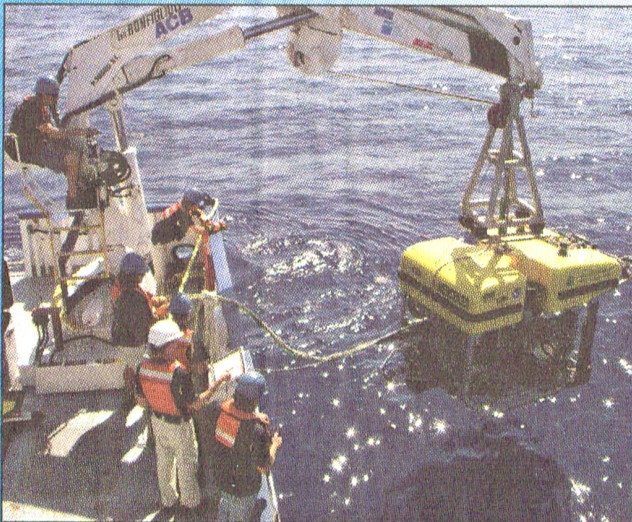


A (SECOND) CHANCE OF A LIFETIME



Coventry High science teacher Tiffany Risch (right) and world-famous oceanographer Dr. Robert Ballard (left) have worked together before, exploring shipwrecks off the coast of Turkey in 2011, and they will again in a few weeks in the Gulf of Mexico.

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Undersea submersibles will help the crew get a better look at what lies beneath the surface during the expedition.

CHS teacher works again with renowned scientist

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COVENTRY — For the second straight year, Coventry High School teacher Tiffany Risch will join Dr. Robert Ballard on board a research vessel as they explore a shipwreck along the Texas coast.

As part of the Ocean Exploration Trust (OET), 47 educators and students from around the world were chosen to join the 2013 Nautilus Exploration Program.

Risch, who joined the exploration in 2012, was again chosen as the 2013 Educator at Sea for this adventure.

She explained that in December 2011 she applied and was given the opportunity to join the team to explore ancient shipwrecks off the western coast of Turkey; now in 2013, she will be able to work alongside Ballard yet again to explore a shipwreck near Galveston, Texas.

In 2012, a group of scientists located a possible shipwreck off the

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Teacher joins famed researcher

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coast of Texas. The only problem, Risch said, was getting close enough to analyze the structure.

“They didn’t have the capabilities to get a close look or take sampling or touch and see the shipwreck,” she added. “So with the Nautilus it’s easier and we have the capabilities to get a closer look at the wreck.”

She said with the team on board, they’ll be able to collect fragments from the ship and hopefully get an estimate of when the wreck occurred, who was on board, if they were trading anything and if it “could potentially tie into American history of some kind.”

When Risch found out she was chosen for a second time to join the exploration, she was in shock.

“I was so enthusiastic and surprised and elated when I was chosen again,” she said. “Because it’s such an opportunity, especially to be selected twice — and for my students, who get to see this firsthand.”

Risch, who teaches physical science, biology, physics and oceanography at the high school, explained that she told her students about the exploration. Because of this, the students will now be able to watch their teacher live on the Nautilus website this summer. With the launch of Exploration Now, the 24-hour online website will give people an opportunity to interact with the educators, students and scientists on board the ship via telepresence technology.

“Each experience is shared with students and colleagues to hopefully spark an interest in STEM-related careers and future possibilities,” she said. “Having a STEM background and using it to explore the unknown is exciting because you never know what you will uncover next, and how those discoveries may change what we currently believe.”

Although the expedition will take place from June to November, Risch said she’ll be on board from July 17-July 27.

The ship will be making multiple stops during the five month journey, including



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ABOVE: The *Nautilus*, the exploration vessel Risch sailed upon in 2011 and will again later this month, where she can keep in touch with students via the internet (below).



locations in Puerto Rico, Montserrat, Cayman Islands, Bahamas, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago and Turkey.

The Educator at Sea Science Communication Fellowship Program will be bringing 16 educators and four veteran educators from as far away as Northern Ireland and Venezuela.

The Science and Engineering Internship Program has invited 15 interns from universities and colleges throughout the world, including Australia and Canada.

And the Honors Research Program (HRP) has invited 12 students from across the United States to join the ship and work alongside scientists at the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography.

“One of the major goals of our Nautilus Exploration Program is to inspire the next generation of explorers in STEM fields,” said Expedition Leader and OET Vice President, Dr. Katherine Croff Bell. “So we’re very excited to provide educators and students with the direct experience of pure exploration, while allowing them the opportunity to share their experience far and wide with their peers.”