

Preface

N. J. Balmforth and G. Veronis

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The GFD Program in 2008 ran with a special theme, in view of the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the program. The first two weeks of Principal Lectures dealt with "Perspectives and Challenges" of the subject, and were commemorated by having ten different lecturers with a diversity of viewpoints and opinions. Though the lectures thereby took less of a pedagogical flavour, each afternoon we saw the fellows grill the lecturers in informal afternoon tutorials.

Also by way of celebration, the Oceanographic Institution threw a 50th anniversary party in honour of the Program and the "Founding Fathers." This was held on one of the lawns in front of Walsh Cottage on Friday, June 27th. We saw a variety of familiar faces, some from the very first years of the Program, others from more recent summers. George Veronis and Jack Whitehead read short pieces about the past fifty years, including the unveiling of the "2008 AGU Award for Excellence in Geophysical Education" awarded to the Program by the American Geophysical Union. The party was skillfully organized by Janet Fields and uniformly enjoyed by all.

In 2008 the Sears Public Lecture was delivered by Andy Ingersoll (CalTech) and entitled "Weather and Climates of Other Worlds: Lessons for Earth." Andy, a participant of the program for many years, described the insights that could be drawn regarding our own climate from observing those of the other planets in the solar system, observations made particularly clear and compelling by recent space missions. Over a hundred people gathered at Redfield for the lecture, many of whom paused afterwards to enjoy conversation and refreshments at the reception that followed.

Other novelties at the 2008 program included Bill Dewar's delivery of a seminar at Walsh in full Scottish regalia, kilt and all. Last, and of course most importantly, we had an industrious group of fellows who rose to the challenge of the Program and contributed tremendously to the anniversary. As always, the WHOI Academic Programs Office and the Physical Oceanography Department provided the administrative backbone to the summer, and Walsh Cottage was perfectly unchanged in its intimacy and rustic atmosphere. Jeanne Fleming, Penny Foster and Janet Fields contributed importantly to the smooth running of the program.