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The R/V Virginia is VIMS' new flagship research vessel.

Spring 2019 Newsletter

Virginia Institute of Marine Science

VIMS WELCOMES NEW RESEARCH VESSEL

The VIMS community officially welcomed its new flagship research vessel, the R/V *Virginia*, after many months of anticipation.

"This is a new day in marine research opportunities for VIMS," said Dean and Director John Wells. "The *Virginia* is the most modern, most capable research vessel in its size class anywhere in the United States."

The 93-foot vessel will allow VIMS scientists to monitor and study the Chesapeake Bay and its marine life much more effectively, and expand the institute's research footprint into the open waters of the coastal Atlantic from Maine to Florida.

Dr. Mark Luckenbach, Associate Dean of Research and Advisory Services at VIMS, said, "First and foremost, the *Virginia* provides a much-improved platform for our fisheries surveys, which are the foundation for the management of recreational and commercial fisheries, not only in bay waters, but for species up and down the East Coast."

The vessel has the equipment required for a variety of survey work as well as coring operations. Its stern- and side-mounted cranes

facilitate deployment of trawl nets and dredges, scientific buoys, and the new generation of robotic vehicles.

More than 500 square feet of lab space is divided into a wet lab for processing samples and a dry lab for conducting experiments. Networking systems are capable of handling the torrents of data collected by high-tech field sensors and lab instruments. A dynamic positioning system helps maximize safe operations

The R/V Virginia will be christened on April 25 and then open for public tours on Saturday, April 26. Information about tours is available on the VIMS website and in the e-Tidings newsletter.



John Olney, Jr., is captain of the R/V Virginia.

and data accuracy. The vessel's captain is John Olney, Jr., and homeport is the Ampro Shipyard & Diesel in Weems, Virginia.

RESEARCHERS SURVEY CRABBERS ON DERELICT POTS

Researchers at VIMS are using a mail survey to ask local crabbers to share their opinions and experiences related to commercial hard crabbing and derelict, or "ghost," crab pots. The results will identify crabber preferences for hypothetical activities and incentives that could help reduce the number of derelict pots and their impacts in Virginia's waters.

Studies show that crabbers may lose 12-20% of their pots each year to boat propellers, storms, and other causes. These lost pots can cause both ecological and economic impacts.

To gauge crabber opinions and preferences as regulatory agencies mull potential options for addressing the derelict-pot issue, VIMS graduate student Jim DelBene has created a Derelict Blue Crab Pot Survey, which he will mail this winter to the roughly 1,100 hard pot crabbers licensed in Virginia.

DelBene is a Master's student at VIMS' School of Marine Science. His involvement in the project is partly funded through a graduate research

Continued on next page

OYSTER AQUACULTURE LIMITS DISEASE IN WILD OYSTER POPULATIONS

A study initiated by Dr. Ryan Carnegie has found that oyster aquaculture operations can limit the spread of disease among wild populations of oysters. The findings are contrary to long-held beliefs that diseases are often spread from farmed populations to wild populations.

Dr. Tal Ben-Horin, the study's lead author and a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Rhode Island, said "The very act of aquaculture has positive effects on wild populations of oysters. The established way of thinking is that disease spreads from aquaculture, but in fact aquaculture may limit disease in nearby wild populations."

Carnegie, a study co-author and research professor at VIMS, brought the study team together as part of a Research Coordination Network on marine diseases funded by the National Science Foundation and led by Drew Harvell of Cornell University.

"We were interested in testing widely held assumptions about how diseases might impact shellfish aquaculture," said Carnegie, "specifically the idea that large numbers of farmed animals would produce higher levels of disease

that could spread to nearby wild or fishery resources. Our hunch was that oyster aquaculture could serve as a 'sink,' rather than a 'source,' for pathogens that primarily spread when oysters die, because the point of aquaculture is to remove oysters from the system before that happens."

By showing that this hunch is correct, Carnegie said the research "highlights an important ecological benefit that intensive shellfish aquaculture may provide." He added "This should help bolster the well-justified perception of shellfish aquaculture as a green industry worthy of public support, which this industry must have if it is to grow."

The study's findings have several implications for the management of wild and farmed oysters. The authors recommend establishing best management practices for the amount



Growers can use cages to protect oysters from being eaten. © K. Hudson/VIMS.

of time oysters remain on farms before harvest. They also suggest that aquaculture managers consider the type of gear—whether farmers hold oysters in cages and bags or directly on the seabed—when siting new oyster aquaculture operations near wild oyster populations.

"It's critical that we fully appreciate how aquaculture fits in the ecology of marine systems, and this study provides new perspective on this," said Carnegie. "It highlights an important ecological benefit that intensive shellfish aquaculture may provide."

Derelict Crab Pot Survey, continued from previous page

fellowship from Virginia Sea Grant and a William & Mary Green Fee award.

"The survey will ask watermen what they think about derelict pots, what activity - if any - they would prefer in order to address the issue, and what kinds of incentives they would

want for participating in that activity," said DelBene. "Successful mitigation strategies require buy-in from the crabbers," he added, "so it's essential to hear from them. The large number of licensed hard crabbers located throughout coastal Virginia make it difficult to hear from all perspectives."

DelBene hopes that his survey can provide commercial hard crabbers with a way to share their thoughts with the public, scientists, resource managers, and policymakers. He has already

teamed up with two focus groups of four to five watermen - one group in Hampton Roads and one on Virginia's Eastern Shore - and met with state resource managers at the Virginia Marine Resources Commission to tailor the survey's questions and wording for the intended audience.

Assisting him in reaching out to local watermen is J.C. Hudgins, president of the Virginia Waterman's Association and a member of the VMRC Crab Management and Advisory Committee.

Hudgins said the survey will provide an important sounding board for local watermen, many of whom downplay the magnitude of the derelict-pot issue. They cite among other considerations the sharp drop in the number of hard crabbers in Virginia during the past few decades - from just short of 2,000 in 1999 to just over 1,000 today - with an attendant drop in the number of crab pots deployed and potentially lost.



VIMS graduate student Jim DelBene (L) and his professional mentor J.C. Hudgins look over the water along a dock on Gwynn's Island in the Chesapeake Bay. © A. Devlin | Virginia Sea Grant.



INAUGURAL MASSEY MEDALLION HONORS ONE TRIBE ONE DAY TEAM WINNERS

The inaugural Massey Medallion was awarded to four VIMS staff members at a seafood feast for annual donors. Named for the Massey Foundation, the medallion honors that organization's long-term commitment to providing unrestricted financial support to VIMS, as inspired by E. Morgan Massey, a co-founder of the VIMS Foundation.

"I am proud to be associated with Dean Wells and his VIMS colleagues," said Massey. "Our family foundation has been a regular contributor of VIMS, and hopefully the medallion will inspire others to contribute regularly."

VIMS Dean and Director John Wells recognized Celia Cackowski, Abigail Hils, Carol Tomlinson, and Adrienne Washington for their efforts in encouraging students, faculty, and



The Massey Medallion honors the Massey Foundation's long-term commitment to financially support VIMS' mission. ©Josh Power

staff donations during William & Mary's One Tribe One Day annual giving event. The donations support institutional activities in research, education, and advisory service.

Speaking on behalf of the group during the ceremony, Tomlinson gave credit to the entire campus for helping the team reach their fundraising goals and noted how that success speaks to the broader culture of giving in place at VIMS. The team achieved an 85% participation rate among its members, helping to secure

the \$10,000 challenge set by the VIMS Foundation. As a result of its overall high performance, VIMS also received a \$15,000 prize in William & Mary's Gerdelman School and Unit Competition.



Gary and Ann Baise with Dean Wells



Guests enjoy science presentations.



Presentation of the Massey Medallion from left: Dean & Director John Wells, Celia Cackowski, Carol Tomlinson, Abigail Hils, Foundation Board Vice President Jeanette F. McKittrick, and campaign chair Marshall Acuff, Jr. ©Josh Power



A casual seafood dinner capped the evening.



MAKE A GIFT TO SECURE VIMS' FUTURE

The future is made brighter when people include the VIMS Foundation in their long-term giving plans, because that long-term support helps VIMS protect marine life, educate marine scientists, and keep coastal communities safe.

One of the simplest ways to do that is to name the VIMS Foundation as a beneficiary of retirement plan assets. According to Kirsten Kellogg, executive director of gift planning at William & Mary, many people don't realize they can use their retirement accounts for philanthropic giving.

"Using retirement plan assets to structure charitable giving affords great flexibility," Kellogg said. "Those who are 70 and a half or older can take advantage of the IRA Charitable Rollover to make outright gifts directly to charity now, but anyone can name the VIMS Foundation as a percentage beneficiary of a retirement account. The process is simple, does not require drafting a will or trust, and avoids the additional taxation retirement savings would incur when left to individual heirs," Kellogg added.

Debbie Bronk, president and CEO of Bigelow Laboratory and a former VIMS professor of marine science, supports VIMS through her estate plan. "Ideas and innovation require private support to flourish," Bronk said. "I'm happy knowing I will be helping the next generation of students build a life in science and make the world a better place to live."

"About one-third of the financial commitments for the current fundraising campaign are planned gifts," noted Amy Fisher, executive director of advancement at VIMS. "Including the VIMS Foundation in your estate planning helps the institute plan for the future."

Those who make future provisions for VIMS - or any area of William & Mary - in their estate plans, in any form or amount, are invited to join The Honorable Robert Boyle Legacy Society. Considered the father of modern chemistry, Boyle (1627-1691) instructed that a portion of his estate be invested in "pious and charitable uses." After his death some of those funds were devoted to the newly



Debbie Bronk's gift supports ideas and innovations at VIMS.

formed William & Mary. Today Boyle Society members gather each spring for special programming with students and faculty on campus. Their impact helps shape the future of the university.

If you would like more information about including VIMS in your estate plans or as a beneficiary of retirement assets, contact Fisher at aefisher@vims.edu/804-684-7107 or Kellogg at kakellogg@wm.edu/757-221-1019.

RESEARCH AND FUN HIGHLIGHT ANNUAL MARINE SCIENCE DAY

Each spring the VIMS Gloucester Point campus opens its doors to the public for Marine Science Day, offering fun and educational opportunities for all ages. This year Marine Science Day will be held on Saturday, May 18, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Visitors will explore the theme of "Search Out" to learn ways VIMS scientists discover solutions to help marine life and our marine environment. Come enjoy mini lectures and hands-on activities. Learn more about VIMS' work in the Chesapeake Bay and around the world as you visit with scientists and tour their labs. Bring kids to the Children's Pavilion to make marine science-themed crafts and participate in other fun activities. Take a walk through the teaching marsh, seine for aquatic animals in the York River, and visit the shellfish hatchery.

If you are feeling creative, register for the annual costume contest, then make a marine-themed costume. All ages can participate, and ribbons will

be awarded for most original plant or animal, most creative use of materials, best group costume, and best representation of a plant or animal.

There are activities to keep you busy all day! Check the Marine Science Day website regularly for updates. Admission and parking are free. Register at www.vims.edu/msd.

Correction to "Maury Society Event" article

Individuals honored were Amy and George Dick, Rob and Jennifer Latour, Althea MacWhorter, John and Patsy Wells, Harry and Judy Wason, and Jennifer Dillon.



Contestants get creative in the 2018 Marine Science Day costume contest.



WEST FELLOWSHIP SHOWS FAMILY'S HEART FOR MILITARY

Ron and Bonnie West believe in the power of paying it forward. Because of that, generations of VIMS and William & Mary students will benefit.

When Ron left the Navy after the Vietnam War ended, he started college at Christopher Newport University when it was still a branch of William & Mary. But even with the GI Bill and a small scholarship, the young veteran still needed an additional financial boost. It was his aunt, Ethlyn Atwood West, head of the business department at Hampton High School and a W&M alumna, who provided it.

"She was a very smart lady," Ron remembered. "She made a big difference in my life by paying my tuition and giving me the ability to go to school."

With a degree and his new bride, Bonnie, Ron moved to Northern Virginia to work in finance. He later became a certified financial planner and for 27 years ran his own business. After he sold the business and retired, he and Bonnie started the Ronald West Family Foundation to pay forward their own good fortune. While much of their



Ron and Bonnie West enjoy getting to know Sharolyn Burt, recipient of the Ethlyn Atwood West Gateway Scholarship.

support was going to help children and families, Ron hadn't forgotten his alma mater.

"I reconnected with William & Mary as a result of a boat trip from Annapolis to a Gloucester Point marina," Ron recalled. "We docked our boat, and there was a VIMS event poster that caught my eye." That's when he and Bonnie met Tammy Bacot, who ran the marina office and was involved with a charity auction at VIMS. She encouraged them to get involved, and their interest grew.

"It's been rewarding and very enjoyable," Ron said. "I've served on the VIMS Council and now the Foundation Board. Investments are in my blood, so I'm on the Budget and Finance Committee and serve as the VIMS Foundation representative to the William & Mary Foundation Board and Investment Committee."

"In honor of what my aunt did for me, we funded an endowment at W&M in her name - the Ethlyn Atwood West Gateway Scholarship. We knew that when we had the opportunity, we wanted to establish a fellowship at VIMS as well."

That opportunity came last year when Ron and Bonnie established the Ronald West Family Foundation Military and Veterans Fellowship Endowment at VIMS. The fellowship will help support a VIMS graduate student, with preference for students in ROTC, active duty military, and veterans. "I understand what it's like for them to come out of the military and not be able to put themselves through school," Ron said.

"We're excited about this scholarship," Bonnie said. "We appreciate being able to do what we can do to help future students with the same financial needs that we had."

FAMILIAR FACE TAKES ON NEW ROLE

Many of you have come to know Susan Maples through her work on VIMS After Hours lectures, Marine Science Day, and the *e-Tidings* newsletter. A long-time member of the VIMS staff, Maples started at VIMS as a public relations assistant and went on to grow the VIMS Outreach program into the success it is today, reaching 20,000+ people every year.



Susan Maples

maintain an office at Gloucester Point.

Maples is excited about the new opportunity. "I love our oceans, beaches, and the fascinating creatures that live in the sea, so I am naturally passionate about the mission of VIMS," she said. "I'm proud to be a part of this world-renowned institute that is

continuously seeking knowledge, educating tomorrow's leaders, and finding solutions to issues that threaten the health of our planet. Connecting with others who want to join us and support this important work is exciting to me."

Contact Maples at 804-684-7846 or susan@vims.edu.

Now Maples is playing a new role at VIMS. She recently accepted the position of director of development at the institute and will be based in Richmond, where she is opening a new office. Maples will work primarily with prospective leadership supporters in the Richmond and DC areas, and with supporters who have a special interest in educational outreach. She will still

FOR THE BOLD CAMPAIGN

Goal:
\$35 Million



Every gift to the VIMS Foundation underpins efforts to better understand and protect precious marine environments. Become a VIMS supporter by making a gift of any size at www.vims.edu/giving or by using the enclosed envelope.

Virginia Institute of Marine Science
1375 Greate Road
Gloucester Point, VA 23062

www.vims.edu/impact



SAVE THE DATE

Discovery Lab

Marine Careers

Tuesday, March 19, 6-8 pm

Family friendly program for all ages

After Hours Lecture

The Story of the Coelacanth

Thursday, March 28, 7-8 pm

Adults and 10+

A Scientist Walks Into a Bar: Graduate Student Edition

Monday, April 15, 6:30-8 pm

Alewerks Brewing
Company Satellite Taproom,
Williamsburg

Enjoy listening to graduate students present 5 minute fast-talks on their research

All events take place on the VIMS campus, unless noted.

Discovery Lab

Plastic Pollution in our Oceans

Tuesday, April 16, 6-8 pm

Family friendly program for all ages

One Tribe One Day

Tuesday, April 16

William & Mary's annual day of giving. Join us online and make a gift to support VIMS' mission

Public Tours of the R/V Virginia

Saturday, April 27, 10 am-3 pm

Yorktown Waterfront

Take a tour of VIMS' new research vessel

Marine Science Day

Saturday, May 18, 10 am-3 pm

VIMS's annual open house including exhibits, tours, activities, a costume contest, and more. All ages.

No charge for events. Reservations required for most events. Visit www.vims.edu/events or call 804.684.7061

It's BACK!

ONE TRIBE ONE DAY
APRIL 16

JOIN US FOR A DAY OF FUN AND GIVING!



The VIMS community comes out in support of OTOD.