Marine Biologists Peter Edmunds, Robert Carpenter to Study Threatened Reef Ecosystems Near Tahiti

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has selected Cal State Northridge and UC Santa Barbara as the joint recipients of an "unprecedented" $4.6 million, six-year grant to establish a long-term project studying the coral reefs of French Polynesia, an effort expected to add volumes to scientific understanding of ominous changes in global coral reef communities.

CSUN marine biologists Peter Edmunds and Robert Carpenter, working with two other principal investigators from UC Santa Barbara, will conduct research centered at the University of California’s field laboratory on the north shore of Moorea, located west of Tahiti in the Windward group of French Polynesia’s Society Islands.

Research at the Moorea site will help scientists better understand coral reef processes affecting the reef ecosystem, the nature of animal and plant community structure and diversity in the famously colorful coral reefs, and the factors that determine the abundance and dynamics of related oceanic populations.

“This understanding,” said Phil Taylor, director of NSF’s biological oceanography program, “will allow us to make more accurate predictions of how coral reef ecosystems respond to environmental change, whether human-induced or from natural cycles.”

Among the oldest and most diverse of the earth’s ecosystems, coral reefs provide natural storm barriers for homes and beaches, habitat for more species per unit than any other of the planet’s marine environments, commercial fisheries, tourism and recreation jobs. Often called the "medicine cabinets of the 21st century," the reefs’ plants and animals are important sources of new medicines.

CSUN/UCSB project will study coral reefs in French Polynesia with a $4.6 million grant from the National Science Foundation.

Climate changes are warming sea water at a relatively fast rate, resulting in two kinds of events. “One is conspicuous and striking,” Edmunds said. “Corals are dying by ‘bleaching,’ that is, turning white. They die if they remain white for several weeks at a time.” This calamity already has killed many hundreds of square miles of coral reefs in both Pacific and Caribbean waters.

“The second is more subtle,” he continued. “The changes in this kind of event are slow, such as diseases that begin to take small numbers of corals every year, year in and year out.” Sewage and pesticides form an unholy alliance with gradual changes in water temperature, possibly affecting the corals’ ability to reproduce. Both kinds of events may presage the slow death of an entire ecosystem unless enough is learned about that tide.”

Carpenter and Edmunds are well qualified to take on the challenge, with more than 40 years of combined experience in field research under their belts at sites as far-flung as Key Largo, the Australian Great Barrier Reef, the kelp forests off Santa Catalina Island, and in Hawaii, where Carpenter currently is engaged in a project investigating the effects of water flow on the island’s reefs.

As a reminder to the community, Cal State Northridge parking permits are now required to park on the main campus, both on weekdays and weekends at all times. The need to display either regular or visitor parking permits on campus applies to all students, faculty, staff and campus visitors.

Questions about campus parking and parking permits should be directed to the Parking Office of the University’s Department of Public Safety at (818) 677-2157.

Campus parking permits are available from the three information booths at campus main entrances (daily from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.) and from the yellow permit dispensers located in various student parking locations.

P.A.L.S. helped me to listen to my parents. It also shows me to respect others’ opportunities I never thought I would have had. Thank you, P.A.L.S., for being in my life and making it fun.”

Campus Parking Permits Required 24/7

I recently had the pleasure of attending a small ceremony at the Devonshire P.A.L.S. (Police Auxiliary League Supporters) Youth Center. The purpose of the ceremony was for the CSUN Department of Public Safety to present bicycles to three P.A.L.S. Kids.

The Department of Public Safety acquires property through various means, such as abandonment or confiscation, and the property is stored for a designated period of time. CSUN’s police chief, Anne Glavin, has instituted a policy to donate the property to charitable organizations at the end of that time period. The Devonshire P.A.L.S. Youth Center was selected as the recipient.

To compete for the bicycles, the P.A.L.S. Kids were given the task of writing an essay, "How P.A.L.S. Has Changed My Life." The best essays were the winners and that’s how three lucky P.A.L.S. Kids came to have the bicycles.

I was truly impressed with the sincerity expressed in the essays and the variety of reasons why the Youth Center is an important piece of the kids’ lives. I’d like to share a few statements from those essays with you.

"P.A.L.S. helped me to listen to my parents. It also shows me to respect my teacher." P.A.L.S. makes me feel safe... it’s a fun place to hang out. I had never thought of going to a place so cool.” P.A.L.S. has given me opportunities I never thought I would have had. Thank you, P.A.L.S., for being in my life and making it fun.”

P.A.L.S. helped me respect the people around me. In P.A.L.S. every...
Anthony Valadez wears his clothes loosely, incorporates hip hop music and rhythm into his dramatic work, and is not shy about speaking his mind.

Valadez is the one-man chorus in his drama, “Blasting Holes in the Night,” selected to represent Cal State Northridge at the Third Shanghai Experimental Theatre Festival in November. Prior to its China debut, the play runs through October 17 at the university’s Little Theatre.

The young playwright bears more than a passing resemblance to the loosely draped chorus of Greek tragedy, which spoke in unison about deeds and misdeeds witnessed onstage, often punctuating the commentary with flute, lyre and percussion. The Greeks’ style was classic. Valadez’ style has the hip hop flavor. But both speak directly to the heart about loss, grief and man’s craving for justice.

“I was overwhelmed that ‘Blasting Holes’ was chosen for China,” said Valadez, a June 2004 CSUN graduate. “It’s weird, because here’s my reality going to Shanghai before an international audience. It’s time for foreigners to see that America is not just blond-haired, blue-eyed people. I wanted to paint a picture of multi-cultural America and some of the issues we face.”

The playwright’s “reality” begins with his family. Except for him, its chorus may have used in ‘Antigone,’’ Sophocles’ play about a king’s fateful refusal to sanction the burial of a traitor. But the writer said the kinship between the two works was deliberately drawn, and goes deep.

“T’ve been able to mesh my personal stories into the things I’ve learned from ‘Antigone,’” Valadez said, “developing parallels between Greek tragedy and hip hop culture.”

The author, whose “Tables of Contents” show airs on the campus’ KCSN-FM radio station, pulled from his deejay background to score the play on turntables, experimenting with records and scratches to create sound effects such as gunshots.

“The godlike chorus,” Valadez said, “I show my power through the sounds and the scratches.”

With “Blasting Holes,” director Peter Grego discovered a vital new theatrical neighborhood. More experienced in traditional theater, he became intrigued with Valadez’s play when colleague Doug Kaback took the drama on a tour of several local theaters.

“Tony uses elements of hip hop to get his point across to the audience,” said Grego, who sees the play more as contemporary drama than as “hip hop theatre,” as it has been called. “When you hear ‘hip hop,’ you think it’s a musical. Honestly, it’s more linked to Shakespeare. It can go from prose to verse to rhymed couplets.”

CSUN’s Theatre Department threw its full support behind Grego’s desire to take “Blasting Holes” to China as the university’s festival entry, and the playwright and director spent the summer re-working the material to accommodate the smaller cast stipulated by Shanghai Festival rules.

On November 18, the eight-member CSUN cast—joined by Grego, the technical crew and costume designer Garry Lennon—departs for Shanghai for the play’s international debut, followed by a special performance at Shanghai Normal University.

Valadez’s remarkable journey to China began when he enrolled in Northridge’s theatre program, where he first felt alienated. “It took a while to develop parallels between what I was learning and what I already knew,” he said. “It wasn’t that I lacked the depth, I just couldn’t relate to Shakespeare. My Shakespeares were the hustlers in my neighborhood.”

With time, however, he made the connections, forming bonds with “non hip-hop” CSUN theatre faculty who were nonetheless supportive and eager to learn about the new genre.

In Shanghai, “Blasting Holes” will make its bow with at least a dozen other companies from around the globe, both professional and academic. “I think the audience there will see a play that is for all ages, genres,” Valadez said. “If it creates discussion, my job has been done, because we need to talk.”

**Coral Reef Project...**

An intense planning period for the Northridge/UCSB teams will get underway this fall, but the real work for Carpenter and Edmunds will begin during field trips to Moorea in spring 2005.

A reconnaissance trip to the area is planned for January 2005, and most of the project’s first year objectives will be set up during a six-week sojourn in April or May. The bulk of the resources for the project already is in place, including laboratory space, living accommodations and water access.

Edmunds will be responsible for the direct study of stony corals, described by NSF’s Taylor as “the foundation upon which tens of thousands of other species rely.” He will determine how much of the ocean bottom the corals cover, and how such coverage changes over a ten-year time scale. Most importantly, he will work to illuminate the mechanism of the changes.

Carpenter will focus on the role of oceanic currents and water flow, coral reef metabolism, the health of the ecosystem, the interaction of water flow with the reefs and the dynamics of coral reef production.

The UCSB marine biologists—Sally Holbrook and Russell Schmitt—are eminent fish ecologists, while Edmunds said, adding that NSF’s sizable investment comes with high expectations for what the scientists will deliver. “Part of it is that we will foster research by colleagues and other scientists who will come to the Moorea site, write their own grants and attract new resources and expertise.”

The CSUN Biology Department’s well-established and productive record of marine biology research, Edmunds noted, was a probable “tipping factor” in the final selection. The UCSB/ Northridge winning proposal also integrates CSUN minority students into the research environment, enabling them potentially to progress through the university’s master degree program and on to doctoral programs at UCSB. Biology graduate students Robin Elahi and Mairead Mahégan will be part of the Northridge research team, with additional students to be recruited over the years.

Born and brought up in the south of England, Edmunds had yearned to be a marine biologist since he was small, following the undersea adventures of his idol, ocean explorer Jacques Gousteau. However, he could easily be spending his days “studying barnacles in Scotland” instead of working in the azure waters off Moorea’s white and black sand beaches, but for a charismatic coral biologist on the faculty of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

“She changed my life,” Edmunds said. The professor introduced him to field work in the coral reef environment and “chaperoned” his entrance into Glasgow University’s doctoral program.

Carpenter also traveled far to reach the open water. A native of Michigan, he graduated from the University of Michigan with a zoology degree and became captivated by coral reefs during his master’s degree studies on St. Croix. A doctoral degree from the University of Georgia was followed by post-doctoral work at the Smithsonian Institution.
Fall Forums Focus on Finances and Special Needs Children

Five women will receive Cal State Northridge’s Phenomenal Women Awards at a Women’s Studies Department fundraising event slated for 3 to 7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 23, in the Grand Salon of the University Student Union.

“The women that we celebrate are local women who are activists in their respective areas, whether it’s in medicine or in the media. But they have each made an impact on people’s lives,” said Marta Lopez-Garza, Women’s Studies interim chair.

An honorary award will be presented to Rigoberta Menchu Tum, winner of the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize and a leading advocate of indigenous rights in Guatemala and in the Western Hemisphere.

Recipients of the Phenomenal Women Awards will include:

- Dr. Laila Al-Marayati, director of obstetrics and gynecology at California Hospital Medical Center. Dr. Al-Marayati is a clinical professor of obstetrics and gynecology at USC. She also is one of the founders of the Muslim Women’s League.
- Donna Brown Guillaume, producer for PBS, HBO and CBS. Guillaume’s television successes include the highly acclaimed HBO documentary “Unchained Memories: Readings from the Slave Narratives.”
- Bess Lomax Hawes, a retired Cal State Northridge anthropology professor who helped create and was the first director of the National Endowment for the Arts’ Folk Arts Program. In 1993, President Bill Clinton presented her with the National Medal of Arts.
- Delia Rudiger, recently retired from her position as chief of staff to the president of Cal State Northridge. A longtime supporter of the Women’s Studies Department, Rudiger was known for her commitment to students, women faculty and faculty from underrepresented groups.
- Sonali Kolhatkar, morning host of radio station KPFA’s news digest, “Uprising.” Kolhatkar is vice president of the Afghan Women’s Mission, which works to improve health and educational facilities for Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

A silent auction is planned for the Phenomenal Women event, held every other year to support Women’s Studies Department programs and student and faculty research.

Tickets for the event are available by contacting the Women’s Studies Department at (818) 677-3110.

Plan for Retirement at CSUN Financial Forum
A two-evening financial planning forum for those whose “nest eggs” may not carry them comfortably through retirement will be hosted at Cal State Northridge from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 9 and 16.

Offered free of charge by CSUN’s Financial Planning, Real Estate and Insurance Department, its affiliated Center for Financial Services and the Center for Education and Research, the forum will be open to Northridge’s faculty, staff and neighboring residents who lack a solid financial plan for a secure retirement future.

“As we reach retirement age, many of us will find ourselves with insufficient financial assets to support the lifestyles we want,” said Finance, Real Estate and Insurance Department chair William Jennings.

By attending the forum, guests will become part of an academic and practical research project, undertaken by the university and collaborators to better understand why saving enough for retirement proves to be so difficult for so many. To protect the privacy of participants, names and addresses will not be shared with anyone, Jennings said. In addition, no products or services will be sold or offered.

With the help of the university and the centers, guests also will begin the process of developing sound and realistic financial plans.

Sadly, Jennings noted, many retirees discover too late that retirement costs more than they thought, that they will live longer than they realized, and that Social Security and a small retirement fund may not adequately support the retirement they had envisioned.

For forum reservations and information, call the department office at (818) 677-2499.

Caregivers of Special Needs Children to Meet Cal State Northridge’s Center of Achievement for the Physically Disabled, in conjunction with Stillpoint Resources, will host a symposium for parents, caregivers and educators of special needs children from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 16, at the university.

The symposium, “Rhythms of the Heart: Focus on Therapies,” will take place in the Abbott and Linda Brown Western Center for Adaptive Aquatic Therapy. It will focus on alternative therapies for children and families dealing with mental, physical, emotional or learning disabilities.

Panel topics will include psychotherapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech therapy.

For ticket and registration information, visit www.StillpointResources.org, e-mail Pointsite@aol.com or call (818) 704-9117.

Community Connection…

Continued from page 1.

body is like a family. If I wasn’t here at P.A.L.S., I wonder where I would be? I’m proud to be a P.A.L.S. member.”

CSUN Police Chief Glavin presented the bicycles at the Youth Center to a round of applause from all the P.A.L.S. Kids. The chief was happy to meet the P.A.L.S. Kids and during the presentation said, “I am very pleased that we could make a donation of three bicycles to the P.A.L.S. program. Three deserving children are able to benefit from this effort. It is a wonderful way for us to serve the community in which we reside. This is a first time effort for us and we look forward to more opportunities such as this in the future.”

This is the month for witches and ghosts and things that say “boo” in the dark. For those of you who don’t know, there is an annual event that CSUN’s Residential Life students host for community children, with a haunted house and trick-or-treating. This year, Halloween will come to the University Park Apartments, Buildings 8 and 9, at Lassen and Zelzah on Saturday, October 30. The party hours are 6-9 p.m. Community children are invited to don their scariest costumes and masks and come on over to campus for a fun and treat-filled evening.

Left to right: LAPD Officer Elizabeth Sandoval, CSUN Officer Gary Braun, CSUN Police Chief Anne Glinn, Devonshire P.A.L.S. Board of Directors President Dave Hambley with winners of P.A.L.S. essay contest (in foreground, with bicycles).
Cultura y Comunidad

Experiences that explore the Legacy of Latino Leadership in California.

Runs through Fri., Oct. 29
C.K. and Teresa Tseng Gallery
Oviatt Library

Rounce and Coffin Club Books Exhibition
The 63rd Annual Rounce and Coffin Club Western Books Exhibition. Runs through Wed., Nov. 24
Oviatt Library Lobby

“Badlands” and “Days of Heaven”
Directed by Terrence Malick.
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History Lecture
“Foreigners in China’s Service? Robert Hart and the Chinese Maritime Customs Administration, 1863–1908”
History professor Richard Horowitz, lecturer.
Tue., Oct. 19, 10 a.m.
For info, (818) 677-2138 or zsu@csun.edu

Music

Admission to all music events (unless otherwise specified): $10 general, $7 faculty, staff and seniors, $5 students.

New Directions Composers Group
Sun., Oct. 31, 8 p.m.
Music Recital Hall

CSUN Jazz Combo Night
Directed by Gary Pratt.
Wed., Nov. 3, 8 p.m.
Music Recital Hall

Guest Artist Series
Featuring classical guitarist Joseph volunteer.
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Music Recital Hall

Chamber Music I and II
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Music Recital Hall

American Guitar Society Concert
Featuring Elgart-Yates Duo.
Sat., Nov. 13, 8 p.m.
Music Recital Hall

$8–$48

CSUN Steel Drum Band
Directed by Glee Rabe.
Tue., Nov. 30, 8 p.m.
Performing Arts Center

The A.S. Ticket Office in Nordhoff Hall sells tickets to many events on campus, except for some held by outside groups. The Ticket Office is open from 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m. Mon.–Fri. For prices not given, call (818) 677-2488. To park on campus for performances, athletic events, lectures and other activities, guests must purchase a $4 parking permit.

Alumni Events

For info or to RSVP www.csunaevents.com unless otherwise noted.

Women’s Softball Team Reunion
Sat., Oct. 16, 1 p.m.
Matador Diamond
For info, Heather Meyer at (818) 677-3230 or heather.meyer@csun.edu

Matador Athletic Hall of Fame
Thu., Oct. 21, 5:30 p.m.
Hilton Woodland Hills
For ticket info, (818) 677-3208

Physical Therapy Alumni Reception
Fri., Oct. 22, 5 p.m.
Anahiem Marriott

Rigoberta Menchú Tum Reception
Honors 1992 Nobel Peace Prize recipient.
Sat., Oct. 23, 7 p.m.
Thousand Oaks Room, University Student Union
RSVP required.

Forensics Team Reunion
Mon., Oct. 25, 6 p.m.
Aronstam Library, Manzanita Hall
RSVP recommended.

Nature Walk
Sun., Nov. 7, 9 a.m.
Las Vegas Canyon Road Trailhead, Ahmanson Ranch Park
RSVP required.

Art and Exhibits

Cultura y Comunidad Exhibition
Explores the Legacy of Latino Leadership in California.
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