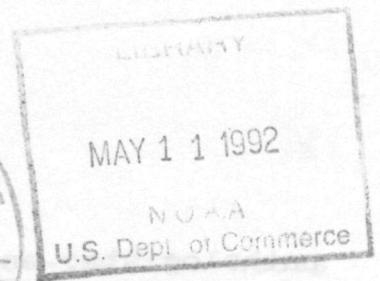




NOAA REPORT



NOAA Report is an administrative document, issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for the information and use of agency personnel.

May 20, 1987

COMING UP

American Geophysical Union spring meeting in Baltimore, Md., May 18-22.

Dedication of new National Weather Service Forecast Office facility in Norman, Okla., May 22-23.

NOAA Awards Luncheon, 11:30 a.m., at Andrews Air Force Base Officers' Club, Md., May 22.

Coastal Zone Expo 87 in Seattle, Wash., May 25-29.

USS Monitor expedition at the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary, Cape Hatteras, N.C., May 27-June 9.

Climate Symposium at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, May 27-28.

NOAA Prepares for Monitor Expedition:--NOAA is gearing up for its expedition to examine the wreck of the USS Monitor off the coast of North Carolina May 27 to June 9. Using a precise electronic grid, the expedition will map the site, locate and photograph any artifacts nearby, and examine the physical condition of the wreck to determine whether all or part of the Monitor should be raised. Earlier studies by NOAA indicate the Civil War ironclad, which rests upside down in 220 feet of water, 16 miles off Cape Hatteras, may be in danger of collapsing. A team of marine scientists, engineers, and archaeologists will use non-destructive remote sensing and photographic techniques to collect archaeological and architectural data.

Dr. Varanasi Heads NWAFC Division:--Dr. Usha Varanasi has been named director of the Environmental Conservation Division of NOAA's Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center in Seattle, Wash. She had been acting director since early February, leading a staff of 60 chemists, biochemists, biologists, oceanographers,

pathologists, and support personnel in research into the effects of pollution on the marine environment. Dr. Varanasi has been with the division since 1975. She has become an internationally recognized authority on the metabolism of carcinogenic hydrocarbons and their reactions with genetic material, DNA, in fish.

NOAA Awards Luncheon Countdown - This Friday:--NOAA Awards as well as Commerce Bronze Medal Awards will be presented at the luncheon slated for May 22 at 11:30 a.m. at the Andrews Air Force Base Officers' Club. To get there: take the Capital Beltway to Exit 9, follow signs to Andrews Air Force Base on Allentown Road. Enter the gate marked Air Force Systems Command and turn right immediately on to Perimeter Road. Turn left at Arkansas Road and proceed to the Officers' Club parking lot on the right. See you there!

NOAA Tests Pressurized Fish Oil Containers:--Tests at the National Marine Fisheries Service's Utilization Division laboratory, show that fish oil may be conveniently stored and dispensed in pressurized containers which retard spoilage. While the consumption of fish oil has increased dramatically during the last few years, the method of dispensing the oil is still done through bottles or capsules. Oil dispensed from bottles quickly oxidizes because of contact with air. Capsules, while less subject to oxidation, are expensive and often difficult to swallow even in small doses. NOAA is studying containers pressurized with nitrogen and equipped with metering valves in 1-, 2-, and 5-ml sizes that dispense the oil in consistent doses. The containers are FDA-approved and have been examined by National Institutes of Health researchers with positive feedback. Purified menhaden and salmon oil have been stored for one year with minimal autoxidation.

New System May Help Hurricane Trackers:--A new system for displaying and analyzing observations from research aircraft as they fly through hurricanes will be tested this season. It could help forecasters better anticipate changes in storm intensity and track. Hugh E. Willoughby, a hurricane researcher at NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory in Miami, says an earlier version of the computer-driven system was successful when tried out during Hurricane Charley last year. The system used an aircraft-satellite data link to communicate observations obtained at one-minute intervals by NOAA research aircraft flying into the storm. Forecasters at the National Hurricane Center in Miami were able to follow from the ground details of storm track and intensity changes almost as they occurred miles out over the Atlantic Ocean. Within an hour of the time of observation, Willoughby explains, a ground-based computer constructs the hurricane track and displays the data as radial profiles for use in storm forecasting. Willoughby has used flight data obtained during the last decade to develop the display and analysis system.

14,000 St. Louis Kids Plug Weather Safety:--The St. Louis Weather Service Forecast Office was the final judge in a recent contest in which 14,000 third, fourth, and fifth graders designed weather safety posters. Each class was provided a pamphlet on weather safety and discussed safety rules with teachers. The students then picked a rule to illustrate. The best posters from each school were judged by the Weather Service. Top prize was a real kid-pleaser: a telephone.

Research Planes Probe Ohio Air Chemistry:--Three heavily-instrumented research aircraft, operated by NOAA, the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), and the Department of Energy (DOE), will sample air chemistry near thunderstorms over Ohio next month as part of a national, long-term acid rain study. The study supports a DOE investigation into how cloud and storm systems process air pollutants. It is generally believed that thunderstorms can remove significant amounts of pollutants from the lower atmosphere and also are responsible for depositing significant amounts of acid rain. The Ohio studies, part of the National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program, a multi-agency investigation into the acid rain problem, will be conducted June 1-29.

Transportation To New NOAA Headquarters Discussed:--Having problems figuring out how you're going to get to work when NOAA begins moving all of its Washington-area personnel to Silver Spring, Md., later this year? Washington-area transportation experts will be on hand to answer your questions at a series of meetings at NOAA facilities scheduled for this month and next. Presentations will be made by Metro Rail, MARC Rail, and the Silver Spring Parking District, as well as the Montgomery County "Ride-On" Bus System, Ride-Sharing Program, and Traffic Engineering Department. Call Rose LaRocca at 377-1521 for a meeting schedule and space reservations.

Hurricane Forecasters Meet the Press:--A media briefing will be held May 27 at the National Hurricane Center in Coral Gables, Fla., to kick off the 1987 June-through-November hurricane season. It will be the last NOAA press conference for Dr. Neil Frank, retiring NHC head.

NOAA Reports Increased Methane Concentrations:--Methane, an important greenhouse gas which can contribute to climate change, has been found in increasing concentrations in the atmosphere around the globe by NOAA researchers. A team, headed by Dr. L. Paul Steele, has completed the first comprehensive mapping of methane distribution in the atmosphere, using data from 23 sampling locations around the world. Dr. Steele is associated with the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences, an organization sponsored jointly by NOAA and the University of Colorado. Major sources of methane are thought to be rice paddies, cattle, and marshlands, according to Steele.

Methane concentrations were measured in air samples collected weekly over a two-year period beginning in 1983. Globally averaged results showed an increase from one year to the next of 0.78 percent. It is too soon to say if the increase is significant, Steele says.

Like carbon dioxide and several other trace gases in the atmosphere, methane lets solar radiation pass through it to the Earth's surface, but traps resulting heat radiated from the surface in what is called "the greenhouse effect." If the concentration of methane in the atmosphere rises, more heat is contained, with the potential of changing world climate.

Federal Laboratories Consortium Meets:--NOAA was represented at the biannual meeting of the Federal Laboratories Consortium (FLC) in Lexington, Ky, on May 5-7, which focused on two themes - the state of the FLC as an organization and the level of involvement by the states in the technology transfer process. The Council of State Governments reports that 28 states now have offices to help with economic development programs whereby federally developed technology can be routed to state businesses. These states recognize the value of the available free technology to their economic development and have actively involved their university systems in the technology transfer process.

NOAA Radio Show Tells of Debris in the Sea:--It might be a discarded piece of plastic, metal, or glass. Or it could be lost gear from a fisherman's vessel. But whatever form it takes, marine debris is harming the animals of the sea. In the latest "Sea and Air" radio program distributed this week by the Office of Public Affairs, NOAA fishery biologist Jim Coe discusses the increasing amount of marine debris found in oceans worldwide and explains that marine mammals sometimes become trapped in lost fishing gear or ingest plastic material. Coe says it comes from ships at sea, the runoff of big-city sewage systems, and beachgoers on shore and it can mean the loss of limb or life for sea creatures such as lobsters, the northern fur seal, and Hawaiian monk seal. The program is distributed to 650 radio stations nationwide.

Savings Bond Drive Under Way:--The Department of Commerce 1987 Savings Bond Campaign will run from May 18 through June 19. Its goal this year is to increase employee participation by 10 percent and have 10 percent of existing bond buyers increase their allotments. Canvassers will be contacting all employees shortly with further details.

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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