



# E-SLATE

## American Academy of Underwater Sciences (AAUS)

### EDITORIAL NOTE -February 2018

Welcome to the February E-Slate. In this edition, we have an update from the President, open nominations for the Conrad Limbaugh Scientific Diving Leadership Award, announce several student summer opportunities and job openings, and preview multiple upcoming events. We also take a look at Glenn Safrit's 40 year career as a DSO on the eve of his retirement. We welcome news, announcements, job postings, and images of underwater work at [aaus@disl.org](mailto:aaus@disl.org). Current and past issues of the E-Slate are available at [www.aaus.org](http://www.aaus.org).

### President's Message

The New Year has arrived, and so has your new Board of Directors. We're all eager to continue working towards the success of the Academy.

As I noted last month, AAUS has a Strategic Plan ([http://secure.aaus.org/uploads/protected/files/strategic\\_planning\\_2014\\_2015/strategic\\_plan\\_2015.pdf](http://secure.aaus.org/uploads/protected/files/strategic_planning_2014_2015/strategic_plan_2015.pdf)) but fiscal realities force us to be strategic in our approach to enacting the plan. With the direction of the membership who were able to attend the Annual Meeting in Michigan (thank again to everyone involved!), we came up with a list of priorities for our work in the coming months. Essentially the membership was asked to rank the following issues, all of which will require funding, based on perceived need.

- The top issue was support for the office staff/administrative services (i.e., Heather, and everything she does for AAUS). The 2017 BOD voted for a modest increase in Heather's salary, but she is still not a full-time employee (I know, hard to believe...); this is a target that will require new funds and we remain committed to getting there.
- A close second issue for membership is the development of a new AAUS website. DAL Mike Anghera was tasked with researching options and producing a request for proposals. The BOD has received some preliminary "bids", and once the sticker-shock subsides we will start the process of thoroughly vetting contractors and products. AAUS has contracted support for the current website for another 2 years, which should allow ample time to bank funds for this costly venture AND to get membership feedback on website options.
- The final four issues fall out as a virtual dead heat, and a distant third priority for the membership. These include: a) DSO qualification, b) site visits, c) an updated

dive logging platform, and d) an e-learning platform. The development of a DSO qualification program is spearheaded by your past-President Rick Gomez, and DAL Jim Hayward are leading the site visit program; we expect progress on this over the coming calendar year. We will also continue to work towards the new dive logging and e-learning opportunities for membership; they are important for AAUS Statistics and Training, but they will require new resources.

- Additionally, a social media initiative developed by Secretary Jessica Keller will provide organizational outreach and fund-raising via Facebook and Instagram accounts.

Next month the BOD meets in Atlanta to further these and other business agendas, to integrate the new Board members, and to provide our semi-annual DSO Training Workshop. As always, we welcome your comments on the service provided by the Academy (77% of respondents in MI indicated that the AAUS is meeting most of their programmatic needs!). In addition, if you would like to work on any of the Strategic Plan initiatives, or you see a need for a new direction, please contact us at: [aaus@disl.org](mailto:aaus@disl.org)

We look forward to working with you in the coming year!

Marc Slattery  
*University of Mississippi*

### NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### 2018 AAUS Dues

2018 AAUS OM dues are now due. OMs received an electronic invoice during the first week of January. You can pay the invoice by clicking a link within the invoice, logging in to your OM profile at [www.aaus.org](http://www.aaus.org) or you may mail in a check to the NEW address, listed below.

AAUS  
PO Box 9067  
Mobile, AL 36691-9067

#### AAUS Statistics Due

Organizational Members of the American Academy of Underwater Sciences agree to submit summary statistics each year of dives, modes of diving and any incidents associated with their program. Annual stats may be submitted at <http://stats.diveaaus.org>. It is strongly recommended that you fill in the blank form by hand before attempting to submit your stats. Inputs are error checked and you may get a message that your totals do not agree. Please do not include

any dives that do not meet AAUS standards, i.e. recreational dives accepted by the DCB as proficiency dives. AAUS statistics collection criteria and definitions are at [http://stats.diveaaus.org/Reporting/Stats\\_definitions.asp](http://stats.diveaaus.org/Reporting/Stats_definitions.asp). Statistical summaries will be accepted beginning January 01, 2018 and considered late on (and after) 01 April.

### **2018 Conrad Limbaugh Award for Scientific Diving Leadership Nominations**

Nominations are open for the 2018 Conrad Limbaugh Award for Scientific Diving Leadership. Presented biennially to an individual who has made a significant contribution in diving safety and diving leadership on behalf of the scientific diving community. Nominations close March 31, 2018. For more information on eligibility and the nomination form, please visit [aaus.org/leadership\\_award](http://aaus.org/leadership_award). Nominations can also be submitted directly to [jheine@ucsd.edu](mailto:jheine@ucsd.edu).

### **2017 DSO Meeting Video**

The video of the 2017 DSO meeting in Alpena, Michigan is now available. It was our initial intent to make these videos available on our website. However, the file size is prohibitive. Members can access the 6-part video for downloading through a shared google drive folder. Please contact the AAUS office for access.

### **AAUS Social Media**

In addition to our current Facebook page, AAUS now has an Instagram account: AAUS.Scientific.Diving. Follow us! The goal is to increase our social media presence and share the incredible work AAUS scientific divers are conducting around the world. Take pictures with your AAUS swag (hat, shirt, koozies, etc.) and we will post it! The idea is to track AAUS and scientific divers in a 'Where's Waldo' fashion as a way to gain interest and promote science. If you need a hat or koozie for this adventure, check out the website or contact Heather. Any other images, videos, stories, or other things you would like shared, please send them to: [AAUSSocialmedia@gmail.com](mailto:AAUSSocialmedia@gmail.com). Please include captions, hash tags, etc. that you would like to be included. Finally, if you are interested in helping with this initiative, please contact Jessica Keller at the social media address above.

## **STUDENT OPPORTUNITES**

### **Summer REU for Undergraduate Science Divers**

The USC Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies invites undergraduate students interested in ocean and marine science to spend a summer conducting research on Catalina Island, CA. Students certified as AAUS research divers that are interested in studying invertebrate and/or fish ecology are encouraged to apply. Applications will be accepted until February 16<sup>th</sup> and the course runs from June 4 until August

10, 2018. More information about the program, including the application, can be found at <http://dornsife.usc.edu/wrigley/reu/>.

### **Marine Subtidal Ecology and AAUS Science Diver Course**

The University of Washington, Friday Harbor Laboratories is offering a Marine Subtidal Ecology course June 11- July 13, 2018. This course focuses on learning key ecological concepts, skills, and tools applied to the subtidal marine environment. Of primary importance, students will be trained as AAUS scientific divers. Students will conduct group and independent research projects addressing a tractable question in temperate subtidal ecology; the skills and principles of ecology will, however, be broadly applicable to underwater science. The training will include visits (and input!) from scientific diving instructors from around the NW, evening discussions of accident case studies, and extensive pool and in-water skills and rescue drills. More information is available at <https://fhl.uw.edu/courses/course-descriptions/course/marine-subtidal-ecology-2018> or email [pema@uw.edu](mailto:pema@uw.edu).

### **REEF 2017 Internship**

Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) in Key Largo, FL is now accepting applications for the 2017 Marine Conservation Internship. REEF's Marine Conservation Internship provides an in-depth look into REEF's Volunteer Fish Survey Project and Invasive Lionfish Program. The internship provides an array of diverse experiences including scientific diving opportunities, outreach and education, data collection and management, non-profit operations, and public speaking. Application deadline is March 07, 2017. <http://www.REEF.org/internship>

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Spring 2018 AAUS DSO Orientation**

The AAUS DSO Orientation will be held on Monday, February 26, 2018 in conjunction with the spring AAUS Board of Directors meeting in Atlanta, Georgia at the Georgia Aquarium. This program is designed to provide an orientation for new Diving Safety Officers and for existing DSOs who would like more information and an update on particulars of running a Diving Safety Program at their respective institutions or organizations. This program is required for DSOs at new AAUS Organizational Members and DSOs participating in the AAUS Certification Program. Also open to non AAUS organizations/DSOs who would like more information about AAUS. The cost for this one day workshop is \$100. Please register at [https://secure.aaus.org/new\\_dso\\_orientation](https://secure.aaus.org/new_dso_orientation).

## Northeast DSO Meeting

The Northeast Diving Officers will convene for an informal meeting at the Boston Sea Rovers show, Saturday March 10, 2018, 1-4pm. Stay tuned for meeting room location and other details. See the Sea Rovers website for details about this weekend (<https://www.bostonsearovers.com>). Contact UMaine DSO Chris Rigaud for questions or to submit agenda topics ([crigaud@maine.edu](mailto:crigaud@maine.edu)).

## The Functional Roles of Mesophotic Coral Reefs in the Anthropocene

The Mesophotic Coral Reef Ecosystems Gordon Research Conference will be held June 18-22, 2018 at Bates College in Lewiston, ME. The number of scientists studying MCEs is growing rapidly and includes coral reef ecologists, molecular biologists, oceanographers, physiologists, biogeochemists, paleo-climatologists, fisheries biologists, microbiologists, chemical ecologists, population geneticists and managers interested in resource conservation. This GRC will attract experts from around the world, as well as students and post-doctoral researchers, to present new data and evaluate the evidence supporting the multiple factors controlling the structure and function of MCE communities worldwide. More information at <https://www.grc.org/mesophotic-coral-reef-ecosystems-conference/2018/>

## Excerpt from Career Aquatic

By Mary Lide Parker  
January 12th, 2018

At the end of his 40-year career at the UNC Institute of Marine Sciences, Glenn Safrit reflects on the most important lessons he has learned—and taught—in the ocean.

In 1974, he (Glen Safrit) graduated from NCSU with a degree in fisheries and wildlife biology, and took a job at the NC Division of Marine Fisheries in Morehead City. During his first year there, Safrit read the Research Diver's Manual and enrolled in a dive instructor course taught by the author. During that time, he received a job offer for a position in Little Washington, North Carolina, but he turned it down as the job did not involve any diving and he didn't want to leave Morehead City.

Because the UNC Institute of Marine Sciences is located right next door to the Division of Marine Fisheries, Safrit often interacted with researchers there, including Alphonse Chestnut, director of IMS at the time. It wasn't long before Chestnut offered him a job.

When Safrit started working at IMS in 1977, scuba diving was still a relatively new sport. The Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) was created just 11 years earlier in 1966, while the Diver Alert Network (DAN) followed in

1980. By the late 1980s, options for professional scuba training remained limited—especially in small-town, eastern North Carolina.

Safrit helped change that. With support from the faculty at IMS, he began the process of creating an official diving program. It took a year (and a lot of paperwork) to ensure the institute met every standard required to join the American Academy of Underwater Sciences (AAUS). In 1991, the institute was granted membership, and has remained active ever since.

“The dive safety officer position can seem thankless at times,” says Niels Lindquist, a researcher who has worked at IMS for over three decades. “Glenn had to repeatedly remind student divers (and often faculty members, too) to log their dives so he could submit the required annual dive program summary to AAUS.” Safrit always approached the tedium of paperwork with the same cool and collected manner he employed while diving.



“He is particularly good with students, many of whom are often not fully aware of the challenges and dangers of working on and around the water,” says Rick Luettich, the current director of IMS.

## Community Organizer

“Being the senior scientific dive program administrator in our area, Glenn has always been a ‘go to’ resource whenever a question arose or there was a problem to be solved at one of the other labs,” says Steve Broadhurst, the dive safety officer at Duke.

Scuba diving, by nature, is a collaborative endeavor—one should never dive alone. “Getting to know the personnel and standards of other organizations is always helpful when you need to dive with another program,” Safrit says.

To that end, in 2010, Safrit helped start the Coastal Carolina Scientific Diving Association (CCSDA). The membership of the CCSDA includes every lab's dive program, and as Safrit

says, “Everybody gets a chance to meet and interact with divers from other Universities and Government organizations. IMS divers have been involved with dive operations with many of the CCSDA members.”

After 40 years, Safrit is ready for retirement, but thankful for all the years he spent at IMS. “It’s a great place to work. I like the people, too—there’s lots of different projects, and always something new.”

But at the end of the day, Safrit’s professionalism and dedication to excellence has boiled down to one thing — “I like the ocean,” he says. “When I get in the water, I think, *I have been really blessed.*”

Full Article available at  
<https://endeavors.unc.edu/career-aquatic/>



The mission of the American Academy of Underwater Sciences is to facilitate the development of safe and productive scientific divers through education, research, advocacy, and the advancement of standards for scientific diving practices, certifications, & operations.

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