

TURNING THE TIDE

For George -

You are an
original - in many
ways!

Sally

PROLOGUE

“Is it nature or nurture that determines who we are?” Typically, nature refers to genetics. For me, it was not just genetics but also Mother Nature and the way she affected my life in wondrous ways. Salt marshes shaped my childhood and sea turtles defined my career as I tried to meet the challenges conserving them demanded. My nurturing came from the human influences over my life: my parents, brother, husbands, relatives, friends, teachers, for better or worse. Each had a role in the person I have become. But then there are choices — the conscious decisions — those fork-in-the-road moments and how they influenced my path. I begin each part of my story with a description of the life cycle of the loggerhead turtle that in some way parallels stages in my journey. The hauntingly beautiful photo on the cover by Barb Bergwerf is also symbolic, for I often felt like that lone hatchling entering dangerous waters, facing tough odds.

Turning The Tide is the story of my journey so far, one of growing intellectually and enduring emotionally, physically and professionally. But it was also fulfilling and fun. Although my initial reason for writing this was to leave something for my sons and grandson, I realized it might be useful to others traveling similar roads. I wanted to explain why I made some of my decisions and how the process evolved over time. I also wanted to give credit and recognize the efforts of the many allies that helped win our conservation battles. I wanted to describe growing up and establishing a career in the times in which I lived. I am not a women’s-libber. I believe that your abilities should be judged by what is in your brain, not by the X or Y chromosomes in your cells. Most of my colleagues were men in undergraduate and grad school, and with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. I’m comfortable with men and find many of them interesting intellectually. But some men — and women — were not fair. Dealing with them taught me valuable lessons.

This memoir is a hybrid. It contains facts and dates pulled from my files like an autobiography, but also includes my thoughts and emotions. Beaufort author Pat

Conroy said fiction contains memoir; memoir contains fiction. This story includes my own biases, but I have asked family members and colleagues for input to make it as accurate as possible.

This book also is dedicated to conservationists everywhere facing difficult journeys themselves. Maybe they will gain insight from my experience.

— Sally R. Murphy, October 2018

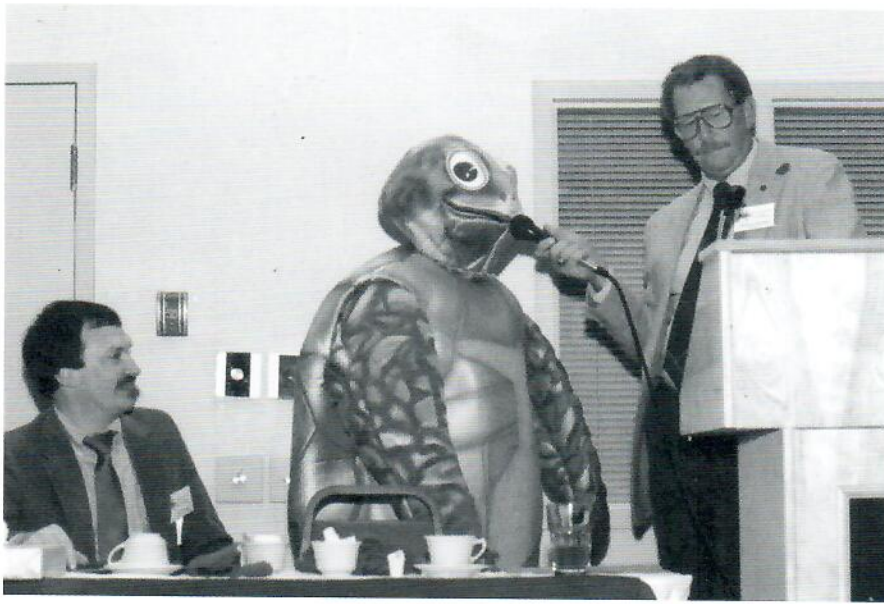
THE SEA TURTLE WORKSHOP MATURES

In 1990 it became South Carolina's turn to host the 10th workshop and I wanted it to be special to highlight the strides the group had made, and special for the people who contributed to our advancement. I also wanted it held in South Carolina. Karen Eckert thought the meeting should no longer be called a workshop, that "symposium" was more appropriate, thus the 10th workshop was also the first by that name.

Ed Drane, nest-protection project leader for Hilton Head Island, suggested it be held at the Hilton Head Beach and Tennis Resort. When Ed and I had our first meeting with the resort manager, we warned him that the nightly social likely would be loud. We were not a rowdy bunch, but the sheer number of people would surely be noticeable.

Indeed it was. Neighbors complained and security guards shut down the party. This happened after I had gone to bed. The next morning found everyone grumped up about having the social ruined. Ed and I talked with the manager again. He agreed to let us bring our alcoholic beverages into the Conference Center at no cost. An accordion door separated the large conference room where the talks were given, from a smaller room where posters and vendors were set up. That room became the bar as well. On auction night, the accordion door could be partially opened so the bar was easily available to the crowd in the main room. This worked especially well, and everyone was tipping happily again.

The 10th Symposium had 446 in attendance from 18 countries. I asked Lloyd Logan to design the tee shirt featuring a juvenile hawksbill, a species we had not used before. His drawing also donned the name tags, the program cover and the cover of the Proceedings. The memento was a small brass hawksbill lapel pin. I came up with the first theme for our meeting: "A Decade of Knowledge, Dedication and Friendship." I felt those three words fully described our workshops through the years. I had blue and red ribbons to attach to each name tag. Those had attended all 10 conferences, got a blue ribbon. Attendance at nine of them earned a red ribbon.



Chuck Oravetz interviews Tony the Turtle while Ed Drane looks on. Photo by John Coker.

Dr. Nat Frazer, from University of Georgia, gave the symposium's first keynote address: "Sea Turtle Conservation and Halfway Technology: Confessions of an Academic Parasite." At the banquet on the final night, Fred Berry presented: "The Sea Turtle Workshop: A History." He also handed out small gift-wrapped boxes with two Florida lottery tickets inside to past hosts.

Dr. Jay Hair, National Wildlife Federation president, spoke on, "Challenges of the Decade of the Environment: Sea Turtle Conservation and Earth Day 1990." He also presented me a special citation from his organization.

I asked Chuck Oravetz to be master of ceremonies. He had a gift for gab and was a natural. Near the end of the banquet, a large sea turtle walked into the room on his hind legs. It was Jeff Brown, who had just started working for Chuck. This surprised everyone, including me. Best student paper went to Tony Tucker from University of Georgia even though he fainted during his presentation.

The 11th and 12th symposia were held at Jekyll Island at Villas-by-the Sea with Barbara Schroeder and Jim Richardson, respectively, as presidents. At the 12th Symposium, Bob Shoop and Carol Ruckdeschel offered homemade pickled pig lips (yes, lips) as an auction item. Someone had the bright idea to not just bid on the jar, but to bid for someone to *eat* some of its contents. They picked Barbara Schroeder. People began dumping money into a bucket totaling more than \$200.



Llew Ehrhart presents Dr. George Balazs, the "B.M. Stool Award" for his paper entitled: "Some aspects of the green turtle fecal wash-up phenomenon on Hawaiian beaches." If you look closely, the plastic bag being handed to George contains Baby Ruth candy bars, and he is being urged by the crowd to ... take a bite! Photo by John Coker.

Barbara, being a good sport, took a bite. This was the beginning of prank-bidding, which has become infamous through the years.

When scheduled again to host the 13th Symposium, I knew there would be a space problem at Villas-by-the-Sea because our meetings kept getting bigger. I rented a tent for the vendors because there was not enough room for them and posters in the same room. Even with portable heaters, it was cold and drafty. The room used previously for the Tippling Turtler Bar was now too small, so I rented another tent to cover the patio just outside of the bar. I bought Japanese lanterns, which were hung around the edge of the tent. The main conference room where the papers were presented was packed.

My staff and I had everything ready with time to spare. I decided to draw a poster to hang in the Tippling Turtler Bar. It depicted several sea turtles standing on their hind flippers or sitting on bar stools having drinks. The leatherback sported a red baseball cap like one often worn by Bob Shoop; the hawksbill had a flowery shirt and lei and looked like George Balazs. A small Kemp's ridley sitting on a bar stool represented Jack Woody. I don't recall who the other turtle was. I was drawing this when Tom walked in and said, "How can you sit there and doodle when you are hosting the symposium in one day." "Simple," I said. "We're ready.

Everything is done.”

For the tee shirt as well as the program cover, Colin Limpus had an artist in Australia draw a beautiful pen-and-ink of flatback turtles copulating. I showed it to Karen Bjorndal, professor at the University of Florida, who said, “Oh, how lovely.” She looked again and said, “Oh my!” But I used it anyway and Col let me keep the original, which is framed and hangs in our house on Huspah Creek.

Tuesday night of the social also happened to be Mardi Gras. Colorful strings of beads appeared out of nowhere and added to the festivities. I made myself scarce auction night because I didn't want to be the victim of any pranks. But someone came to my room and said I was needed at the auction. When I entered, Richard Byles, from FWS, began escorting me down the aisle to chants of my name. When I got down front, I saw the dreaded bottle of pickled pig lips. Ugh. The bucket was still being passed around for contributions, and I told the crowd I would not eat pig lips for less than what Barbara raised.

It soon exceeded her amount by \$20. Barbara said, “Whatever you do, don't try to chew them. Just take them like a pill with beer.” Good advice. The oil in the top of the jar looked rancid, but Richard cut off a hunk with his pocket knife. I followed Barbara's instructions, and 30 minutes later I headed for the bathroom. Ugh again!

I was one tired pig lips survivor by the time the Friday night awards banquet came around and more than ready to turn the reins over to Barbara Schroeder, the new president again. My days of serving as host/president of the workshop/symposium were over. Others have hosted it three times, but four remains the record! Younger bucks and does could have this pleasure from now on. The presidents would be elected, not just states taking turns.

The next morning, I went back to the bar, but my Tippling Turtler poster was gone. I looked everywhere, probably discarded with the trash. I was heartbroken.

14th Symposium president Barbara Schroeder and I met at the Hilton Head Beach and Tennis Resort, talked to the manager and worked out a solution to the bar problem that we had in 1990. The venue worked well with enough room for posters, vendors and the bar next to the conference hall. Again, the two rooms were separated by accordion doors except on the night of the auction when the doors were opened for access to the bar. We used this arrangement for the next three years.

In August 1994, Ed Drane completed the paperwork for the Annual Sea Turtle Symposium to be incorporated as a non-profit in the State of South Carolina. The first board of directors were: Jack Musick, Jack Woody, Karen Bjorndal, Scott Eckert, Colin Limpus, Nat Frazer, Benito Pinto-Rodriguez, Earl Possardt, Ken Dodd and Llewellyn Ehrhart. Now the symposium was an official entity instead of just a



Peter Pritchard gives the author a hug after the 13th Symposium. Photo by Tom Murphy.

band of roving turtlers. But more important, it had become a “community.” Before the workshops, a few sea turtle scientists were scattered around the world and some didn’t get along with each other. But the annual meetings forged a group of not just friends and colleagues, but a collective voice for conservation. Students could test their wings in a congenial setting before entering the professional realm and perhaps become leaders in this arena. It was satisfying to be part of the evolution.

THE INTERNATIONAL SEA TURTLE SYMPOSIUM EMERGES

Jeanette Wyneken, who now had her PhD, was the president of the 17th Symposium held in Orlando, Florida in 1997. Colin, Leisa and son James, now almost 3 years old, attended. What a doll!

After the banquet on the final night, Jeanette introduced something new. She had hired a dance band. Jack Frazier, associated with the Smithsonian Institution, wore a long flowery *lungi*, or sarong, perfect for the Congo line, and it was quite a show. I met two graduate students, Jeff Seminoff and Wallace J. Nichols, who went by just the initial J. They were both very good-looking: Jeff a dark brunette and J with sandy hair and blue eyes. They were studying sea turtles in the Sea of Cortez in Baja, Mexico. Little did I know then they were destined to become prominent in the sea turtle community and with the symposium.

For the first time outside of the United States, Dr. Alberto Abreu-Grobois from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, hosted as president the 18th Symposium in Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico. Mazatlán is located on the Mexican mainland across from the southern tip of the Baja Peninsula. Alberto had arranged an elaborate show for us at a nearby venue with Mexican music and dancing (which included Alberto as one of the leads).

But in that part of the country, which is mostly desert, it gets freezing cold at night. While the show was fun, I was shivering and ready to get back to the hotel. That year also began serious fundraising. Jack Frazier got the Packard Foundation to provide \$15,000 for travel support; and over the next five years, it gave us more than \$100,000 per year for student and international travel grants.

Dr. David Owens, who at that time taught at Texas A&M University, hosted the 19th Symposium at South Padre Island, Texas. Colin and Leisa made the trip and they brought James, now almost 5, and new baby daughter, Gina, 13 months old. I admired Leisa for traveling from Australia with two small children.

Mark Hamman, one of Colin's graduate students, attended and gave a paper. He unfortunately mistook one of the shallow reflecting pools at the resort for a deeper

one and dove in, which resulted in a busted nose and a nasty black eye. Alcohol might have been involved. He looked terrible, but won "Best Oral Presentation." After the symposium, Col, Leisa and the children came to South Carolina to visit with us.

The 20th Symposium was a landmark, hosted in Orlando, Florida, by president Dr. Blair Witherington. His wife, Dawn, who is an excellent artist, designed a metal medallion keychain as the memento. One side pictured a group of loggerhead hatchlings scrambling to the sea. Around the perimeter it read "1981 Workshop on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation." The other side pictured a juvenile loggerhead approximately 20 years of age. Around this edge it said "20th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation."

We traveled to the frozen north for the 21st Symposium in Philadelphia. Dr. Jim Spotila, a professor at Drexel University, was president. Tom and I went to Glen Burnie in my state station wagon, spent the night and drove the rest of the way to Philadelphia. On the first leg of the trip we drove through snow and on slick roads, and the headlights iced over. Thankfully, the next day dawned sunny and clear. It snowed during the meeting to the great delight of those from Central and South America and the Caribbean. Someone built a life-sized leatherback snowman in front of the hotel.

The 22nd Symposium took place in the warmth of Miami, Florida, with Earl Possardt as president. In December 2001, the Annual Sea Turtle Symposium had become *The Sea Turtle Society*, so the 22nd was the first meeting under this new name. Tom and I did not attend the 23rd Symposium in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, not because it was a long and expensive trip, but because it was a week before George W. Bush began the war in Iraq. All the saber-rattling made us leery of going to a Muslim country.

This was the first symposium I had ever missed. Nothing dangerous happened and everyone had a lovely time thanks to the efforts of president Dr. Nicholas Pilcher. The Sea Turtle Society became the *International* Sea Turtle Society that year.

President and auctioneer extraordinaire Rod Mast held the 24th Symposium in Costa Rica, in a large resort complex just outside the capital city of San Jose. He featured the leatherback but went overboard with the mementos. Everyone received a backpack and a zippered writing folder with the symposium logo on them. The symposium was in debt for the first time.

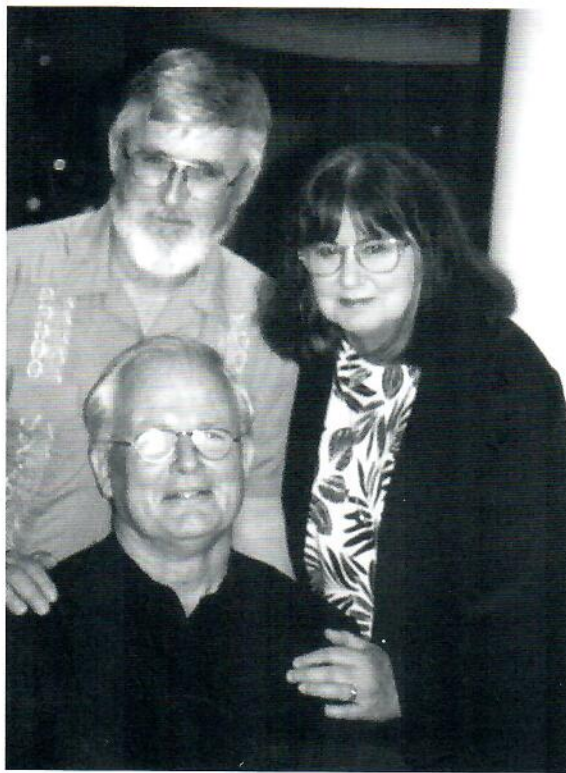
President Dr. Thane Wibbels held the 25th Symposium in my hometown of Savannah on the waterfront. It seemed odd to be back in Savannah at a meeting and not visiting relatives. River Street had changed significantly. There were now cafés and bars and you didn't have to worry about being mugged.

One of the best symposia for me was the 26th on the island of Crete, Greece. Dr. Dimitris Margaritoulis presided at a resort perched on a high cliff just above a small Mediterranean beach town. Restaurants were separated from the beach by only a sidewalk and Aliki Panagopoulou ordered a sumptuous lunch for us. Aliki, one of the Greek turtle workers, helped host the symposium. She was quite a character, always upbeat and funny, and rolled her own cigarettes.

Mr. Leatherback, someone in a life size suit that looked like a leatherback, graced us with his presence. The auction was

the high point of the trip. To replace the booby prizes (getting your beard shaved, eating pig lips), the auctioneer picked three young ladies and three young men to vie for king and queen of the symposium. They were each given a bucket and had to go through the crowd collecting money. The two who collected the most would be crowned king and queen. I was surprised to be one of the nominees because usually younger, college types are selected. As I went around the room, Jeanette Wyneken put a check in my bucket for \$250! Sure enough, I was queen, and was given an olive leaf wreath to wear around my head.

But I had to return it because the U.S. Department of Agriculture would not let me bring live plant materials into the United States. (A couple of months later at the spring training workshop for the sea turtle volunteers, Gary McGraw, a volunteer from Dewees Island, presented me with a wreath made out of fake ivy to replace the one I had left in Crete.) Another thing that made this such a special symposium was seeing Jim Richardson again.



Jim Richardson, (standing) Peter Pritchard and the author in Crete. Photo by Sibille Pritchard.

THE SOUTH CAROLINA AQUARIUM

Many cities along the coasts have aquariums, and along with entertaining the public, they serve as rehabilitation facilities for marine mammals and sea turtles. But South Carolina did not have one and Mayor Joseph Riley, after visiting the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, decided Charleston needed one too. He was the shaker and mover behind the fund-raising effort but it was a long time in coming. The site on the Cooper River, called Calhoun Park, was contaminated and all the soil had to be removed first. Groundbreaking finally took place 10 years later in 1995. While under construction, the aquarium rented warehouse space near The Citadel campus to begin its animal collections. Bruce Hecker, the aquarist, gave me a tour of that facility. He also gave Tom, Colin and me a tour of the aquarium while under construction. It opened to the public on May 19, 2000.

The various displays illustrate the entire spectrum of ecosystems in the Southeast Appalachian Watershed in South Carolina: the mountains, the piedmont, the coastal plain, the coast and the ocean. The 93,000-square-foot building includes nine galleries featuring more than 5,000 aquatic animals, including river otters, sharks, loggerhead turtles and American alligators.

The aquarium also wanted to display sea turtles, so I arranged for 10 hatchling loggerheads to be donated from Kiawah Island. Ten seemed like a lot to Bruce, but I had known hatchlings to succumb to fungus and other infections very quickly. They got excellent care. All the hatchlings survived and fairly soon the tank was overcrowded.

Bruce kept saying that the aquarium was “head-starting” loggerhead turtles. Head-starting was a controversial management option pursued by the National Marine Fisheries Service at their Galveston lab. They raised Kemp’s ridley turtles from hatchlings until they were about dinner-plate size before releasing them into the Gulf of Mexico. If the turtles were larger, fewer predators could eat them.

I told Bruce, “The aquarium is *not* head-starting loggerheads. These turtles are ambassadors for their species so that the public can learn about them. Stop say-



The number of people attending a turtle release on the beach has grown into the hundreds, as can be seen in this aerial photo by Nicholas Johannes.

ing this.” Despite this warning, I continued to see this terminology appear in the newspaper and press releases, and finally told Bruce, “If you continue to use that term, there will be no more hatchlings for the aquarium.”

That worked. Arrangements were made to take most of the “Kiawah 10” to the Gulf Stream so that they could join other loggerheads of that size class in the North Atlantic Gyre.

A beautiful male green sea turtle named “Calhoun” after John C. Calhoun, a South Carolina statesman, was the star of The Great Ocean tank. But somehow Calhoun got wedged between concrete coral formations and drowned. Tom performed a necropsy but it was just too painful for Bruce and the rest of the staff to keep Calhoun’s lovely shell, so I used it for our education programs. Years later, after the pain had worn off, I returned the shell.

Having an aquarium in Charleston meant my staff no longer had to transport sick and injured sea turtles to Marineland in Florida or to Topsail Island, North Carolina. With large tanks and specialized veterinarians, the Charleston aquarium was well-suited to fill this gap in South Carolina. The first summer it opened, two debilitated sea turtles were admitted: “Stinky” and “Tiderunner.” With these two turtles, the partnership between the South Carolina Aquarium and S.C. Department of Natural Resources began. The next spring Calhoun’s replacement was a female loggerhead named “Caretta.”

By the fall of 2005, "Jetty" became the Aquarium's 16th turtle rehabilitated and released into the wild. There were other happenings at the aquarium that fall as well. Bruce Hecker retired and I was flattered to be invited to the aquarium for his retirement party in November. Former DNR director Dr. Timmerman, one of the aquarium's board of directors, was in attendance. This event also served as the coming-out party for Kevin Mills, who would take over the reins as president and CEO in January.

The open patio, on the roof of the building just outside the meeting room, had picnic tables where staff could take lunch breaks, etc. I was out there talking with Dr. Timmerman when he said, "You know, Sally, I have never thanked you for all you have done with the sea turtle program and for our agency."

I replied, "Thank you. That means a lot coming from you, Dr. Timmerman." Two days later he died of a heart attack. What a shock! In hindsight, it appeared he was settling some of his affairs that afternoon at the aquarium.

The number of sea turtles coming in to the South Carolina Aquarium increases annually. The aquarium has constructed a new sea turtle hospital facility on the main floor in addition to the one in the basement.

MORE SYMPOSIA

The 27th Symposium was back in South Carolina at North Myrtle Beach in a big high-rise hotel on the ocean. It felt weird to be attending as a retiree. Over 1,000 participants from more than 80 countries (including Colin again) attended with Michael Coyne as president. His theme for the symposium was "Migration."

Michael wanted to have the symposium back in the Carolinas since he was living in North Carolina. He scheduled a special session just for the North and South Carolina attendees that Matthew Godfrey, of the North Carolina Wildlife Commission, and I hosted. I also gave a presentation. The banquet was especially fun because of the great people we had at our table: Zandy Hillis, Carl Safina, J. Nichols, Jeffery Moore, Kelly Thorvalson, DuBose Griffin and Gary McGraw.

At the auction, anyone who had a sea turtle tattoo came up on stage and showed it to the audience. Michael Coyne had his long ponytail cut off for the good of the cause — more travel money for students.

Dr. J. Nichols, president of the 28th Symposium, convened it in Mexico in the small town of Loreto on the Baja Peninsula where he and Jeff Seminoff had done



Here are the Three Amigos: Hoyt Peckham; J. Nichols, president; and Jeff Seminoff. Eat your hearts out, ladies. Photo by Matthew Godfrey.



Colin Limpus dancing with DuBose Griffin at Loreto.
Photo by Matthew Godfrey.

most of their research. We stayed in a nice motel right on the Sea of Cortez. The posters were displayed in the main plaza of the town and the town folks were involved with the symposium. It seldom rains in this part of Mexico, but it drizzled the whole time we were there. The posters got soaked, but the rain didn't dampen our spirits.

The food at our hotel was tasty, the staff friendly, but we wanted go out on the town at least one night. We met up with the group from Charleston at a local restaurant. I ordered a fresh salad and developed the worst case of Montezuma's Revenge I had ever had. About half the people attending came down with it too. Some were so sick they were unable to give their paper presentations. Luckily, I had packed medication and brought it under control fairly soon.

The paper sessions were given in a gymnasium, where local town dogs wandered in during the presentations. The dogs had no shame and were actually humping in front of the audience.

Colin was there as president-elect for the next symposium, which would be held in Brisbane, Australia. He also received the first Lifetime Achievement Award, along with Nicholas Mrosovsky.

We traveled to Australia a third time to attend the 29th Sea Turtle Symposium. Colin invited me to be one of the keynote speakers and paid for my ticket and hotel room. The theme was, "Creating Community Collaboration," which fit perfectly with my keynote address, "Reducing Sea Turtle Mortality from Coastal Fisheries: Lessons from South Carolina." Most of the information in my address is contained in the chapters of this memoir on TED's. The *final* lesson in my talk was, "Use



One of the technicians had on so much sun screen that he looked like The Joker in the Batman movie. Photo by Tom Murphy.

the other lessons wisely and never give up!”

At the auction, Colin agreed to let someone from the audience shave off his beard — again. The auction night featured Gina Limpus singing. She had a beautiful voice for such a young child and was not the least bit nervous, not that anyone could tell.

The banquet and awards ceremony differed from other symposia in that we were served an Aussie dinner family-style instead of a buffet line or plates of rubber chicken. Many well deserving notables were recognized. Jack Frazier from the U.S. and George Hughes from South Africa were recognized for Lifetime Achievement Awards, and Archie Carr received one posthumously. There was much dancing and chatting with old friends.

Col planned a special field trip for a select group of us on the Sea World vessel into Moreton Bay for a turtle rodeo. This vessel served as the mother ship and two aluminum dinghies were the catch boats. Moreton Bay’s shallow, clear water made submerged turtles highly visible as they tried to outrun the catch boat. The diver jumped off the front of the speeding boat and grabbed the turtle under the water. The catch boat then circled back to the diver, attached ropes around the front flippers and hoisted the turtle up onto the gunwale of the boat where it was

measured and flipper tagged.

Turtles were then carried back to the mother ship for further evaluation before being released.

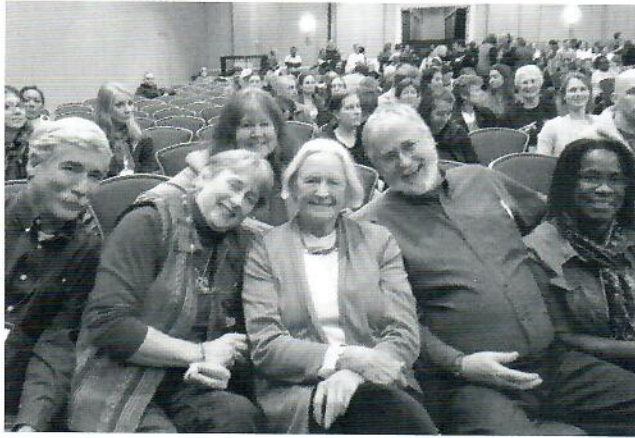
A buffet lunch on the spacious Sea World boat consisted of lobster and prawn, all sorts of beautiful veggies and salads, and dessert on silver trays. It was elegant and delicious. The next day we headed out for Mon Repos.

This time we stayed in a motel in a nearby town because the double-decker bus from the first trip had been sold. Many attendees from the symposium were also traveling to Mon Repos because at that time of year, flatback (*Natator depressus*) hatchlings were emerging from nests, a new experience for me. They are much larger than loggerhead hatchlings and have blue eyes.

Being back at Mon Repos, especially with friends and colleagues to share the experience, made it a special memory. It was here that I learned of an elegant piece of research that Col had done to determine the age of loggerheads when they nest for the first time. He and the volunteers at Mon Repos clipped notches in the rear marginal scutes of 120,000 loggerhead hatchlings over a period of seven years. That is not a typo. Remember the man is obsessive. As the turtles grew, those notches enlarged. At the time, everyone thought the age to sexual maturity was eight to 10 years. Decades passed and no notched turtles nested on Mon Repos. Finally, 29 years later, a female with two large, symmetrical notches in her shell came ashore. Col named her "Premier." About a dozen more have arrived since then and the scientific world now knows that it takes about 30 years before a loggerhead matures and produces eggs. Patience and resolve are necessary traits in sea turtle biologists too.

The 30th Symposium was held in Goa, India, with Dr. Kartik Shanker as president. I did not want to make that long, expensive trip, so I missed my second symposium. Kartik and his team were able to attract a large number of marine turtles from India and elsewhere in Asia, which gave these people and their programs added visibility, and enhanced prospects for political and financial support. This has always been an important function of the symposium, particularly when organized outside the U.S.

After two years of being overseas, the 31st Symposium returned to the U.S. for the first time in San Diego, California, with Dr. Jeff Seminoff as president. The picturesque resort had lush and colorful blooming flowers and palms. Everything was beautiful as is most of San Diego. The two keynote presenters were Dr. Peter Prichard and Dr. Karen Bjorndal. Georgia shrimper Sinkey Boone was to get a posthumous Champions Award and his son Howell was there to accept it on behalf of his family. Todd Steiner of Turtle Island Restoration Network; Randall



Tom Murphy, Debbie Crouse, the author, Rebecca Bell, Jim Richardson and Rhema Keer Bjorkland of Jamaica at the Baltimore auction. Photo courtesy Tom Murphy.

Aráuz of PRETOMA, Costa Rica; and I put together a poster presentation about Sinkey Boone's turtle excluder device and what it had done to advance sea turtle conservation both in the United States and in Central America. "The Legacy of Sinkey Boone" was fitting since he was getting the Champions Award. We were all busy, and DuBose was involved with three papers.

When the banquet rolled around, things were starting to calm down a bit. Jeff Seminoff began with the Lifetime Achievement Awards, and the first name he called was Karen Bjorndal, one of the keynote presenters. I thought, well naturally. The next name he called was Peter Pritchard, also one of the keynote presenters, and I thought, that makes perfect sense too. The next name he called out was Sally Murphy. I didn't think I heard him correctly. And when I realized he had called my name, I said to Tom, "Did you know about this?" He said, "No, I knew nothing about this." But DuBose was grinning from ear to ear.

I made my way up to the stage where Jeff gave me the framed certificate. At the microphone I wondered what in the world to say? I finally said, "Y'all sure know how to keep a secret." I then gathered my thoughts and expressed how meaningful this was because I considered everyone at the symposia over the years as "family." After I got back to my seat, Barbara Schroeder and Marydele Donnelly came over to congratulate me. This night is one of my fondest memories.

I did not attend the 32nd Symposium in Mexico with Ana Barrigan as president, but those who did said the well-organized meeting was attended by many people from not only Mexico, but also Central and South America.

Dr. Ray Carthy, president for the 33rd Symposium, held it in Baltimore, Maryland, Tom's hometown. Tom and I rode the Amtrak train from Yemassee, South Carolina, to Baltimore. It took about the same time as driving I-95, and was less stressful. We traveled on Super Bowl Sunday and the Baltimore Ravens were in the game. Because of a malfunction with the stadium lights during the game, the start of the second half was delayed, so it was still on when we arrived. Since the hotel lobby was packed and noisy, we went up to our room, ordered some sandwiches and watched the second half of the game. The Baltimore Ravens won! Immediately after the game, fireworks started going off all over the city. There were also crowds in the street and constant tooting of horns. What a great coincidence to be in Tom's hometown at the time their team won the Super Bowl.

I chaired the Awards Committee and decided to do something different for the presentations. I contacted nominators, who were sworn to secrecy, and asked them to send me a head shot and then some candid photos of each awardee. I put together a PowerPoint slide show where the name of the award came on the screen, then the head shot and name of the winner as the announcement was made. Once at the podium, where a short bio was read, the candid shots appeared on the screen. I thought it would make the ceremony more personal for winners and the audience.

Jack Woody, my old buddy with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and from the first Marine Turtle Recovery Team, received the Lifetime Achievement Award and there were several old friends, including Richard Byles, attending. They were there to see Woody because he had been diagnosed with lung cancer and refused treatment. I saw Debbie Crouse coming down the aisle. I ran and hugged her with tears of joy. Jim Richardson and Rebecca Bell attended. I hadn't seen them since the meeting in Crete.

A miracle also happened at the Baltimore meeting. The poster I drew for the Tippling Turtler Bar at the 13th Symposium was being offered in the live auction. I could not believe my ears. One of the vendors from Florida, Janet Hochella, had it all these 20 years. She didn't remember how she got it, but sure enough, there it was. I didn't plan to bid because I thought it would bring in a hefty price. Michael



Janet Hochella and the author holding the poster. Photo by Jim Stevenson.

Coyne was determined to have it and he kept out-bidding everyone. I think it finally sold for over \$200. I'm glad it found a good home.

A winter storm, forecast for the Northeast, caused many people to cancel their banquet plans and leave early to beat the snow, so it was not well attended. Hoyt Peckham received the Champions Award and our own Betsy Brabson, received the Ed Drane Award for Volunteerism. Betsy was so pretty and eloquent with her remarks. Daniela Freggi, from Italy, also received an Ed Drane Award and became very emotional. Everyone was emotional when Woody received his award. And even more tears were shed when Ray presented Marydele Donnelly with the President's Award. Another wonderful memory.

The 34th Symposium was in New Orleans with Dr. Roldan Valverde as president. Roldan had many "Nawlins" themes. He wore big purple beads and even dyed his hair and goatee purple. Others picked up the spirit and got beads and purple boas.

I still chaired the Awards Committee, but because awardees had differing schedules, the awards had to be given out at different times during the conference, not just at the banquet. Rod Mast received the President's Award during the auction, which was fitting. Drs. Ann Meyland and Frank Paladino were given Lifetime Achievement Awards during the business meeting, but someone screwed up and the PowerPoint previewed on the screen and everyone knew about Ann's award before the announcement. But I asked J. Nichols to stand in front of the projector lens and Frank was totally surprised and humbled. Jennifer Homcy also received the President's Award for her involvement in the auction for many years.

During the banquet, a sad memorial was held for Jairo Mora Sandoval, the young man who was murdered on a Costa Rican beach while volunteering for WIDECAST. We had to take a short break to recover before the final Lifetime Achievement Award could be presented to Jim Richardson. Because none of those who nominated him could attend, I presented it and I made sure the students knew that having an auction to raise travel money for them began with Jim's idea. They responded with a hardy round of applause. Jim's acceptance speech was also emotional as he remembered his life working with sea turtles along with his wife, Thelma, who had passed away recently. Jim finally got the recognition he so deserved.

Larry Ogren attended, along with his daughter Kim, because he had written a book, *Turning Turtles in Tortuguero*, which was about his adventures with Archie Carr in Costa Rica. Larry was there to sign and sell them. I had not seen him in decades, and except for using a walker, he had not changed. It was great to relive old times again with him.

The 35th was in Dalaman, Muğla, Turkey with Dr. Yakup Kaska as president,

but I could not make it to Turkey. I was sorry to disappoint Yakup, but I was not a "spring chicken" any longer. I got photos from the nominators and put together the awards PowerPoint show for him — with explicit instructions about covering the lens while loading the preview so that no one saw the winner's name in advance. One of the nominators, Lily Venizelos, from Greece, was also nominated for a Lifetime Achievement Award, a tricky situation. But it worked out and she was so shocked, she told me on the phone afterwards, that she almost fainted.

People reading this should know that in the early days, technology did not exist that is used now by the symposium presidents and various committees. The talks were illustrated with 2"x2" slides in a carousel projector, or on acetate with an overhead projector, not PowerPoint. The announcement and registration forms were sent by snail mail, not done online. I remember my staff and me collating, folding and stuffing more than 500 mail-outs on the floor of my office, then sorting them by hand into stacks by zip code. The first four workshops were free, no registration fee. Numbers five through eight charged \$5, and numbers 10 and 11 charged \$10. I still enjoy attending the symposia, but something was lost when it got so big with more than 1,000 attendees. I used to know 90 percent of them and now I know only about 10 percent. That's why it is so important to see these dear friends because we are all getting "long in the tooth."