In this edition of Aquarium Science News, three current students share their personal reflections on the Aquarium Science program. In particular, we will focus on and time we spent with the National Visiting Committee last term. See Bruce’s Director’s Corner below for more details on this unique program.

As for me, I found the visit very encouraging. I realized how much I had actually learned in my first five weeks, as well as how far I still have to go. I am very grateful to this year’s committee members for taking the time to share their input with us.

More generally, I am amazed by the sheer volume of experiences I accumulated, having only been in the program since September. I have handled and fed animals I could not have identified a few months ago. I have learned to think and work in new ways. I have stumbled and I have carried on. I have made new friends and learned from them all.

Editor’s Note By Harrison Baker

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DIRECTOR’S CORNER By Bruce Koike

A Season of Change

Significant changes took place at the college this past year. With the ending of the spring 2009 term, we transitioned from the leased spaces to the new campus located just south of the Yaquina Bay Bridge. Summer tasks included moving out, moving in and hosting an internship class (from a remote location...Japan!). I was actually the tag-along individual on this trip, but my wife, Mary, was kind enough to allow time to explore the Osaka Aquarium and Port of Nagoya Aquarium. Mary was part of a group of educators meeting with Japanese counterparts. Interestingly, the sessions took place at the Lake Biwa Museum and Aquarium...yippee!

The scenery changed for program graduates as the summer internship closed the books on the 2009 graduating class. This year’s graduates are now working at Cameron Park Zoo, Discovery World at Pier Wisconsin-Reiman Aquarium, Underwater Adventure, and Oklahoma Aquarium. In addition, two of this year’s graduates were hired by Ripley’s Aquarium in the Smokies (Gatlinburg, TN) and another is employed by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. There are now seven graduates who are employed by this particular agency, with most working in the fish propagation division. Finally, one graduate, Kenny Turk, broke new ground by being the first graduate to earn a Baccalaureate degree (Business Administration). Congratulations to Kenny!

A change in venue was experienced by the 20 new individuals who came here to develop as aquatic animal husbandry specialists. These individuals represent Alaska, Arizona, California, Idaho, Kansas, New Hampshire, South Dakota, and Washington (2). Even within Oregon, students live from 5-7 hours away which required relocating to Newport. Recently many of these individuals invested in themselves by interacting with this year’s National Visiting Committee. The committee consisted of Jon Hoech (Monterey Bay Aquarium), (continued on page 4)

Committee members met individually with each life support system group to review their projects. (From left: John Rupp, Cara Johnson, Chelsea Wake and Kaite Potter)
**Student Voices**

**Alice McKinstry**

Over my short time being involved with aquariums and the work that goes on within them, I have learned many things. The most valuable, I believe, is this: Get to know your co-workers.

Upon interacting with the National Visiting Committee this past term, I came to realize that the term 'co-workers' has expanded quite a bit for me. In an industry such as this, it's important to know not just those who work in the same facility, but those who work in the same field, as well. Meeting the Committee has opened my eyes to this.

During the faux interviews, I learned a lot. I learned what to expect in an interview, and I got to have some one-on-one time with potential future employers. It was very eye-opening, and I enjoyed it.

Having these chances to get to know major players in the industry is incredibly valuable, in my opinion. I felt like it was an amazing opportunity to get to know some professionals, to be able to ask questions and hear their insights and anecdotes. But more than that, I felt like it was really a chance for them to get to know us, as well; a time for them to see who would be coming to work in the industry in the next few years.

I know that I'll always remember the things that they said to me, and I can't wait to run into them again in the future.

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**Rob Kirkelie**

I have to say that I was more nervous for my faux-interviews with participants from the National Visiting Committee than I have been during interviews I have had for employment in non-aquaria related jobs.

I have found that being nervous is a good thing, however, because it keeps me in check with my desire for the position that I am applying for. Since I've wanted to work in a public aquarium for more than half my life, you can imagine how anxious I was to meet and be interviewed by people who actually do work my dream-job.

I did not know what to expect with their visit, and was pleasantly surprised to learn that we would first meet with the participants in a casual get-to-know-you manner at the Rogue Public House. This gathering definitely took the edge off and put into perspective that the committee was not here just to see if I would cut it at their facility, but to offer their advice and experienced knowledge.

It was also a foresight into the culture of public aquariums, and a chance to just simply get to know each other elbow to elbow at the dinner table.

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**Alyssa Harrison**

I was introduced to the ocean when I was just barely able to walk. Several times a year our family would go to the Oregon coast to visit relatives. This provided me with the opportunity to encounter marine life. I would watch the waves crash on the shore and be amazed that anything could thrive in such a place. I still find myself exploring every nook and cranny in tide pools and sand dunes, looking for wildlife.

I have shaken hands with an octopus, been kissed by koi and gavage (tube) fed wolf eels. The Aquarium Science Program is allowing me to follow my dreams and to explore new experiences.

New experiences are what life is about. I will let this new experience build a future that will have me gaining wisdom and confidence. Thanks to everyone that will be a part of the journey that I am taking.
A trip to the Willamette Valley enabled Bruce to visit with 2008 graduate, Michelle, who demonstrated the fine art of walking a thin line while feeding fingerlings. Michelle is now working at an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife hatchery located on the mid-coast, Salmon River Hatchery.

Oyster Cloyster 2009

Just about all the Aquarium Science students participated the evening of Oyster Cloyster, the main fund raising event for the Aquarium Science Program. From left: Kara Ravenscroft-Ligman, Rachel Garcia, Sage Butts, Kaite Potter, and Alyssa Harrison (in back).

Live spawning of steelhead trout is a hands-on activity hosted by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Alsea Fish Hatchery. Pictured: Jim Steitz, now working in Galtinburg, TN.

The OCCC-Newport campus moved to its new South Beach location this year. Top left: The common area during construction. Bottom right: The common area as it appears now.
DIRECTOR’S CORNER (Continued from Page 1)

John Rupp (Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium), Ken Yates (Landry’s Downtown Aquarium-Denver), Tim Carpenter (Seattle Aquarium) and Scott Martin (Walt Disney World-The Seas). Over the course of 4 days, the committee received a comprehensive look at the program, observing class sessions, interacting with life support system project groups, conducting faux interviews, giving presentations about their facilities and meeting with various individuals involved with student development. Having industry members supported by their institutions reflects a high degree of support towards our effort to develop skilled and knowledgeable husbandry personnel. Thanks!

The New Year will continue to bring additional changes to Aquarium Science. Currently, plans for the 7,500 square-foot Aquarium Science building are under review. Construction documents will go to bid in June with construction set to begin in mid-July. It truly is an exciting time at the Oregon Coast Community College.

In light of all these changes, one constant has been the support for the educational experience of our students. One critical learning element is having the students actively participate in husbandry work. I want to highlight the time and effort spent by individuals who provide opportunities for our Practicum 1 and 2 students. Through these two courses, each student gains 110 hours of real workplace experience at sites including public aquariums, fish hatcheries, research facilities, public schools with classroom aquaria, and ornamental fish businesses. Each opportunity is a coveted resource because of the limited number of opportunities for students. As is, an individual might choose to travel 60 miles to take advantage of a particular practicum appointment of their interest. Often times practicum preceptors (hosts) schedule special activities that may require an extra hand, thus involving students as an integral part of the operations.

We appreciate each preceptor/host who has contributed to this learning experience. Without such efforts students would be less prepared for the workplace. THANKS!

Acknowledgments

-Thanks to the Oregon Coast Aquarium for again hosting the Oyster Cloyster. What a great venue to have 13 executive chefs present their oyster creations. Planning for the next Oyster Cloyster begins the day after it’s over! Thanks students for helping that evening and thanks Aquarium.

-My appreciation goes to Harrison Baker for serving as editor, recruiter, and go to guy for this edition of the newsletter.

-The college’s Foundation Board recently approved funding of an Aquanauts trip to Monterey and San Francisco over the spring break. Thanks to this group’s fund-raising efforts, students will visit 3 major facilities in the region ...Here we come!

-The program awarded scholarships totaling $58,000 to program students through a grant from the National Science Foundation. Thank you NSF!