



Atlantic Estuarine Research Society

All the news that'll fit, and then some

Volume 2000 Number 2

August 2000

Jerry Williams Turns Over *AERS* News Editorship after 20 Years



Dan Dauer gives Jerry a big "Thank You!" kiss for all of Jerry's hard work.

In 1992, Jerry Williams thought that he had finally earned a long-awaited, and well-deserved rest. He was finishing his duties as the Executive Director of the Estuarine Research Federation, and had already retired after a teaching career at the US Naval Academy. He would finally have time to publish some of the myriad data that he had amassed over his years of working in optical measurements of water clarity. Few of us realize the seminal role that Jerry Williams has had in the development of optical systems for measurement of water clarity. Many of you believe that the Italians had a great deal to do with this area of science. They did, but not in the way you might imagine.

When Jerry started his naval career as a midshipman, the world was not as safe a place as today. Before he could finish his rigorous studies in Latin and Greek (he was a modern languages scholar in those days), trouble broke out on the north coast of Africa, and he and many of his classmates were summoned to active duty. Unfortunately, just as Jerry's ship arrived on station, it ran aground on the treacherous reefs off of Tunis. You might say that this event changed his life, but it was just the beginning of the change. He and most of his fellow shipmates were captured by the Royal Guard of the Caliph of Tunis, and imprisoned in the infamous "Black Hole" of Tunis. Their daily ration while the prisoners of the Caliph was day-old pita bread. As you know this flat bread starts out stale, and gets harder from there. Furthermore, the Caliph reserved all of his salt supplies for his own men, and the flat, stale, bread was utterly tasteless for lack of salt. After awhile, some of the sailors marooned with Jerry came upon the idea of tying a string to the flat, stale, hard, tasteless, pita, and tossing it into the ocean through the window in their prison cell. After soaking in the ocean for a little while, the flat, stale, hard, tasteless, pita became less stale. The sailors took turns "cooking" their daily ration. It was a way for them to see the outside world, if only briefly, while they soaked the flat, stale, hard, tasteless, pita. One particularly clear and bright day, it was Jerry's turn to "cook." While he was

soaking the flat, stale, hard, tasteless pita, the Caliph observed Jerry at work. The Caliph became incensed, believing that Jerry was trying to signal the Marines. This of course was nonsense because no Navy man would ever call a Marine to do a man's work, and because Jerry was not in the signal corps. However, when Jerry was brought to the Caliph's throne in irons, he somehow knew that the Caliph would not believe the cooking story. So Jerry, thinking quickly, explained how he was observing the clarity of the water by lowering the flat, stale, hard, tasteless pita into the water until it disappeared from view, and measuring the string to get an idea of the water clarity. The Caliph was very impressed with Jerry's scientific acumen. He was even more impressed that Jerry would squander his daily bread in the pursuit of scientific knowledge. The Caliph granted parole to all of the American sailors, and elevated Jerry to the position of Grand High Pooh Bah. Jerry spent the next several months surveying the waters and especially mapping the shoals all along the Barbary Coast. Using his flat, stale, hard, tasteless, pita, Jerry was able to chart safe shipping lanes for the Caliph's navy. When Jerry returned to the Caliph, and displayed the safe shipping lanes, and taught the Caliph's men how to survey, the Caliph was so grateful that he ceased hostilities with the US, and freed the sailors.

However, Jerry's troubles were far from over. When he returned to the fleet, he was brought before the Captain's Mast and accused of collusion with the Caliph. All of the freed sailors testified on Jerry's behalf, and it was looking pretty good for acquittal, when Jerry started to tell about the flat, stale, hard, tasteless, pita. The members of the Captain's Mast seemed to be unconvinced, until Jerry demonstrated the device. The story seemed plausible enough, but every sailor knows that no scientist (Jerry was calling himself scientist by then, since the Grand Pooh Bah thing wasn't well received on deck) would ever fail to take the

opportunity to invent some jargon to describe a perfectly common piece of apparatus. Thinking quickly again (for just the second time in his life), Jerry stated that the apparatus (flat, stale, hard, tasteless, pita) was called a Secchi disc. As Jerry explained it to me at one AERS meeting, he named the disc Secchi after the Italian word for flat, hard, stale, tasteless pita-like bread called Ceci. The Italians make the Ceci with ground chick-pea flour. Since Jerry was missing Lee (at that point Lee was his fiancé back in Annapolis), and she used to call him her little chick-pea, he thought that name was appropriate. Needless to say, his egregious misspelling of Ceci appalled his colleagues in the modern languages department, and they drummed him out of the department. At that point Jerry became the founder of the Optical Clarity Measurement Laboratory, which eventually became the Oceanography Department at the US Naval Academy, where he served until the beginning of this story.

As I said, Jerry was looking forward to a little quiet time with Secchi-girl as he had come to call Lee. But as he stepped down from the ERF Executive Director position he had held as a volunteer, I approached him to head up the AERS Newsletter. In 1992, the AERS Newsletter had all but disappeared. It had become no more than a call for papers, and the program for each meeting. There were less than three per year, because we just didn't bother in years when ERF was meeting. I felt that the AERS Newsletter was an important part of membership. I for one, lived in the hinterlands of AERS membership, and if I couldn't read about it, I would never find out about it. Jerry graciously stepped in, and Lee graciously allowed him to step in. He has edited *AERS News* since then. He elevated the AERS newsletter in content, and in status. He printed "all the news that would fit." I wish him luck in finally getting to retire. We all owe him – BIG TIME. Thanks Jerry.

Fall Meeting To Be Held Near Annapolis

The Fall Meeting of the Atlantic Estuarine Research Society will be held 9-11 November in Edgewater, Maryland. The meeting will be jointly hosted by AERS and the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, who are providing their laboratory, conference and dormitory facilities, which are located just 20 minutes south of Annapolis in a scenic natural area on the edge of the Rhode River.

The local AERS hosts, Steve Storms and Chris Swarth, and have done an outstanding job in arranging the meeting with SERC co-host, Tuck Hines. The local hosts have arranged for all meals to be provided at SERC and included in the cost of the registration.

Meeting Information:

The facility is located in a beautiful setting down Contees Wharf Road. To best appreciate the hilly, gravelly road as it winds along the neighboring pastures and farms, please drive **slowly!**

Meeting events will be divided primarily between two buildings. On Thursday, the Board Meeting (6-8 PM), Registration (7-9 PM) and Beverage Consumption Event (7-10 PM) will be held in SERC's new classroom facility and adjoining picnic area on the edge of the Rhode River. Presentations on Friday and Saturday will be held at SERC's conference center adjoining the dormitory facilities. The Friday night banquet will return to the waterfront classroom building and picnic area.

Registration for the meeting will cost \$50 for regular members and \$35 for students. The registration costs include everything except fresh underwear: the Thursday night social, Friday breakfast bar, lunch and banquet, and Saturday breakfast bar and lunch. Additional banquet tickets, which may be limited, will cost \$20.

To keep costs low, AERS *must* provide the caterer with an accurate estimate of meeting attendance. Therefore, we ask that all attendees pre-register for the meeting using either the enclosed form or through the AERS website. The AERS Board strongly encourages everyone to pre-register to prevent establishment of mandatory pre-registration and tiered (cheap pre-registration vs. outrageous regular) registration fees at future meetings.

Accommodations:

A block of hotel rooms has been reserved at the Annapolis Best Western Hotel. The Best Western is located at 2520 Riva Road. Tel: 410-224-2800 Fax: 410-266-5539. Take Route 50 to Exit 22 (Arise T. Allen Blvd. to Riva Road). Take left off exit on to Riva Road. Go to next traffic light (1/8 mile). Hotel is on the left.

Exclusively for students

A limited number of rooms are available on-site at the SERC dormitory, and are being reserved exclusively for students. (Should students not fill up the 10-15 available beds, space will be made available to others on a first come, first served basis, so not *that* "exclusively...") The rooms are spartan, but clean and cheap (approximately \$10 per night). In addition, the dormitory is within *crawling* distance of all meeting events (sound good, Beth?). Rooms have two single beds and share common bathroom facilities. Students must bring their own linens, towels, *etc.* Preference will be given to students by the following priority: students who receive AERS travel awards, other student presenters, and other students. Students desiring rooms should apply as soon as possible and provide all of the requested information to facilitate dormitory assignments.

Directions

From Best Western to SERC

Exit south at Md. Route 424 (Davidsonville Road)

Turn left (east) at stoplight onto Md. 214 (Central Ave.) Follow Central Ave. (Md. 214) east to stoplight at Md. 468 (Muddy Creek Road). Turn right (south). Proceed about 1 mile, then turn left (east) at the SERC sign on the corner of Contees Wharf Road. Proceed 0.8 mile on gravel road to SERC sign, turn right onto paved road. Immediately after entering the paved road, you will pass a motorized gate and a directory sign. Turn left at the directory sign, toward the Reed Education Center and the main dock. Parking for the Reed Education Center is in the parking lot on the right near the end of the paved road. If the lot is full, you may park on the grass adjacent to the paved areas. Parking at SERC is limited. If possible, please consider carpooling from the motel or with colleagues.

If you turn right at the directory sign (by mistake), you will come upon the Schmidt Conference Center, and the Administration Building is the white two-story frame building.

For more info on our co-host, SERC, and the meeting site,
including its programs, facilities, and directions, please visit its website at www.serc.si.edu.

Stan's Musings

Like the many features of estuaries that we study, change is an inherent feature of scientific societies. One major reason that AERS has been so successful over the past 50 years has been its ability to change to meet the needs of its members. A number of important recent changes are keeping that strong "tradition of change." First, Jerry Williams has retired as the editor of *AERS News*. Jerry's tireless efforts and unique style have enriched everyone in the AERS family for many years. I join with everyone in AERS in thanking Jerry for his many years of outstanding service as editor of *AERS News*. I also want to thank Pat and Frank Reilly, who have taken over the duties of editor of AERS NEWS. Both Pat and Frank have told me that, like Jerry, they'll try to give AERS NEWS a unique style.

I also ask everyone's patience in dealing with a number of other changes that are underway. We are in the process of changing the web page to better serve our needs. Both electronic submission of abstracts and pre-registration for the meeting will be offered through the web page. I strongly encourage everyone to use the web page to pre-register for the meeting to keep meeting costs low. Steve Storm and Chris Swarth, the local host committee, have done a truly outstanding job in making the meeting arrangements. However, to keep costs down, it is essential that we have an accurate estimate of attendance, so please pre-register. A number of other changes to the web page are also being discussed, including changes to the list server, a bulletin board, etc.

The relationship between AERS and ERF is also likely to change in the next few years. In response to input from AERS and other regional affiliates, stronger ties between ERF and all of the regional affiliates are developing. The ERF Board has agreed to meet with the regional affiliates whenever possible, and will be attending the SEERS meeting this fall. I encourage all of you to share your views with me concerning different ways that AERS and ERF can work together to serve their members.

I look forward to seeing all of you at SERC in November.

Stan Hales

Call for Abstracts

Abstracts are being solicited for the fall meeting, and must be submitted by **Sunday, September 20, 2000**. Electronic submission of abstracts is highly preferred and strongly encouraged.

The preferred form for submission is using the form for abstract submission available on the World Wide Web at the following address: http://www.erf.org/aers_meeting/aers_abstract_submission.html. Please follow the submission instructions included at the site.

If you cannot access this website, abstracts may be e-mailed to Beth Hinchey, the AERS Program Chair, at ehinchey@vims.edu. As a last resort, a diskette copy of the abstract file can be submitted in a text file to Beth Hinchey, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, College of William and Mary, Gloucester Point, VA 23062. Please label the diskette with author, title, and software used.

Abstracts should begin with the title, names and affiliations of the author(s), and be followed by the text (250 words or less). If there is a preference, please identify whether the presentation is a poster or oral presentation. If coauthored, identify the name of the presenter. If the presenter is a student, please identify the student's status as undergraduate, MS or PhD in parentheses in the abstract. Due to anticipated attendance at the meeting, all presenters are strongly encouraged to submit their abstracts early.

Please include an email address and/or phone number with all abstract submissions to facilitate communication in the event of any problems.

Student Travel Changes

The AERS Endowment Fund provides travel support with a maximum of \$75 per trip for student members in good standing (current dues paid) who play an active role in AERS meetings (*e.g.*, present a paper or serve on the Board) and cannot find sufficient funding from other sources. To apply for this aid, please send the following information to the new chair of the Endowment Committee, **Dr. Chris Jones**, Biology Department MSN 3E1, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA 22030, 703-993-1127, 703-993-1046 (fax), rcjones@gmu.edu: a letter describing activity at the meeting, itemized list of expenses, description of other support, and a letter from the student's advisor documenting the need and activities.

AERS Former Member, Award-winning soil scientist, George Demas Dies



AERS members were saddened to learn of the passing of one of our former members. Dr. George Demas was a member of AERS from 1994 through 1997. He died suddenly of pneumonia during the Holiday Season.

He was a University of Maryland graduate from Cape May, NJ. His Master's Thesis was entitled "Recent Erosion Rates and Their Relation to Climatic and Cultural Change in three Maryland Watersheds." However his contribution to science will be long-remembered because of his Doctoral research. His Ph.D. work was supported by the USDA-NRCS at the Graduate Program of The University of Maryland. His degree was conferred in May of 1998. His dissertation entitled, 'Subaqueous Soils of Sinepuxent Bay, MD was immediately recognized as revolutionary. Based on his findings, the USDA-NRCS modified the definition of soils as stated in soil taxonomy to include subaqueous soils in shallow water environments as soils rather than their previous classification as sediments. His work with other estuarine ecologists was able to demonstrate that the growth and survival of SAV were correlated to particular bottom types, which constituted the first interpretive use of subaqueous soil surveys. The work proved that these sediments underwent pedological processes, and were therefore soils. In the future, Demas' foundational work will be frequently cited by scientists and natural resource managers seeking to apply his work.

ERF Notes

A new regional affiliate is forming: GSLERS (pronounced "guzlers"...). The Gulf of St. Lawrence Estuarine Research Society has notified ERF for of their desire to join the federation.

- ☆ ERF Board may meet with AERS at the Spring meeting. The Spring meeting has a tentative site in ODU country with Dan Dauer as host.
 - ☆ ERF 2003 is to be held on the University of Washington campus in Seattle.
 - ☆ ERF 2005 will be in Virginia Beach with Linda Blum and Bob Christian as co-hosts. (*Editors' note: Do not make eye contact or accept beverages from either of these people!*)
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Student News



Helen Woods is continuing her work with other staff and students (Helen freudulently calls them “studdnets”) for our most venerable oyster Dr. Bill Hargis in the Center for Coastal Resources Management at VIMS which involves the 3 dimensional computerized reconstruction of the oyster reefs of the Chesapeake Bay.

Alessandra Sagasti, Jen Rhode and Katie Farnsworth were recently awarded teaching scholarships sponsored by Virginia Power. Funds were used to develop and conduct short courses in SAS and Arc View at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Congratulations!

Has this ever happened before? We now have a father and a daughter who are both members. Julie Christian, Bob Christian's daughter, joined at the April Meeting in Wrightsville Beach.

Jennifer Rhode, Elizabeth Hinchey and Tammy Hutchison all received Student Travel Awards to help defray the cost of their trip to sunny North Carolina for the Spring Meeting. YOU TOO could win one of these coveted awards. See the new method to apply in this issue on page 3.

Volunteers Needed

Both Student Rep Positions to AERS Board are Open

Recent student representatives have moved on to other Board positions; thus, AERS is now seeking volunteers for the two students' positions. One position is available to an undergraduate or master's student; the second position is open to a doctoral student. Any student interested in serving (e.g. Helen Woods) should send a *c.v.* and letter of application to the AERS President that states why/how the student would like to serve students and AERS. Responsibilities include reporting news about students within the AERS community and attending the AERS Board meetings, where you usually get fed and get to vote on the Venerable Clam recipient.

AERS Awards and News from the Spring 2000 Meeting in Wrightsville Beach, NC.

Elections were held for the position of Treasurer at the Spring Meeting. Iris Anderson was the Nominations Committee Chair, and submitted the slate of Steve Fuller for election as Treasurer. Steve is a Professor in the Biology Department of Mary Washington College. He has served as Treasurer previously, and will continue to do so until he pays off the mortgage on his home.

The Venerable Clam Award was deservedly received by Dr. Harriet Phelps of the University of the District of Columbia. Harriet is one of our long standing members and has been a regular contributor to AERS functions since she joined AERS in (*gasp*) 1973.

Congratulations to the following student award winners from the Spring Meeting:

- Tami Hutchison won for the Best Poster entitled “Microbial Dynamics and Nitrogen Cycling in a Shallow Coastal Lagoon.” Tami is a student at VIMS.
- Jennifer Rhode won for the best Ph.D. paper, for her presentation entitled, “Environmental Effects on Reproductive Effort and Output in Eelgrass.” She is a VIMS student as well.
- James Salierno won for the best Master’s paper for his presentation entitled, “The Effect of Interspecific Competition and Prey Odor of Foraging Behavior in the Rock Crab, *Cancer irroratus*, Say.” He is a student at UMES. Congratulations to all!

Pre-Registration Form

In order to help us plan for this meeting, and avoid financial ruin from catering costs AERS has decided to require pre-registration for this meeting. You can pre-register on-line - the **preferred** method - at (http://erf.org/aers_meetings/registration) or use this form and snail mail. Send the form to:

Elizabeth Hinchey
Virginia Institute of Marine Science
College of William and Mary
Gloucester Point, VA 23062

First Name and M.I.: _____

Last Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State or Province: _____

Zip or Postal Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

FAX Number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Student? Yes No If so, what kind? _____

Fall Meeting

November 9-11
Smithsonian Environmental Research Center,
and Annapolis, MD

Registration \$50
Students \$35

Pre-registration *strongly* encouraged

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