

From the Editors

NOAA Ship *Albatross IV* is the focus of our first article. Her formal decommissioning ceremony was held in Woods Hole on November 20, 2008, complete with a Navy band, official dignitaries and high-ranking guest speakers. Her colors were struck and a plaque was presented. Fishery Biologist Linda Despres and Operations Officer Ensign Jonathan Heesch solicited and organized stories and statistics about *Albatross IV* to commemorate the occasion. The resulting booklet included the official decommissioning program and much of the oral history of the ship and the people who worked and lived aboard her over the years. We have chosen excerpts from that booklet plus additional stories that came in after the decommissioning for this issue of *Sprintsail*.

There are two relevant articles in *Woods Hole Reflections*, a history of Woods Hole published by the

WHHC in 1983. “The Fisheries” by D. W. Bourne is a brief history beginning with Spencer Fullerton Baird in the 1870s. “Fisheries with a Foreign Accent” by H. C. Boyar recounts cooperative research in the 60s and 70s. In 1967 Woods Hole scientists sailed on the USSR’s converted trawler, *Albatros*, and Russian scientists sailed on *Albatross IV*.

Albatross IV played a tangential part in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1963. In World War II, the US Navy not only requisitioned *Albatross III* but also reached into the ferry fleet, turning *Naushon* and *New Bedford* into hospital ships. Our second article, “From Island Ferry to Hospital Ship,” was researched and written by Graham Ward. Graham describes the details of boat design and necessary redesign, and presents personal recollections that bring to life local participation in an historical event.



National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration Research Vessel *Albatross IV*. Courtesy NOAA Fisheries Service, Woods Hole, MA.

Personal recollections are channeled into a universal lament for times past and time passing in Samm Carlton’s poem, “Salt Song” that concludes this issue.

The editors accepted with thanks and regret the resignation of Eleanor Bronson-Hodge from the board. She has been a valuable contributor to *Sprintsail* both as an editor and as an author. We will miss her writing, her comments and her company.