

Some Things Change, Some Don't

In 1988, the Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped below 2000 (and, no, for the youngsters in the audience, there is not a zero missing), the Red Army began withdrawing from Afghanistan, a cyclone left thousands dead in Southeast Asia, and an invasive species (the zebra mussel) was discovered in the Great Lakes.

Also in 1988, The Oceanography Society (TOS) went from a fledgling concept to reality. In the last two decades, TOS has emerged as an extraordinary society, representing the leading edge in oceanographic research, education, outreach, operations, and technology. We have benefited from the leadership of all of our Councillors and of our Presidents: Jim Baker, Arnold Gordon, Margaret Leinen, Bob Duce, Ken Brink, Jim Yoder, Eric Hartwig, and Larry Clark. And we, too, have seen some things change, and some not.

What's changed?

- We built a system of superlative biennial ocean sciences meetings with our partner professional societies (but see below), in which a fair means of sharing revenues has finally been established.
- Membership in the society increased by 44% from 1988 to 2006.
- Our magazine, *Oceanography*, has grown to a full four-issue annual cycle, with a dedicated, paid editor.

What's stayed the same?

- Membership in TOS still represents an extraordinarily full spectrum of experience in the community, from the freshest minds of new students, to the most well-established portfolio of career policy-makers.
- We recalled the successes of a biennial ocean sciences meeting and have re-incorporated that into our business model.
- Membership in the society remained flat from 2000 to 2006.
- *Oceanography* is recognized as a leading publication of the oceanographic community.

Consequently, this score of years has taught us some lessons regarding the future. And it is in this spirit that I humbly suggest what *should* change and what *should* stay the same over

the next 20 years. So, in 2028, as I—in my dotage—sit back (on my patio at the High Desert Oceanographic Institute I plan on founding in Bend, Oregon) and read Volume 41 of *Oceanography*, my successor might marvel (chuckle) at the accuracies (inaccuracies) of my projections for our future.

What should change?

- TOS membership should be larger and more representative of the full community of interests in our field, including international and industry participants.
- *Oceanography* should be published 12 times a year, widely recognized and cited as a leading publication.
- Our legacy of TOS elected officials should include more women, minorities, and non-US scientists.
- The TOS Speakers Bureau should be a self-sufficient operation with a portfolio of dozens of technical experts.

What should stay the same?

- The regular meetings of the Society will continue to be held up as a model for how to conduct conferences in the oceanographic community.
- TOS recognition (e.g., Munk and Jerlov Awards, Fellowships) will continue to be a prestigious honor for international oceanographic scientists and educators.
- The spirit of TOS will remain as first defined in 1988: “to disseminate knowledge of oceanography and its application through research and education, to promote communication among oceanographers, and to provide a constituency for consensus-building across all the disciplines of the field.”

It is with these thoughts that I affectionately sign off in my capacity as TOS President, confidently pass the baton to my successor, Carolyn Thoroughgood, Professor of Marine Biosciences at the University of Delaware, and point our bow downwind to enjoy the following seas.



RICHARD SPINRAD, TOS PRESIDENT