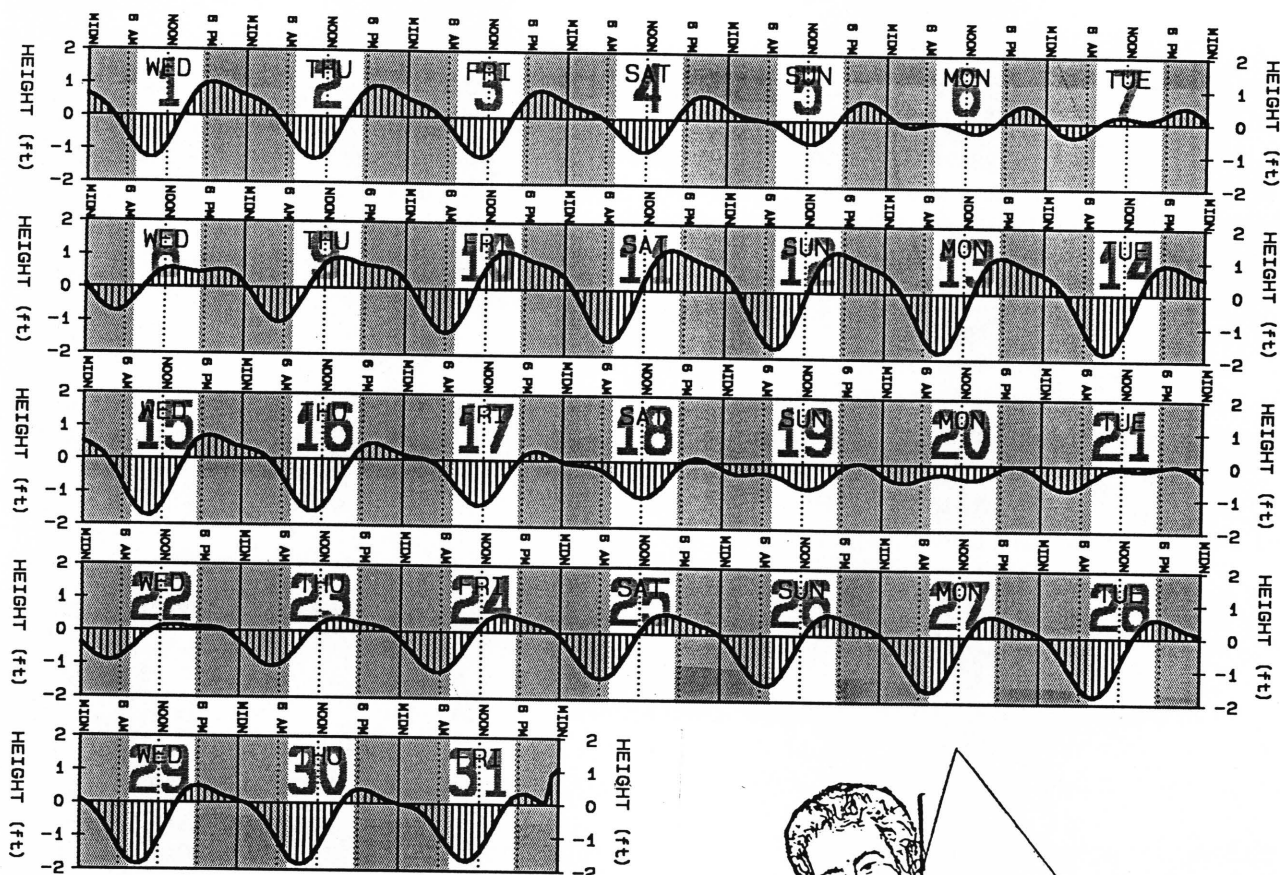
—Bill Piepmeier

■ **Shadow from Carroll High School** — Ken Dunton has once again been *shadowed*. Kimberly Lantier shadowed Ken on December 1 during a field trip to the East flats.

■ **New Automobile Loss Notice Forms** — New forms have replaced the old for vehicle accidents. Bobby G. Cook, Associate Vice President and Business Manager for UT has given the following instructions regarding accidents: *Drivers of University vehicles should be cautioned to never admit fault at the scene of an accident...indicate that the accident will be reported to the University's insurance company who will be in contact with the claimant...write down the license plate number of any vehicles at the scene, as they could be a witness...request insurance information from the other parties involved in the accident.*

Tony's Tidings...

Tide Predictions for December (For tidal heights at the tide tower, South Jetty, the Aransas Pass. Heights are in feet above or below mean sea level. The shaded area is nighttime. Remember, this is tidal height, not tidal current. Slack water is when the wiggly line crosses the MSL line, not at peaks and valleys, where the tidal current will be a full flood or ebb.)



Weather Report—November 15—28

15 - 21 NOV 1993		MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MEAN
DATE		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
AIR TEMP	HIGH	68.5	69.5	66.5	67.8	75.7	62.9	61.8	67.5
AIR TEMP	LOW	64.0	56.4	53.7	55.4	62.6	50.1	49.4	55.9
SEA TEMP	LOW	--	67.1	--	63.1	--	59.7	--	63.3
RAINFALL	TOTAL	0	0.27	0	0	0	0	0	0.27
22 - 28 NOV 1993		MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MEAN
DATE		22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
AIR TEMP	HIGH	67.1	73.5	75.9	66.9	44.9	55.0	65.6	64.1
AIR TEMP	LOW	53.9	61.3	65.4	37.7	35.9	37.7	41.9	47.7
SEA TEMP	LOW	60.7	--	67.6	--	52.3	--	54.0	58.7
RAINFALL	TOTAL	0	0	0	0.17	0.11	0	0	0.28

Letters to the editor

Enclosed is another small check. Hope that this will help some student. Reading Tony's "pillar of darkness" reminded me of a local mirage and since I am getting ready to publish it along with other trivia it might be nice if someone else has seen it. Coming towards Aransas Pass from the Gulf, looking to the north, on some days the dunes appear to make a sharp turn to the east. I am not sure what the necessary conditions are, but I suspect it may require a very sunny day with a bright reflection off the dunes, making the distant ones appear closer. The Austin map, and even some earlier Spanish, among other maps, show this orientation instead of the actual gradual coastal bend, possibly because of this illusion. Another possibility was the confusion between Aransas Inlet and Pass Cavallo. The first Austin map labeled Aransas, Pass Cavallo, and maps were not correct until statehood. The pass was to the north at that time somewhere opposite the lighthouse. By the way I saw something similar to the old 4-wheel drive International Travelall that B. J. (I think) used (unsuccessfully) to expose a topless bather, still with the outline of the decal, on the beach near Boca Chica (the truck, not the bather). This has been about 4 years, but I wonder if that was it and does it still exist? Could have been others, but the decal remnant was UT's. Great truck—wish I could trade my Suburban for it. Also someday I'll write LORENE stories.

(H. D. Hoese, Ph.D., 1965)

Marine Education Services

Oceanography Day will be Saturday, April 23, 1994. **Oceanography Day** is for Boy Scouts, and is a full day of activities at MSI. The 1987 **Oceanography Day** was featured in *Boys' Life*. From four to five hundred Boy Scouts are expected to qualify for attendance at 1994's **Oceanography Day**. To be approved for attendance, Scouts must first demonstrate a serious interest in Oceanography by the successful completion of the first six written requirements of the Oceanography Merit Badge — a formidable task. The program on Saturday is provided by volunteers from MSI scientific staff and students. An information sheet on **Oceanography Day** is reproduced as the final page of the *Lazarette Gazette*. You may wish to pass this information on to your Boy Scout sons or grandsons and to Scoutmaster friends.

Editor's Note

Did you spend a Christmas in an usual place or in some unusual activity? We would like to hear about it for our Christmas issue and, also any special Christmas wishes. And especially we would like to have *Dear Santa* letters from the children. If you don't—this is a threat—I will be forced to repeat *Surfboard Santa* (*Who is it on Christmas we trust, to bring us some gifts, beginning to rust, etc.*). Please save us from *Surfboard Santa* by sending your own Christmas stories. We are grateful to Bill Behrens for sending *VAGABOND* stories. I was going to name the boat the *RV Fruit-of-the-loom*, but Lynn Amos said *RVBVD* was more *brief*. If you remember the origin of the term, *Irish Pennants*, you will know Bill Piepmeier's story is especially appropriate under that heading. But we need to give Bill credit, many of us have been watching the little white sloop near the Pilot House for some years. We were beginning to suspect it was a permanent part of the dock. Then Peter Thomas sold it to Bill; we thought at last it would venture to sea. However, it was many months before the little boat broke free of the dock. Finally it has gone to sea! That sailboat should show a little appreciation and cooperate with MSI Refrigeration Mechanic Bill Piepmeier more in the future. In addition to Bill Behrens and Bill Piepmeier, thanks for help with the *Lazarette Gazette* go to Lynn Amos, JoAnn Page, Kathy Quade, Patty Baker, Erin Meuth, Tony Amos, and Andi Wickham.

—John Thompson

OCEANOGRAPHY DAY

WHAT IS OCEANOGRAPHY DAY?

Oceanography Day is a full day of activities at The University of Texas Marine Science Institute at Port Aransas. It includes a trip aboard a University Research Vessel, marine science laboratory work, films and slide shows, and talks by Oceanographers. Participants have an opportunity to earn their Oceanography Merit Badge. 350 Boy Scouts from 100 different Scout Troops attended the 1991 event. The 1987 Oceanography Day was featured in "Scouting Around" in the July 1987 issue of *Boys' Life*. The next Oceanography Day is **April 23, 1994**.

WHO CAN ATTEND?

Oceanography Day is for **BOY SCOUTS** who have a serious interest in Oceanography. To secure permission to attend, a Boy Scout must first successfully complete in writing the first six requirements for the Oceanography Merit Badge.

WHAT DOES IT COST?

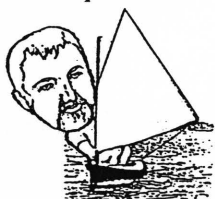
Not anything! (except some time and effort) Scouts who are approved to attend Oceanography Day and complete the day's activities, while demonstrating good Scout Spirit, receive a special Oceanography Day Patch.

IS THIS A GOOD ACTIVITY FOR ALL THE TROOP?

NO. Oceanography Day is not for everyone. It is for those with a real interest in Oceanography and Marine Science; it requires serious *individual* effort to complete the first six requirements. Attempts to qualify everyone in a troop to attend are strongly discouraged. *Help sheets* (duplicated *fill in the blank* forms) are not acceptable for the written requirements. However, it does work well for the seriously interested Scouts in a Troop to have their efforts assisted and coordinated by an Adult Leader, who may also attend Oceanography Day.

HOW DO I SIGN UP?

Pickup a copy of the *Oceanography Merit Badge Pamphlet* (from a Scout Supplier or your Scout Council) and complete the first six requirements. Mail your completed work **BEFORE APRIL 1, 1994** to:



Oceanography Day Chairman
The University of Texas Marine Science Institute
P. O. Box 1267
Port Aransas, Texas 78373

WRITTEN WORK:

- Should be neat, legible, and the Scout's best effort.
- Will be reviewed, and you will be asked to correct mistakes and/or insufficient work.
- *And don't forget* to put your name and address and your phone number!
- Also, give your age, school grade, and Scout Rank and your Troop Number.

If you have difficulty obtaining a copy of the Oceanography Merit Badge Pamphlet, or have questions, write the above address, or phone John Thompson at 512-749-6760.