

Beachgoer's Double Whammy

Just as vacationers' thoughts turn beachward, scientists are warning of a seaside hazard beyond those of tooth and claw and tentacle. The tsunami, that massive wall of water known to coastal residents around the earthquake-prone Pacific,

might also be triggered in the quiescent Atlantic by under-sea landslides or extraterrestrial impacts.

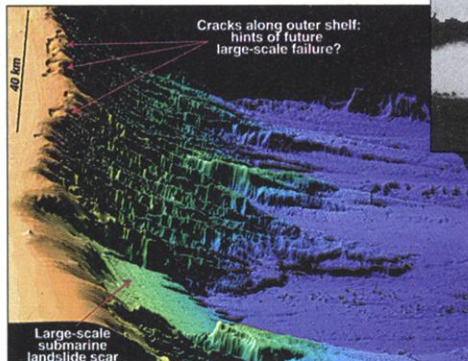
In the May issue of *Geology*, marine geologist Neal Driscoll of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts and his colleagues report finding 50-meter-deep

cracks along a 40-kilometer section of the continental shelf off southern Virginia and North Carolina. The shelf edge beyond the cracks appears poised to slip into the abyss, following about 150 cubic kilometers of nearby shelf that made the plunge near the end of the last ice age.

When a similar landslide peeled off the Grand Banks in 1929, notes Driscoll, it created a 4- to 12-meter-high tsunami that killed 51 Newfoundlanders.

The researchers can't yet set the odds of a new killer wave. But thanks to scientists at the University of California, Santa Cruz, we now have a likelihood of an Atlantic tsunami from another source—a comet or asteroid. Steven Ward and Erik Asphaug estimate, in the May issue of *Icarus*, that

there's a 1-in-47 chance over the next 1000 years that an extraterrestrial body at least 60 meters across will splash into the Atlantic and send a 5-meter tsunami rolling over New York City.



Ocean floor showing cracks and location of post-ice age quake. (Inset) Tsunami hits Hawaii in 1946.

School Board Nuclear Jitters

A California school board has retreated from an attempt to prevent student visits to a local science museum. On 11 April the Alameda County Board of Education voted 5 to 1 for a moratorium on school field trips to the Lawrence Hall of Science (LHS) at the University of California, Berkeley, because of claims that the area could be contaminated by radioactive waste.

The move was in response to warnings from the Berkeley-based Committee to Minimize Toxic Waste, which claims that emission standards at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's National Tritium Labeling Facility, whose emission tower is near the LHS, are inadequate.

Horried officials from the lab and LHS—backed by the Environmental Protection Agency—protested the moratorium, assuring the board at a 25 April meeting that emissions from the tritium facility are well below mandated levels. So the board backed off. Although it refused to rescind the earlier motion, it issued a "compromise" statement noting that there are "differences of opinion regarding ... hazards" from the facility, and recommending that "educators, students, and parents independently assess the possibility of risk and make individual decisions regarding visits to the Lawrence Hall of Science."

Wisdom for the Tenured-to-Be

"Never forget that you will be judged by senior colleagues who never would have received tenure had they been evaluated under the standards by which they will judge you. ... During those gray days [the 1960s and '70s], a professor would have had to shoot up in front of students and be convicted of gross moral turpitude to be denied tenure. Now, this deadwood is going to judge you. ... But just remember that if you make it ... you, too, will live to be an unworthy fossil who determines the careers of far more talented and industrious people than yourself."

From "Gaining Tenure: Rules Your Chairman Never Told You," by Amherst College professors Lawrence Douglas and Alexander George, in the 5 May *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Head Count

Psychiatric epidemiologist Ronald C. Kessler of Harvard gets top billing in a new citation ranking for psychiatry to be published by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) in Philadelphia. ISI compiled a list of 1800 highly cited papers from 16 psychiatry journals between 1990 and mid-1999. Kessler and psychiatrist Kenneth Kendler of Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond are co-authors on the most-cited paper of them all, a survey on psychiatric disorders in the U.S. Other oft-cited papers cover topics from schizophrenia imaging and the psychobiology of posttraumatic stress disorder to the genetics of bulimia. Harvard and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) churned out the

greatest number of high-impact papers. The Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry in Munich and the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, in contrast, led the pack in average citations per paper, even though they produced relatively few papers.

	Name	Affiliation	No. of high-impact papers	Citations per paper
1.	Ronald Kessler	Harvard University	31	103.4
2.	Kenneth Kendler	VA Commonwealth U.	29	104.1
3.	Dennis Charney	Yale University	27	78.9
4.	Joseph Biederman	Harvard U./MGH	26	66.8
5.	Jeffrey Lieberman	Long Is. Jewish Med. Ctr.	25	62.4
6.	Judith Rapoport	NIMH	23	54.4
7.	Lawrence Price	Brown University	21	67.2
8.	Stephen Faraone	Harvard University	21	56.8
9.	Nancy Andreasen	University of Iowa	19	89.9
10.	Michael Rutter	Inst. of Psychiatry, London	19	60.9