

A MATTER OF DETAIL

THE CLASSIC MAINE LOBSTER BOAT, with graceful sheer and high bows, has a natural appeal that has evolved over many generations, beginning before the turn of the century. The beauty of these boats does not arise from fussy or pretentious ornamentation, nor from arbitrary class rules, but from a utilitarian design well suited to the task. Mahogany and teak give way to white oak and hemlock, and varnish is replaced by paint; yet to my eye there is no finer yacht than a Jonesport hull slicing a silvery sea.

Good publications, like good boats, result when form is closely linked to function. In this way the feedback process continually brings the product into closer alignment with the purpose it is intended to serve. If the initial design is good, the changes may be limited to subtle adjustments—perhaps a different font on the title page or a relocated chock on the foredeck—but in the long run it is the fine points of detail that bring lasting satisfaction.

Three years ago, *Oceanography* magazine was conceived with high aspirations and a desire to serve. We decided at the outset to go as far and as fast as resources would allow, with standards of quality and attention to detail our primary guides. We launched this adventure by drawing heavily on volunteer effort and by exploiting ad hoc arrangements. The method has worked well during the initial years, but the inevitable time has come to focus on goals of more frequent publication and long-term financial stability. To this end, the Council has decided to centralize the magazine's production facilities at the Washington, D.C., office, beginning with the spring issue of 1991.

When asked to serve as editor of this magazine, I expressed my willingness to set a course and get us "off soundings." With your help this has been accomplished, at the expense of a few rope burns and blisters perhaps, but also with a measure of success, as the results from the recent questionnaire demonstrate. Now it is time to consider new directions, with new editorial blood and new ideas; it is time for the next iteration of detail. This is my last issue as editor of *Oceanography*, but I look forward to assisting the new editor and the Council in the coming years. I am proud to have been present at the birth of this publication. Thank you all for your continuing support.

—David A. Brooks

FRONT COVER

Floating Flora: Diverse phytoplankton from a vertical net haul taken in Massachusetts Bay, February 6, 1990. The intersecting "airport-runways" in the upper part of the photomicrograph are *Stephanopyxis nipponica*, the "bracelet chain" of cells at the center are *Thalassiothrix longissima*, and the sphere at the bottom is *Coscinodiscus* sp. *Chaetoceros decipiens* is the genus and species of the multi-spined rectangles of cells. All of these are diatoms. The *Coscinodiscus* has a diameter of approximately 20 μm —about the size of the period at the end of this sentence. The small bright spots throughout are cyanobacteria with a diameter of $\sim 1\mu\text{m}$. Photo taken on a Zeiss microscope using bright-field phase contrast. (Photo courtesy of E. Haugen and L. Shapiro, Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences and University of Oregon.) See p. 47.



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