

SURFACE SALINITY, VISUALIZATION, CD-ROMS

THE FACT THAT WE MAY soon be able to virtually walk (or run) through our data is exciting. I have often felt that support for oceanography would be better if people could see ocean currents, river plumes, and herds of whales as easily as they can see birds, clouds, and cold fronts. Imagine sitting on the bottom of a virtual ocean looking up through variably translucent density layers . . . then you touch the control panel tweaking the trade winds a bit and watch the resulting adjustment. Imagine seeing the ocean from the viewpoint of a fish larvae or an oyster. The possibilities for research and education are nearly limitless. Wheless, Valle-Levinson, and Sherman describe some of the interesting aspects of virtual reality when applied to oceanography. Hopefully we all may soon be able to walk into a CAVE and explore a virtual ocean.

When Gary Lagerloef brought up the idea of a paper on remote sensing of salinity I was skeptical while at the same time knew that we desperately needed such measurements. His paper with Swift and Le Vine shows that the capability to measure interannual variability of surface salinity is near. Such measurements will no doubt help us understand the interplay between North Atlantic salinity and Deep Water formation. A sidebar piece by Jerry Miller describes an airplane mounted sensor that is nearly operational for observation of salinity in coastal waters.

This issue ends with Korgen's comments on the 1993 Briscoe and Evans article, Elizabeth Smith's review of CD-ROM technology in oceanography, and two Futures pieces one on coccolithophores by Christopher Brown and a second by Thomas Orsi on seafloor sediments.

—Larry Atkinson

WE'VE MOVED. . .

TOS Headquarters has moved to a new office. You can now reach us at:

4052 Timber Ridge Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23455
USA

Phone: (804) 464-0131; FAX: (804) 464-1759;
Internet: jrhhodes@ccpo.odu.edu



THE OCEANOGRAPHY SOCIETY

4052 Timber Ridge Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23455 USA
(804) 464-0131; fax: (804) 464-1759

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OCEANOGRAPHY

CO-EDITORS

Larry P. Atkinson
Center for Coastal Physical Oceanography
Old Dominion University
Crittendon Hall
Norfolk, VA 23529
(804) 683-5558
Internet: atkinson@ccpo.odu.edu

Connie Sancetta
National Science Foundation
Ocean Sciences Division
Room 725
4201 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22230
(703) 306-1586
Internet: csancett@nsf.gov

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

James W. Ammerman
Department of Oceanography
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843 USA
(409) 845-5105

Gregg J. Brunskill
Australian Institute of Marine Science
PMB No. 3, Townsville, M.C.
Queensland 4810, Australia
(077) 789 211; FAX (077) 725 852;
Internet: g_brunskill@aims.gov.au