

Tuesday, March 27, 2007

We are—as a body—beholden in an extraordinary way to our good friend and longtime colleague, Dr. Melbourne Briscoe. He has served The Oceanography Society (TOS) admirably for 20-odd years (and I use that term not to imply approximation of time frame, but actually to qualify the eccentric nature of the past two decades—many of the years truly were odd).

Through wit, wisdom, and wizardry, Dr. Briscoe has guided, advised, and cajoled the leadership of our noble society, while faithfully recording the every action and decision of its central organ: the brain trust that is the TOS Council. His lightning swift humor, deftness of keyboard, and virtually hard-wired communicability have touched all limbs of this body oceanographic. His intellect has enlightened our thinking. His creativity has kindled our spirit. Albeit somewhat trite to connote, through thick or thin (and there have been some very thin times), Mel has been one of our society's most stable components.

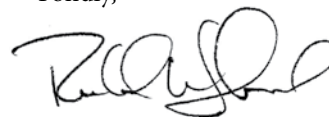
Mel is retiring and passing the baton as Secretary of the Council of TOS to Dr. Sue Cook. Society members who've enjoyed the pleasure of working with Mel will know the very personal nature of this decision on his part. They also know that Mel's passion doesn't expire with his federal paycheck! In fact, as a retiree, Mel will undoubtedly be spending more time in the environs upon which all of our society's activities are based. In recent years, Mel became a dive instructor par excellence (in fact, check him out on the Web and you'll find the statement that, "Mel and his wife have been to Bonaire so many times, the fish practically carry his tanks for him"). And he's still actively involved in Scottish country dancing (making him qualified—and undoubtedly, uniquely so in the universe—to lead an activity called, yes, you guessed it ... "SCUBADANCE"!). Mel has also made clear his deep and continuing commitment to the TOS activities toward developing a professional certification program for oceanographers (even the non-dancers and non-divers among our numbers).

On a slightly more personal note, let me simply state that I will miss Mel's involvement with the Council. I have served this TOS Council in a number of capacities over the last 20 years. In every case, I came to rely on Mel's vision and insight. I will miss that.

So, in closing, a simple adage of remembrance and appreciation seems too trivial. Instead, I'll embellish a time-tested farewell shared among mariners, with a flavor most suited to Dr. Mel Briscoe: *We wish you fair winds, following seas, and, most importantly, waters of high thermal content and anomalously low beam attenuation coefficient!*

Good luck, Mel!

Fondly,



Rick Spinrad
President, TOS