NOAA REPORT

Vol. VII, No. 10 October 1998

Atmospheric ... U.S. Dept. of Com...

Coral Reef Task Force Meets: The first-ever meeting of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force was held this month at Biscayne National Park in Florida as part of the effort to protect coral reefs in American waters and around the world. NOAA Administrator D. James Baker and Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt hosted the meeting.

"Coral reefs are the rain forests of the sea," Baker said. "They are home to nearly a million species of marine life and have become an increasingly important source of new medicines. They are also the foundation of important tourism and fisheries economies. However, it is estimated that two-thirds of the world's coral reefs are dying, and that is why this meeting and initiative are so important."

The task force was created by an Presidential executive order as part of the Year of the Ocean observance.

News Briefs

Supercomputer to Boost Forecasts: NWS has awarded a contract to lease a new supercomputer that will significantly improve its weather, flood and climate forecasts for the country. The four-year, $35.6 million contract, awarded to IBM of Somers, N.Y., is contingent on the availability of funding.

The new high-performance Class VIII computing system will allow NWS's National Centers for Environmental Prediction in Camp Springs, Md., to operate more so-

continued on page 8

Scott Gudes, NOAA's new Deputy Under Secretary, has extensive experience in the U.S. Senate and the Office of Management and Budget working with NOAA issues.

New Deputy Under Secretary Comes With Senate, OMB Experience

'We Need to Think and Plan Like a Private Company'

Scott Gudes, NOAA's new Deputy Under Secretary, came to the agency in June from the U.S. Senate, where most recently he was minority Staff Director for the Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations Subcommittee. In that capacity, and in his previous position with the Office of Management and Budget, he worked closely with legislators and NOAA officials on ocean and atmospheric issues. A native of California, he received a B.A. from San Diego State University in 1976, and a Master's of Public Administration from California State University at Fullerton in 1978. He is married to Ann, an operating room nurse at Washington's Sibley Hospital.

NOAA Report spoke with him last month.

NOAA Report: The last person to hold this position, Diana Josephson, said that she saw the job as being chief operating officer, the top manager. Is that how you see it as well?

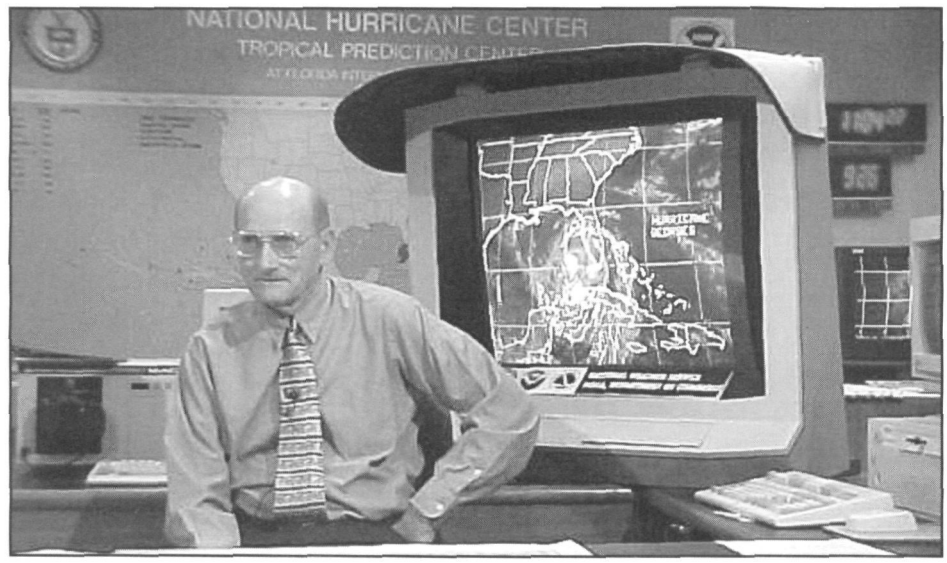
Scott Gudes: Yes. That's the way I think [NOAA Administrator] Dr. Baker and [Deputy Administrator] Terry Garcia see it, and how the Department sees it. I'm the person

continued on page 4

RECYCLED PAPER

Hurricane Georges Proves No Match for Resourceful Weather Service

Days before Hurricane Georges began its rampage across the Caribbean, Florida, and the Gulf Coast, forecasters at the National Hurricane Center were watching the storm's every move. During its genesis over the Atlantic, NOAA Hurricane Hunters were flying into Georges' eye. GOES satellites were zeroing in high above the earth, and at every shore, Doppler radars and National Weather Service forecast offices were waiting to intercept the Category Three storm.



JOHN JENSENIUS

Jerry Jarrell, Director of NOAA's National Hurricane Center in Miami, takes a breather between one of the many live interviews conducted with the media worldwide during the nine-day-siege of Hurricane Georges.

At the hurricane center in Miami, reporters were calling it "the hurricane that just wouldn't go away." Around the clock, for nine days, Director Jerry Jarrell and his staff plotted Georges' progress and reported their forecasts to an anxious world.

Challenging the hurricane staff even further, Georges was joined by three siblings, Ivan, Jeanne, and Karl—the first time in a hundred years that four hurricanes churned in the Atlantic at once. On top of that, the employees, still haunted by memories of Hurricane Andrew's destruction across south Florida, had to balance their service to the public with the need to protect their own homes and families.

"In addition to its vital forecast and tracking functions, the hurricane center was media central, with the staff conducting almost a thousand interviews and posting live images with every major media outlet in the U.S. and throughout the world," noted NHC public information officer Frank Lepore.

At the National Weather Service Key West office, forecasters stayed on the job even as the eye of the storm passed directly overhead. It was only when the office was surrounded with four feet of water did the staff seek higher ground. Earlier in Georges' siege, the weather service's San Juan office suffered a direct hit, and even then, the dedicated Federal employees remained on station.

"Never before have so many facets of NOAA come together to serve the public during a major hurricane," said Hurricane Center Director Jarrell. "In addition to our many skilled forecasters and hurricane hunters, we relied heavily on the weather service's field offices, River Forecast Centers, Hydrometeorological Prediction Center personnel, NOAA researchers, and a Hurricane Liaison Team which kept our efforts coordinated with the Federal Emer-

continued on page 6

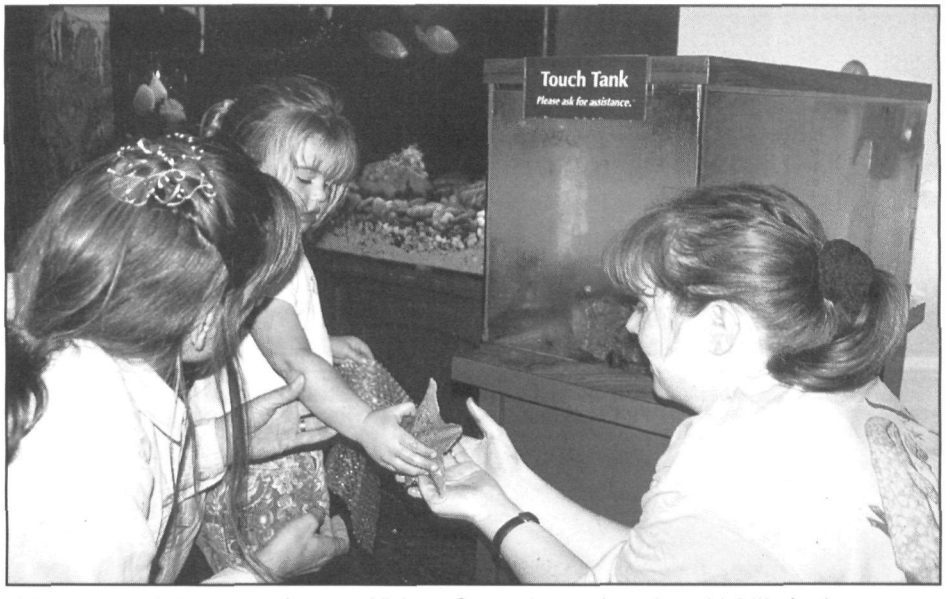
JOHN JENSENIUS

NOAA Aircraft Operations Center "Hurricane Hunter" pilots and FEMA Hurricane Liaison Team member wind down between missions into Hurricane Georges during a visit the National Hurricane Center; (left to right) Cdr. Ron Philippsborn; Cdr. Phil Kenul; Billy Zwerschke, Texas Department of Emergency Management; and LCdr. Brian Taggart.

Marine Sanctuary Visitor Center Opens in Shadow of Golden Gate Bridge

With the majestic Golden Gate Bridge as a backdrop and sunny blue skies overhead, the new Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Visitor Center has opened in San Francisco's Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA).

Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association Director Maria Brown kicked off the day's events at an opening ceremony that featured speeches by Sanctuary Manager Ed Ueber and GGNRA Assistant Superintendent Len MacKenzie. When the ceremonial ribbons were cut, more than 600 people streamed through the Visitor Center to learn about the creatures of the sea, feel the soft fur of seals and the baleen of whales, and listen to mysterious humpback whale songs.



Volunteers and visitors to the new Visitors Center learn about intertidal life in the sanctuary at the Touch Tank interactive exhibit.

The Center's superb location provides an unparalleled opportunity to introduce Bay Area residents and visitors to NOAA, the National Ocean Service, and the National Marine Sanctuary system. The Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Presidio are flooded daily with tourists, joggers, rollerbladers, bicyclists, and other San Franciscans.

National Park officials estimate that 700,000 people visit the GGNRA/Presidio each year, and that number is expected to increase dramatically when ecological restoration of the area is complete, sometime around the year 2000.

Visitor Center Manager Amber Mace emphasizes the accessibility of the new center. "Through our interactive displays, people can learn of the numerous outdoor adventures that await them in the Sanctuary. And here they can also learn about how to get involved in making a difference for the ocean," Mace says.

"This Visitor Center offers the public a unique opportunity found nowhere else in the National Marine Sanctuary system, and from the comments of visitors, has made a tremendous impact on the availability of information for locals and tourists," remarks Sanctuary Manager Ueber.

—Cathryn Poff

Ocean Year Concert Wows Crowd

A large, enthusiastic crowd attended the Year of the Ocean concert held at Constitution Hall in Washington, DC to hear musical selections with sea themes last month. NOAA Administrator D. James Baker quizzed the 500 school children in attendance and led them in an ocean pledge to become Ocean Ambassadors.

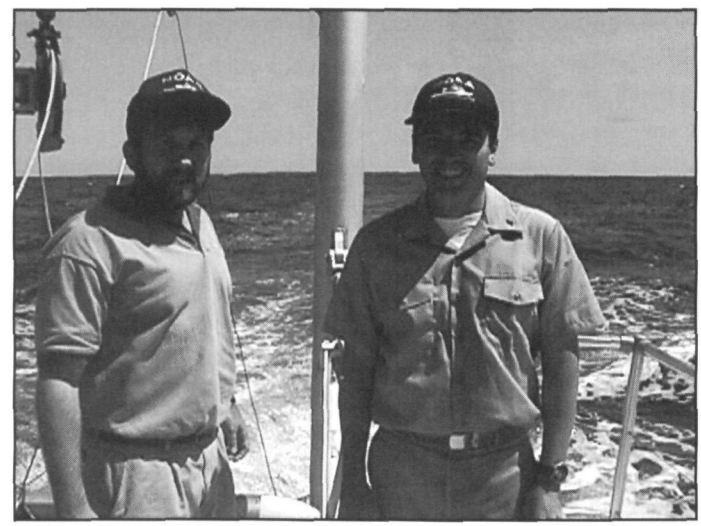
Focus On...

'NOAA is About Life on Earth': Gudes

continued from page 1

who has to deal with the nitty-gritty management issues of keeping NOAA running, whether it's human resources, budget, finance, facilities or contracting. I'm the person who has to worry about systems acquisitions coming in on budget.

I think it was Mark Twain who said "All generalizations are bad, including this one." With respect to the NOAA Deputy Under Secretary position, I think this applies. I am much more than the "management guy." The Deputy Under Secretary is the third ranking program and policy official in NOAA. During August I was acting head of NOAA at least for two weeks. So I need to focus not just on management issues but on NOAA's programs as well...why we need that computer or new laboratory or budget increase. Management is fine, but if I don't understand the actual programs and what our meteorologists, biologists, and oceanographers are doing....then I would be focusing "on the hole instead of the donut." It is *not* essential that I understand the engineering specifications for our NOAA polar-orbiting satellite sensors like the Advanced Microwave Sounding Unit...but it is critically important that I understand what data they collect and what difference they make in weather or sea surface temperature forecasts. So, I see the job as the chief operations officer as well as the third-ranking program/policy official.



Gudes (left) on a Chesapeake Bay mission with NOAA Corps Lt.j.g. Shep Smith, commanding officer of the Bay Hydrographer. *"Our real work," he said, "is ...going on out in NESDIS in Suitland, or in our Auke Bay Fisheries Lab, or AOML in Florida, or with our HAZMAT people in Seattle or at the Weather Forecast Office in Oxnard, California."*

I also see the job as being one member or player on our larger NOAA management team along with others like [NOS director] Nancy Foster, [NWS director] Jack Kelly, [OAR director] Dave Evans, [NMFS director] Rollie Schmitten, [NESDIS director] Bob Winokur, [NOAA Corps director] Admiral Stubblefield, [Legislative Affairs director] Brian Wheeler, and [Public Affairs director] Lori Arguelles, to name a few. It is about leadership, but it is also about being a part of a whole. I tend to think in terms of teams and consensus, and not in terms of a hierarchical organization.

OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

NR: What are your top operational priorities?

Gudes: Okay, you asked.

First, I want NOAA to continue to excel at its mission and strategic goals. I want the Weather Service to improve lead times for tornado and severe storm warnings. NESDIS to improve the visualization of NOAA satellite products. OAR to create an ARGO ocean-based observation system so we know more about Pacific Ocean interaction. Fisheries to maintain sustainable stocks. NOS to find ways to respond quickly to harmful algal blooms.

Pushing forward science and our environmental stewardship mission...this is the easy part of my job, because it is what most people in NOAA focus on anyway...improving the effectiveness of our programs and service to the public. You only need to visit one of our OAR or NOS or NMFS labs to see how motivated and hard working

our employees are. For me, this means doing what I can to support them and fight for our programs.

Second, NOAA needs to show that it can acquire major systems on schedule within budget. Unfortunately, we don't have a good track record in this area. Many of our problems with Congress and the Secretary of Commerce result from cost overruns and a sense up there that NOAA does not take system costs seriously.

So, I'm going to work hard to scrub requirements for systems, oppose increased requirements and changes, and hold program managers accountable for bringing in the systems within budget.

Third, I want to focus on the workforce and making NOAA a better place to have a career. I have been pretty fortunate, because in my 20-year Federal career, I have had some great jobs and have always been in positions in which I look forward to going to work. That's what I want to create for others.

This is, in part, what our NOAA diversity program is about. It is what our partnership program is about. It is what our professional developmental programs are about. When I was a Presidential Management Intern, early in my career at the Office of the Secretary of Defense, management officials were willing to give me rotational assignments and challenging opportunities. That is what I want to ensure is available here.

"It is not essential that I understand the engineering specifications for our NOAA polar-orbiting satellite sensors like the Advanced Microwave Sounding Unit," Gudes said, "but it is critically important that I understand what data they collect and what difference they make in weather or sea surface temperature forecasts."

I meet with Stu Remer, our head of Human Resources, once a week. I started that the first week I got here. He has the most talented staff, and they are can-do people. You know, whether you are the U.S. Army, or a company, or NOAA—people are your greatest resource, your most important asset. We need to ensure that NOAA continues to attract and retain talented people.

Good managers develop their people. When a crisis situation hits is not the time to find out if we can handle it. We need in NOAA to think more about what is called "succession planning"...about training our people to move up and become the program managers, Assistant Administrators and Deputy Assistant Administrators and Deputy Under Secretaries of the next decade.

I'd like to see more *esprit de corps* and group activities. Back in the Senate, we do more of that. Years ago, when I was at OMB, I used to see all the NOAA budget people hanging out after work. I don't see as much of that camaraderie anymore. We need to do more of those kinds of morale-

continued on page 6

'I Want to Focus on the Workforce and Making NOAA a Better Place to Have a Career'

continued from page 5

building activities in NOAA.

I could talk on this goal at length ...and take this whole interview to speak about people issues. But, let me say finally that I want to break down dysfunctional us-and-them distinctions like "headquarters and field." At an early point in my career, I worked out in San Francisco and learned a lot about field/headquarters interactions and problems. At NOAA, we need to keep communication constant and in both directions. I have been to Kansas City, Seattle, Charleston and Long Beach since joining NOAA in June. I intend to get out to the field frequently.

Fourth, I want to focus on infrastructure. We need to focus on having the tools to do our jobs effectively 10 years from now. I want to bring more attention to improving and replacing our ships, aircraft, satellites, radars, facilities and information systems that enable us to carry out our mission, and to focus on supportive programs like environmental cleanup and maintenance and repair.

Other agencies do this better than we do, and they have had more success with the Congress and securing funding for hardware and information systems. Also, I want to focus more management attention on effectively using the assets that we have. For example, when I chaired the Fleet Allocation Council recently, I spent half the time asking why we program so few flying hours for our new G-IV hurricane surveillance and research aircraft.

Fifth, and finally, I want to focus on what I will refer to as marketing and promoting the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We have the best mission of any agency around; that is why I decided to come here rather than another agency. One of NASA's contractors has this statement "The Space Station — it is about life on earth." Well, with all due respect, they've got it wrong. NOAA is about life on earth. About the oceans, living marine resources, and the atmosphere. We have the best people. And, frankly, we have the best logo in the Federal Government.

Now, I define strategic planning differently than most people in NOAA. I think that we need to think and plan just like private companies in America. We need to focus on customers and new products. We need to think about the skill mix we will need to excel. We need to look at what services we provide now, and which of those need to be changed or "reinvented" or discontinued. Most importantly, we need to think about who are our competitor agencies and how we need to out-compete them.

"You only need to visit one of our NOAA OAR or NOS or NMFS labs to see how motivated and hard working our employees are," Gudes said.

continued on page 7

NWS Offices Earn High Marks on Hurricane Georges Coverage

continued from page 2

gency Management Agency and emergency management state and local offices."

The Weather Service Southern Region Headquarters in Fort Worth, Tex., also played a key role, staffing a hurricane watch office for more than 200 hours as the storm struck the region at three different locations.

"Our people didn't waiver in their commitment to keep their neighbors informed," said Bill Proenza, Southern Region director. "They stayed and worked even in the face of a terrible storm threatening their families and homes. It makes us all so proud of the courage and dedication of our employees," Proenza said.

NOAA's multi-faceted hurricane response did not go unnoticed: A University of South Alabama poll revealed that NWS employees "earned very high marks" during Hurricane Georges—87 percent of respondents rated the weather service's performance as good or excellent. And from the St. Petersburg Times: "Many thanks for a job well done."

—Bob Chartuk

Gudes: 'We Need to Focus on Customers And New Products'

continued from page 6

My own view is that by promoting NOAA and identification with NOAA, we can have a better chance of getting the appropriate support for our programs and people. We have a better chance of competing effectively with other Federal agencies in the future.

In saying this, I don't mean to undercut or in any way diminish the importance of our NOAA Line Offices. For example, I'm the Weather Service's number one fan. I think it is great that our NWS management and employees wear the NWS logo. I wear our NWS pin too. But, I do believe that NOAA corporate identity also is important and essential to promoting the other goals I have outlined...like getting the funds to do new research and rebuild our infrastructure.

You know, when the Nation turns its televisions on each night to get the latest tropical storm update, it would be good if they realized the National Hurricane Center was one of NOAA's stars. I'm afraid they don't know this. Based on press coverage, I'd bet that most probably think its part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or an independent agency. If Congress wants to respond to the need for making the prediction of hurricane landfall, precipitation forecasts and observations more accurate, I want to ensure that they understand it is NOAA—the NWS, NESDIS, OAR, the Corps—who are responsible, not FEMA. So you see, there is a method to my madness on this corporate identity issue.

This relates back to my human resource goals. I would like to see more cross-NOAA personnel moves. Some of our Assistant Administrators have worked in two or more line organizations. I'd like to see us promote this kind of cross-line assignment at all grade levels.

So, there are a few of my goals. I guess that's enough!

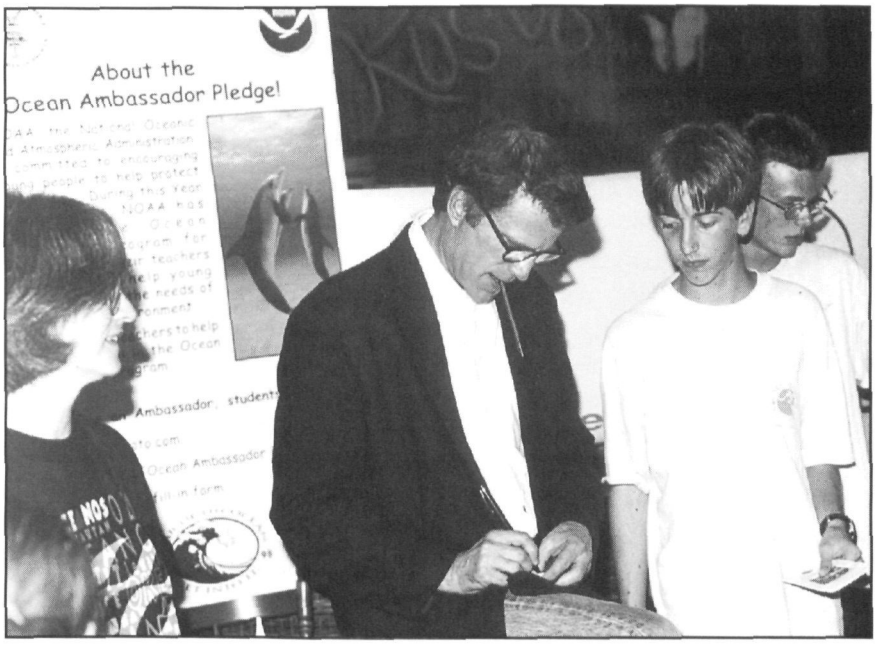
DIFFERENCE FROM CONGRESS

NR: You're on the opposite side of the table, now, than you were when you were with OMB and the Appropriations committee. How is it different in the Executive Branch?

Gudes: Interesting question. In some ways it is very different.

The first thing that hits me is how much more complex and difficult it is to get anything done in the Executive Branch. One gets a sense quite quickly of how complex an agency of 12,000 people is, especially one as geographically dispersed as NOAA. We have so many meetings here compared to the Hill. I actually think it is a treat to get to use my phone and return calls. Yet for all our meetings and information-sharing efforts at NOAA, it is hard to really know what is going on when you are housed down in a corner of the Hoover Building.

continued on page 8



Pledging to Care for the Ocean

American Oceans Campaign founder and actor Ted Danson (center) *unveiled the Ocean Ambassador pledge campaign designed to have people make a long-term commitment to care for the ocean last month in Santa Monica, Calif. "The ocean is vital to life on earth," said Ed Cassano, sanctuary manager for NOAA's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. "This pledge will help ensure that our children understand the importance of being ocean-aware and sea-smart." The Ocean Ambassadors pledge is featured in the last in a series of 30-second television public service announcements, which Danson also narrates.*

continued from page 1

phisticated models of the atmosphere and oceans to improve weather, flood and climate forecasts for the country.

Recreational Fishing Survey Coming: NMFS has awarded a three-year, $8 million contract to conduct surveys that track the effort and catch of recreational saltwater fishermen throughout the country.

Macro International Inc. of Calverton, Md., will conduct the 1999 Intercept Survey for collection of comprehensive marine recreational fishing data as a component of the Fisheries Service's annual Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey. The agency estimated that more than 179,000 shore and dockside interviews with anglers along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts will be conducted during the three-year survey.

News Briefs

Record Tornado Outbreak in Okla.: At least 20 tornadoes cut a swath of destruction through parts of Oklahoma on Oct. 4, breaking a record for the most tornadoes ever reported at any time in the United States during the month of October since records began in 1950.

Preliminary figures from the NWS Storm Prediction Center, the leading center for severe weather forecasting, indicate 13 tornadoes touched down in western and central Oklahoma, and seven in the eastern part of the state.

"We never want people to be lulled into a false sense of security, simply because the peak season for tornadoes may have passed," said Gary Grice, SPC deputy director. "Tornadoes can occur at any time during the year any place in the United States." Grice said the tornadoes were caused by an unstable air mass.

Gudes: 'Real Work' Goes On Not in DC, But in the Field

continued from page 7

Our real work is not going on in room 5810 on 15th Street and Constitution Avenue NW but rather out in NESDIS in Suitland, or in our Auke Bay Fisheries Lab, or AOML in Florida, or with our HAZMAT people in Seattle or at the Weather Forecast Office in Oxnard, California. I spend so much time dealing with administrative issues that I have to work to get to deal with program, output issues. It is rewarding when I do. Because when I get to focus on the "real" stuff at NOAA, it is great. Fortunately, Dr. Baker helps by scheduling science seminars and bringing me in for discussions with our constituents.

I suppose the other difference is one that I knew I would have. On the Hill you learn to depend on yourself. You become a one-man show. If the Senator needs a speech in 15 minutes for the floor, you do what it takes and create one on the computer. If you need an amendment—you draft it. If you need a budget analysis...you do it. You handle it. But, there aren't many people around to help. You become awfully self-contained. Now, I'm in a position where I work for a lot of people, and they work for me. Learning to delegate and not do it myself—sometimes that doesn't come naturally. I need to work on that.

CALIFORNIA LEADERSHIP

NR: Is it a coincidence that you, Dr. Baker, and [Deputy Administrator] Terry Garcia are all from southern California?

Gudes: Interesting point. Though Terry might say he spent as much time in Florida.

I suppose when you think about it, southern California is a NOAA kind of place. It has lots of coastline with lots of population growth. Fishing can be pretty good. Air quality issues are important. People pay attention to water quality issues and polluted runoff from winter rains. I remember the furor over the Santa Barbara oil spill when I was a kid. Even though the weather is generally good, people really focus on the daily weather forecast. Rain storms and are like snow in the east, and El Niño events are big news. Long before NOS focused on our coastal mission, southern Californians paid attention to the daily surf forecast.

So maybe it isn't a coincidence after all. But, it was a handy factoid to mention during the Southwest NOAA Constituent Conference in Long Beach!

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