

## VIMS Educator Lisa Lawrence Wins NMEA National Award

The National Marine Educators Association (NMEA) honored Lisa Lawrence, educator at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester Point, Virginia, with its 2015 James Centorino Award for excellence in Informal Education. The presentation took place on June 30, 2016, before a crowd of roughly 380 educators at the Association's annual conference, held in Orlando, Florida. Lawrence, who has been a MAMEA member since 1998, joins a prestigious list of our chapter members who have attained national recognition from NMEA – some 27 since 1987.

When Lisa was awarded the MAMEA Informal Educator Award in 2014, we celebrated her contributions as a regional educator, noting the many top-flight teacher professional development workshops and field courses she has facilitated, the web communication tools she has designed for educators and resource managers, and her consistent service to the MAMEA Board and membership since 1998, among others. See the MAMEA Awards website page, [www.mamea.org/docs/awards/Lawrence.pdf](http://www.mamea.org/docs/awards/Lawrence.pdf), and Masthead article, Fall 2014, Vol. 34 (3), on the website at [www.mamea.org/masthead/fall2014.pdf](http://www.mamea.org/masthead/fall2014.pdf).



MAMEA member Lisa Lawrence accepts the 2015 James Centorino Award for distinguished performance in Informal Marine Education from out-going NMEA President Bob Rocha. The presentation took place at NMEA's 2016 Conference, held in Orlando, FL. Photo courtesy of NMEA.

But, it was time for Lisa's well-earned national recognition from NMEA. She has been a NMEA member since 1998 and she has been instrumental in managing some of NMEA's most visible and popular projects.

- **The Bridge** was conceived in 1997, the National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) funded a novel concept in ocean science education – an online clearinghouse for ocean science education resourced called the Bridge. This project brought together the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (developers of the website), the Sea Grant Educators Network (national network of educators to assist with resource identification), and the National Marine Educators Association (URL host and disseminators of project information) in a formidable and long-lasting partnership that would provide easy access to ocean education resources to classroom teachers everywhere. Shortly after the funding award was announced, Lisa Ayers Lawrence was hired to bring the concept to life. Lisa spent months scouring the internet for resources, working with scientists and educators to review resources for accuracy and usability, and programming the html code to create the website framework. The Bridge opened for business at the 1998 National Marine Educators Association's annual conference. Since its launch, the Bridge has provided immediate access to a comprehensive collection of ocean science information and resources for coastal and non-coastal educators around the globe. The Bridge serves more than 200,000 visitors annually from nearly 200 different countries. It was awarded the NOPP Excellence in Partnering Award in 2001 and the NMEA President's Award in 2004 and has served as a model upon which many other online ocean education resources have been designed. From its infancy as a static website to its current status as the nation's go-to database-driven ocean education resource center, Lisa has been responsible for the growth and development of every aspect of the site over its 17 year history.

•**Scuttlebutt:** The Bridge also serves as a communications hub for the ocean science education community through its international listserv, “Scuttlebutt.” With more than 3,200 subscribers from around the world and an average of 1,800 postings annually, Scuttlebutt fosters discussion and announcements about ocean science topics, ocean education issues and professional development opportunities. Lisa moderates each and every message that is distributed via Scuttlebutt to ensure that only legitimate messages of interest to the ocean education community are posted – no spam allowed!

•**Bridge Data Analysis Teaching Activities (DATA) Series.** Lisa has been a groundbreaker in the development of online ocean education materials. In addition to providing access to more than 1,200 peer-reviewed resources through a pedagogically-friendly navigation system, the Bridge staff also created a collection of data-based classroom lesson plans called the Bridge Data Analysis Teaching Activity (DATA) Series. This series was developed in 1999 in response to requests from teachers for real scientific data they could use in the classroom. At first, the “Data Tips” provided a link to a user-friendly set of data with suggested topics they could explore using the dataset. It was not long before Bridge staff realized that teachers needed more guidance in mining and analyzing the data. The Data Tips quickly evolved into full-fledged classroom activities providing the classroom teacher with background information on the topic (with links to more supporting information), detailed instructions on how to access, download and even graph the data, and discussion questions to guide the teacher as they help students to analyze the data and discuss the importance of these data. More than 60 DATA activities geared for the middle and high school level have been developed since 1999. Lisa has authored more than one-third of these activities and overseen development of the rest. The DATA Series has been the model for other data-based classroom activities including some developed for the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute. They have been incorporated into school curricula, and published resource sets such as the COSEE Great Lakes *Fresh & Salt* curriculum and COSEE Networked Ocean World’s *Ocean Gazing* website and DVDs.

•**Service to NMEA and MAMEA:** Lisa is a 17-year member of both NMEA and MAMEA. Since starting her career as a Marine Education Specialist with VIMS, Lisa has regularly attended the annual conferences for both organizations, frequently conducting presentations and exhibits. She has been central in making marine science resources, as well as NMEA and MAMEA communications and benefits, accessible to members of both organizations.

#### **NMEA**

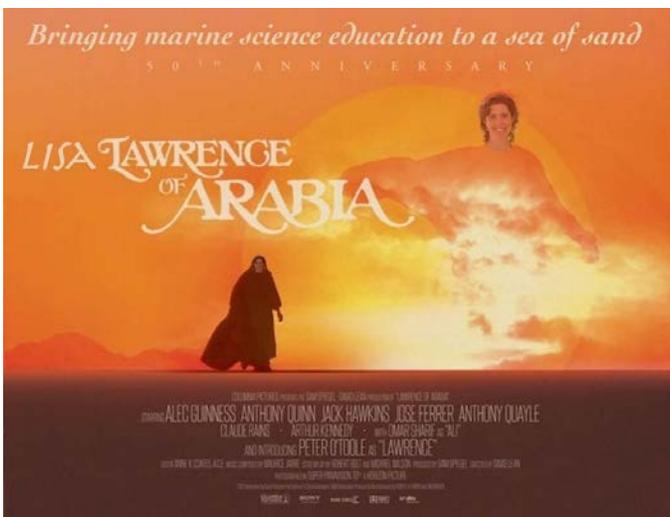
- **Technology Committee Chair** (2010-2013); **Committee Member** (2013-present) – Served as the first Chair for the Technology Committee for three years, continue to serve as committee member. Implemented online voting for NMEA elections in 2013 and continue to manage online voting.
- **NMEA Co-webmaster** (2009-2013) – Developed database-driven sections of the website including Chapter Rep reporting section, award nomination form, and conference presentation submission forms.
- **Conference Planning Committee Member** (NMEA 2003, NMEA 2014) – Served on the concurrent session planning team for NMEA 2003. Created and ran the website and conference app for NMEA 2014.

#### **MAMEA**

- **Membership Chair** (2012-present) – Created and manages Access database to manage the membership records. Created an online membership enrollment/renewal form and associated

Paypal account.

- **Webmaster** (2005-present) – Maintains the organizations website with enhancements such as custom-built sections for annual and state conferences including information and online registration.
- **Listserv Manager** (2000-present) – Manages listserv subscriptions. Reviews and approves/discards all message postings.
- **Past President and Mentoring Committee Chair** (2012-2013) – Provided guidance to new President, President elect and State Representatives
- **President** (2011-2012) – Oversaw MAMEA operations and presided over official board and member meetings.
- **President-Elect** (2010-2011) – As President-Elect of MAMEA, hosted the highly successful joint MAMEA/VA Environmental Educators annual conference in Williamsburg, VA.
- **Nominating Committee Chair** (2002-2004, 2013) – Solicited candidates for nominations, prepared the slate of candidates, and conducted elections. Implemented online voting for 2010 MAMEA elections and has conducted the online elections since.
- **Virginia State Representative** (2000-2004) – Served two back-to-back terms as the Virginia State Representative for MAMEA. In this role, she created the successful Species of Special Concern workshop series. This series, held annually from 2002-2007, provided teachers with a one-day teacher workshop focused on a Chesapeake Bay related species or topic offering scientific presentations, field and hands-on activities and educational resources.



This spoof - by a VIMS colleague - is a fun reminder of the many wide-reaching contributions that Lisa has made to marine education.



Lisa's not just an excellent marine educator; she's also a wiz at steaming clams and crabs! Here she is with the feast she prepared for teachers at the VIMS Coastal Ecosystems Field Course this summer. Photo by C.Hopper Brill.

*Please, join us in **congratulating** Lisa for this prestigious award and thank her for years of dedication in working – often behind the scenes – to help make NMEA and MAMEA the organizations they are today.*