THE DAILY CLIPS

March 22, 2012

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A new study shows that traces of oil have shown up in tiny creatures in the Gulf of Mexico food chain as a result of the Deepwater Horizon rig disaster.

**BP oil spill contaminated Gulf food chain, study says**

The Deepwater Horizon explosion and subsequent oil spill could have long-term effects on the Gulf of Mexico's aquatic food chain, a new study says.

BP Plc's (NYSE: BP) Macondo well at the site leaked approximately 53,000 barrels of oil per day from April 20 to July 15, 2010. The study, "Macondo-1 well oil-derived polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in mesozooplankton from the northern Gulf of Mexico," found that oil has contaminated zooplankton, one of the first links in the oceanic food chain.

"Traces of oil in the zooplankton prove that they had contact with the oil and the likelihood that oil compounds may be working their way up the food chain," Dr. Michael Roman of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science said in a statement accompanying the study.

Baby fish and shrimp feed on the tiny, drifting zooplankton, and then introduce contamination and pollution to the larger sea creatures in the food web.

At the time of the oil spill, Houston restaurateurs and food distributors were hit hard by shortages of popular delicacies such as oysters and crabs while regulators scrambled to determine the affects of the spill on marine life.
Researchers identified the Macondo well's unique chemical "fingerprint" of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in Gulf of Mexico zooplankton. The study shows the chemical fingerprint was present in some zooplankton as much as a month after the leaking wellhead was capped.

However, the report describes the geographic extent of the zooplankton contamination as "patchy." Some zooplankton far away from the spill were contaminated, but some near the spill site had lower levels of contamination.

Dr. Siddhartha Mitra of East Carolina University added that the researchers' identification of the well's chemical fingerprint could prove valuable for other studies.

East Carolina University led the study with researchers from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Oregon State University, Georgia Institute of Technology, and U.S. Geological Survey. It was published in the February issue of Geophysical Research Letters.
Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Contaminated Ocean's Food Chain, Study Finds

By Ryan Villarreal

A recent study has confirmed that toxic compounds derived from oil that was released in the Deepwater Horizon spill that occurred in the Gulf of Mexico nearly two years ago has entered the ocean's food chain through microorganisms.

The study, funded by the National Science Foundation and led by a team of researchers from East Carolina University, the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Oregon State University, Georgia Institute of Technology, and the U.S. Geological Survey, detected chemical compounds found in oil called hydrocarbons, some known to be carcinogenic, within the bodies of microscopic crustaceans called zooplankton.

"Our research helped to determine a 'fingerprint' of the Deepwater Horizon spill--something that other researchers interested in the spill may be able to use," Dr. Siddhartha Mitra of East Carolina University said in a statement. "Furthermore, our work demonstrated that zooplankton in the Northern Gulf of Mexico accumulated toxic compounds derived from the Macondo well.”

Zooplankton form the base of the ocean's food web and are typically fed upon by fish larva and smaller crustaceans, said Dr. David Kimmel of East Carolina University. Whether or not these larger organisms have accumulated significant amounts of toxic compounds, or has entered the human food chain, has yet to be determined.

"That is certainly one of the questions we would like to see answered with more research," said Dr. Mitra in a phone interview.

Another question the researchers would like to see answered is how long the oil compounds will remain in the zooplankton, but it requires sustained observation over a long period of time.

The zooplankton themselves, do not seem to have been negatively impacted in terms of population, said Dr. Mike Roman at the University of Maryland, though they serve as a conduit for energy and matter, including the toxic compounds, to move up the food chain.
The research team was funded to test its hypothesis about the presence of oil compounds in zooplankton, and the results of its study are viewed as something to build upon in determining the full ecological impact of the oil spill.

Dr. Roman said there needs to be long-term monitoring systems in place in the Gulf to examine various levels of the ecosystem and how they have been impacted by the spill.

Dr. Joseph Montoya at GIT plans to return to the Gulf in late May through June to study the impact of the carbon infusion into the ecosystem due to the spill, particularly how it interacts with another aquatic microorganism called phytoplankton, which he describes as the "trees of the ocean" as they produce oxygen, through photosynthesis. Approximately half of the oxygen in the Earth's atmosphere is produced in its oceans and phytoplankton are responsible for the majority of that production.

The zooplankton that the initial study examined "graze" on phytoplankton, and Dr. Montoya hopes to learn more about how the carbon compounds from the oil spill move up the food chain in his next field study.

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Saunders: NCSU paper pushing to keep Pack covered

By Barry Saunders - staff columnist - bsaunders@newsobserver.com

If Krystal Pittman can pull this off, she doesn’t need to be working at N.C. State University: She needs to be in Washington helping with the budget deficit – or at least on a Vegas stage performing magic.

Pittman, the advisor for the NCSU student newspaper, The Technician, wants to send six staff members to St. Louis to cover the Wolfpack basketball team’s first trip to the Sweet 16 in seven years this weekend.

How much, I asked, does she reckon that’s going to cost?

“We’re trying to find the cheapest hotel rooms, and we’re going to need about $600 for gas,” she said Wednesday. “I guess about $800 in all.”

Ah, the sweet naiveté of youth.

“I’m used to us traveling on a budget, making travel arrangements for other people,” she explained with a laugh. In this case, she’s trying to make arrangements for two student radio hosts, two writers and two photographers.

The Technician’s funding comes solely from advertising revenue, Pittman said. And because the paper is prohibited from accepting donations, she and her staff are making “a big push to pick up some ad revenue.

“We’re encouraging businesses to send in ads,” she said, noting that the daily student newspaper already had seen an increase in alumni buying ads to wish the team good luck.

The student newspaper at the Triangle’s other Sweet 16 entrant, the University of North Carolina, is sending two reporters and a photographer to St. Louis. “We’d probably send more if we could get more press passes” to the game, said Kevin Schwartz, general manager of The Daily Tar Heel newspaper, on Wednesday.

Schwartz said his staffers will be flying – yes, he said flying – out today.

“This is a big deal, and it’s a big commitment. Our readers want it, and we save up for it,” Schwartz said.
“The big difference between us and The Technician is that we’re a separate incorporated legal entity from the university,” he added. “We’re 100 percent self-supporting.”

If the Tar Heel team makes it through to the Final Four, Schwartz said, he expects the entire NCAA run will end up costing the paper between $5,000 and $6,000.

**Students find a way**

College kids are typically renowned for their resourcefulness. My hungry buddies and I once went to a stranger’s wake in Atlanta to get a home-cooked meal. Several years ago while covering an execution at Central Prison, I met two N.C. State students. I asked if they’d come to protest the death penalty.

Nope. They came, they said, to protest the hunger in their bellies: They thought there might be food.

For such resourcefulness, they remain my heroes.

Sean Fairholm, the Technician’s deputy sports editor, went to the tournament in Ohio last week to follow the Wolfpack. But he won’t make it this time because he doesn’t have relatives in St. Louis, like he did in Ohio.

“I have an uncle who lives about 25 minutes from Columbus, and we stayed with him,” he said. “I can’t afford to go this time.”

If members of The Technician’s staff have to drive to St. Louis and bunk down at a relative’s house or rent a room at the Rock ’em, Sock ’em Motel instead of in a fancy hotel, they’ll do it. It’ll give them a great adventure to talk about to their grandkids.

As Fairholm, 19, said of the 22-hour drive and crashing at his uncle’s crib, “We had a blast. It was pretty wearing, but it was fantastic.”

They shouldn’t have to resort to that, though. There are certainly enough Pack fans who want to wish the team “good luck” that the student journalists can get rooms and not have to scrounge for meals, right?

The old saying about history being written by the victors has been attributed to everyone from Churchill to Aesop to Alex Haley. The Poynter Institute, which promotes journalism, used a similar headline this week in comparing The Technician’s coverage of State’s victory over Georgetown to that of the Georgetown student paper.
Regardless of who said it first, though, wouldn’t it be a shame if the Wolfpack wins and has no one there to tell their story?
bsaunders@newsobserver.com or 919-836-2811

How to help
If you’re a Wolfpack fan and want to see that the student journalists make the trip, call The Technician at 919-515-2411 to find out about placing an ad.
Published Thu, Mar 22, 2012 02:00 AM

Jo Allen to be installed as Meredith College president on Thursday

By Alex Vaughn - avaughn@newsobserver.com

RALEIGH Nearly a year after she was chosen to lead her alma mater, Jo Allen will formally be installed as president of Meredith College at a ceremony in downtown Raleigh on Thursday.

Allen, a North Carolina native who earned a bachelor’s degree in English from Meredith in 1980, began her tenure as the eighth president of the women’s college last July. Meredith traditionally holds the formal installation ceremony during the first year of the president’s term.

Allen is the first alumna to ever serve as president of the college.

The theme of the ceremony is “Remembering Our Roots, Extending Our Reach,” recognizing the 121-year history of the school while celebrating its recent expansion in an increasingly tough environment for women’s colleges.

About 50 colleges nationwide remain women-only, down from more than 200 in 1950. William Peace University, formerly Peace College, will begin admitting full-time male students this fall to try to broaden its appeal and ensure its survival, leaving Meredith as the largest of only three remaining women’s colleges statewide.
Despite these trends, students at Meredith have seen an increase in the programs in recent years. The school recently began offering an undergraduate major in criminology; became one of the first colleges in the state to offer an interdisciplinary major focused on environmental sustainability; and expanded its engineering dual-degree program to include mechanical engineering.

This fall, the school will become the first college or university in Raleigh to have a women’s lacrosse team.

Freshman applications are up 11 percent compared to last year, and applications to its honors program have increased 34 percent, according to the college.

The installation ceremony will take place at Raleigh Memorial Auditorium to symbolize the college’s original location downtown. Alumnae from classes as early as 1934 will march in the academic procession.

**Installation details**

If you go
What: Installation ceremony for Meredith College President Jo Allen
When: 10 a.m. Thursday
Where: Raleigh Memorial Auditorium
Free and open to the public.

**Q&A with Allen**

Staff writer Chelsea Kellner spoke with Allen last week to talk about her hopes for the future and the advantages of being an all-female college.

**Q: What drew you to Meredith as a student?**

Initially, it was the camaraderie among the students. My sister was a student here, and I knew it was known for great academic quality, but I didn’t know if I wanted to go to a women’s college. Then when I came up with her a couple weekends and saw the great connections with each other, it was really clear to me this was the place to get a great education and build lifetime friendships. As it turned out, that’s exactly what happened.

**Q: What did you get out of the experience of going to an all-girls school?**
One thing I got out of it is the opportunity to really test your ideas in front of other people and not worry if they’re still going to want to date you over the weekend. For me, it was a place to build real appreciation for the give and take of good debate, of developing processes for thinking things through, knowing how to give and accept feedback.

Q: You have said that Meredith won’t follow Peace College’s decision to go co-ed. Why not?

I don’t know the story behind Peace and what led to their decision. Right now, Meredith has a great reputation for academics and leadership development and relationship building. For those reasons, there is no reason to suddenly shift and become co-ed.

Q: What are your goals for Meredith?

Meredith is way too good a college not to be better known than it is now. We still have people that have us confused with Peace. One of my goals is to make it that there is no way that a young woman in North Carolina who’s considering college could say, “I’ve never heard of Meredith.” Then you expand it out by region. Quite honestly, I think we’re too quiet. I think you should expect to hear a lot more about Meredith.
Harvard announced on Wednesday that it would open a campus office for the Army R.O.T.C. later this year, a move the Army believes will lead to greater participation in the program by Harvard undergraduates.

The agreement is the latest by several prominent universities to welcome the Reserve Officers Training Corps back on campus four decades after they banned it because of the Vietnam War. Those bans continued into recent years on the grounds that the military discriminated against gay and lesbian troops by barring them from serving openly.

But since Congress lifted that ban, known as Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, in late 2010, a number of universities have moved to welcome R.O.T.C. back. Last year, Harvard, Columbia and Yale signed agreements to allow the Navy to have an R.O.T.C. office on their campuses.

“This is a welcome step in the long and distinguished history of military service by members of the Harvard community,” Drew Gilpin Faust, the president of Harvard, said in a statement.

Under its agreement with the Army, Harvard will provide office space for the local R.O.T.C. commander to conduct classes and counseling sessions
with cadets. It will also make classrooms and athletic facilities available for training. And it will assume financial responsibility for administrative costs associated with the program. Those costs were covered by a Harvard alumni group since the R.O.T.C. left the campus.

After the R.O.T.C. left, Harvard undergraduates went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Tufts University for weekly courses in military science and three-times-a-week physical training sessions. Since 1989, the Army has commissioned 88 second lieutenants out of Harvard through the R.O.T.C., and six students are currently participating in the program, said Lt. Col. Tim Hall, commander of the local R.O.T.C. unit, known as the Paul Revere Battalion.

The new agreement will not radically change the weekly routine for Harvard cadets, who will continue to attend classes and drill sessions elsewhere. But Colonel Hall, who is a visiting professor of military science at M.I.T., said that he was considering recommending that the program hold some its classes and physical training sessions at Harvard.

“I’ve gotten to see a lot of prospects and I’ve heard Harvard students say, ‘I would do R.O.T.C. if it were on campus,’ ” the colonel said. “This is going to make R.O.T.C. a little more accessible.”
BU officials investigate possible hazing
School suspends sorority for now

By Mary Carmichael, Globe Staff

Boston University and its Police Department are investigating whether some 20 members and pledges of the Sigma Delta Tau sorority and members of an unrecognized, off-campus fraternity engaged in hazing, a violation of college rules and the law, by forcing or encouraging underage women to drink, even to the point of hospitalization.

On March 3, BU police stopped three male students carrying women down an Allston street. They called an ambulance for the women, at least one of whom was heavily intoxicated.

The school has temporarily suspended the sorority while it investigates. Kenn Elmore, the dean of students, said the college was also investigating “about seven current sorority members, the same number of new members, and five to seven fraternity members” as individuals, either for hazing or underage drinking.

“We have an accusation and a quick judgment that there may have been some hazing,” Elmore said Wednesday. “We want to give people the opportunity to be heard. But in the meantime, we just don’t want this organization to continue operating before getting to a final conclusion.”

Elmore added: “These students have to be held accountable, even if, in the end, we determine that some of them were forced to do some things they didn’t want to do. We still need to ask them, in essence, ‘What were you thinking?’ ”

The hazing allegation follows several student scandals at BU in recent months. Two members of the hockey team have been arrested on sexual assault charges, a development that led to the students’ suspension and the formation of a task force. Female students have also reported peeping toms in dormitory showers three times since January.

But hazing has not been a major issue on campus or at least one that has drawn the attention of administrators. The school has not disciplined a student group for hazing in more than a decade, Elmore said.

“What’s especially disappointing is that back in January, I met with all the presidents of our fraternities and sororities - and the captains of our athletic
teams, and the heads of the social groups - to talk specifically about hazing,’’ he said. “We had what I thought was a good and candid conversation. I think I used the words ‘human dignity’ more than I’ve ever used them in my life.’’

Hazing is prohibited by BU’s student conduct policy and Massachusetts law, and BU spokesman Colin Riley said a police investigation is now underway. Sigma Delta Tau’s national organization also prohibits hazing and has notified BU that it will consider disciplinary action against the school’s chapter. The organization’s executive director, Ann Braly, said in a statement: “Sigma Delta Tau National Sorority does not tolerate hazing of any kind. . . . The alleged actions do not reflect Sigma Delta Tau’s mission and values and are not representative of our membership.’’

BU’s governing body for sororities e-mailed members March 8 to note the sorority’s suspension.

“This is a serious issue, and the Panhellenic Council is not treating this matter lightly, and neither should any of you,’’ the e-mail read.

The alleged incident at BU is not as severe as recent accounts of hazing at other schools.

In November, a student in the Florida A&M University marching band died after being hazed. In December, two Andover high school students were expelled, and at least five others were kicked off the basketball team after reports of a hazing incident in which two underclassmen were forced to play a humiliating game involving a bodily fluid.

Hazing has also been the talk of the campus at Dartmouth College in recent weeks. The school is investigating graphic allegations made by a former fraternity member, tales so extreme that some faculty members have called for the dissolution of single-sex Greek organizations altogether, even with fraternity members insisting the accusations are overblown.

In comparison, student reaction to the allegations at BU has been relatively muted so far. Some students who took to Twitter over the issue expressed only mild exasperation.

One questioned whether the incident signified anything larger about the campus. “I think BU does a great job keeping hazing to a minimum,’’ wrote one graduate student.

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Community colleges downsize programs
By Mary Beth Marklein, USA TODAY
Updated 1d 19h ago

Community colleges across the USA, faced with tight budgets and competing priorities, are downsizing or shuttering programs that in many cases have been held near and dear for years by students and other local constituents.

• Texarkana College in Texas is one of the latest schools to drop intercollegiate sports.

• A group of older adults is working to keep alive some version of Santa Barbara City College's continuing education division, which offers free classes in subjects such as financial planning and pastry-making.

• Starting this summer, Pima Community College in Tucson will no longer offer remediation for incoming adult students who fail a seventh-grade-level test of reading, writing and math.

Two-year schools, established to serve the needs of their local communities, "can't do it all anymore," says Suzanne Miles, Pima's interim president. She
estimates the school's decision will affect no more than 2,000 students this fall.

State funding cuts are one culprit. For instance, state funding for California community colleges has been slashed $809 million, or 12%, since 2007-08. Another driver: a growing emphasis on improving degree-completion rates and retraining displaced workers. President Obama has made both central to his higher education agenda.

"The challenge of this decade for community colleges is to make hard choices about whom they will serve, and in what ways," says Kay McClenneney, director of the Center for Community College Student Engagement, a research and service initiative at the University of Texas.

In many cases, schools look for ways to fill the gap. Texarkana College President James Henry Russell hopes a donor will step up to fund the school's softball, baseball and golf teams. About 70 student-athletes were affected, which will save the school about $500,000 a year.

As state funding for personal enrichment dwindles, a Santa Barbara college task force hopes to create a self-supporting center. But seniors on fixed incomes may be unable to pay, says Cathie McCammon, co-president of Santa Barbara's Association of Continuing Education Students.

"The whole philosophy that people should be learning throughout their life has kind of been thrown out," she says.