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Scripps Institution of Oceanography in Fiction

Author:

[Brueggeman, Peter](#), Scripps Institution of Oceanography Library

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Abstract:

Scripps Institution of Oceanography is a fictitious setting in several novels. Genres in which SIO appears include murder mysteries, romances, and science fiction. SIO appears under its own name or other names like Scripps Institute, University of San Geronimo Department of Oceanography, Oceanography Institute, Pacific Institute, Seaside Laboratory, Marine Research Institute, Brayton Institute of Oceanography, Dawson Oceanographic Institute, and Torrey Institution of Oceanography. Excluded are works where SIO is mentioned very briefly, typically to establish a character's credentials in a single sentence or two.



Scripps Institution Of Oceanography In Fiction

Peter Brueggeman

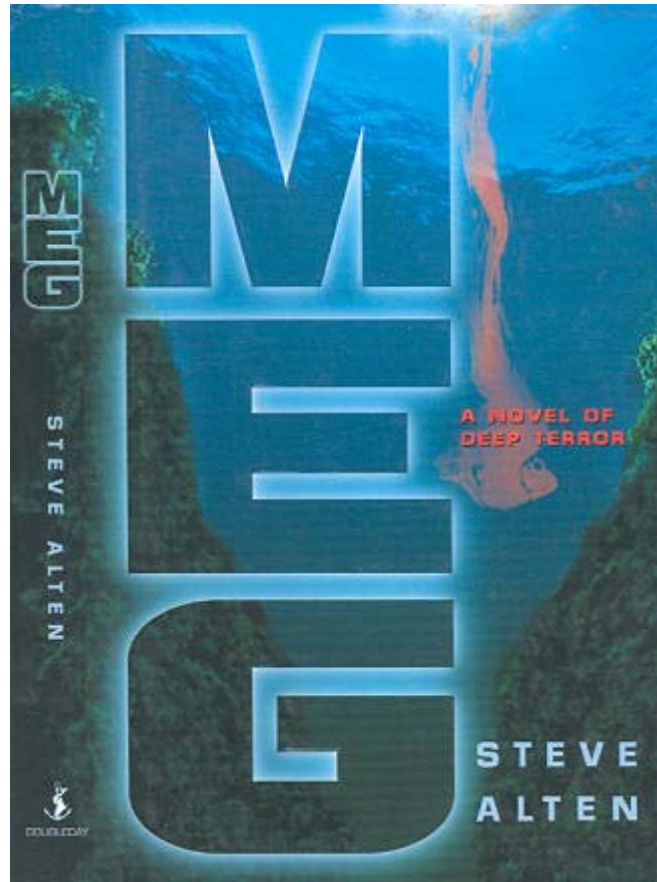
Scripps Institution of Oceanography Library

March 2001

Scripps Institution of Oceanography Technical Report

Scripps Institution of Oceanography is a fictitious setting in several novels. Genres in which SIO appears include murder mysteries, romances, and science fiction. SIO appears under its own name or other names like Scripps Institute, University of San Geronimo Department of Oceanography, Oceanography Institute, Pacific Institute, Seaside Laboratory, Marine Research Institute, Brayton Institute of Oceanography, Dawson Oceanographic Institute, and Torrey Institution of Oceanography. Excluded are works where SIO is mentioned by its name solely to establish a character's credentials.

Thank you to alert readers: Kris Anderson; Lawrance Bailey; John Calderwood; Robin Calton; Deborah Day; Sarah Glaser; Michael Lee Huygen; Douglas Inman; Debra Losey; Richard Rosenblatt; Shelley Shaffer; Eric Vetter, and Walter Munk, who indirectly started me on this trail through a book he gifted to the SIO Library collection (The Narrow Cell).



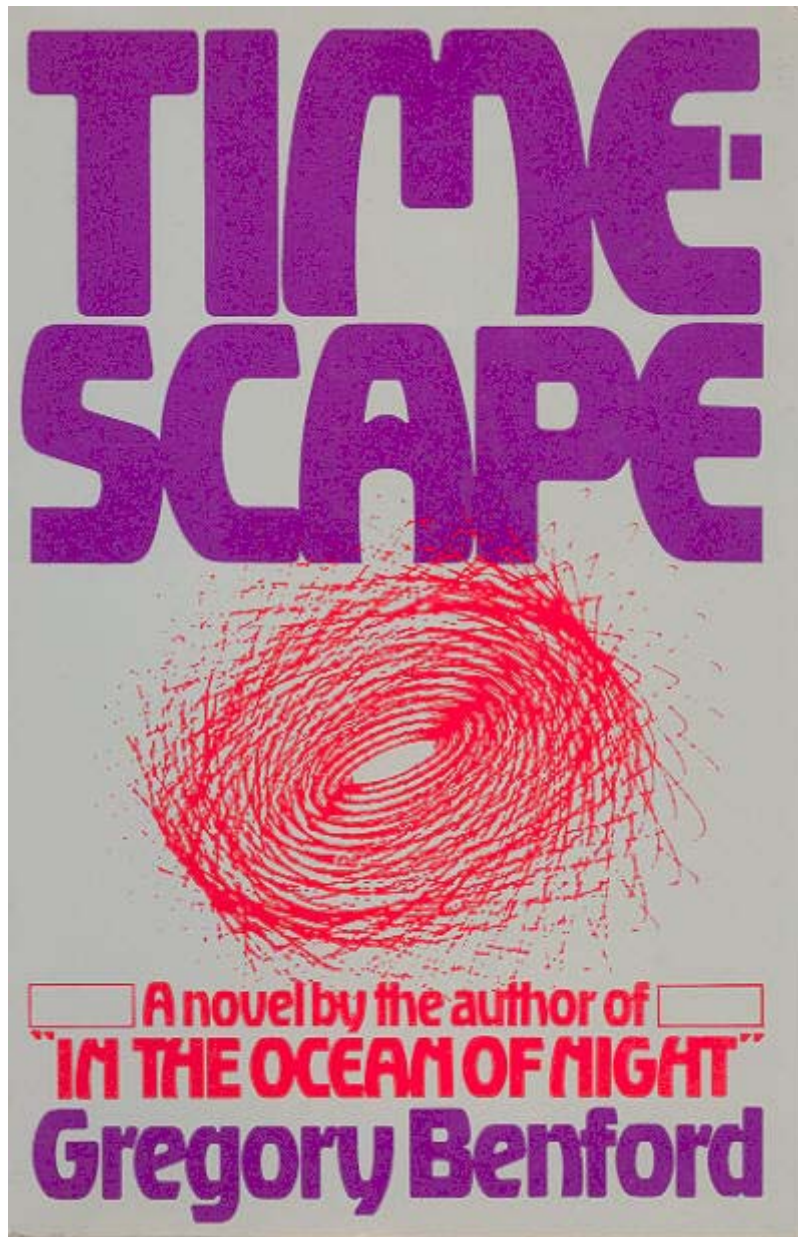
MEG, a Novel of Deep Terror

Alten, Steve

NY: Doubleday, 1997

SIO goes by an altered and shortened name in this novel, being called Scripps Institute.

Carcharodon megalodon, the sixty-foot prehistoric shark, is considered extinct by all, with the exception of Dr. Jonas Taylor. Taylor, a former deep-sea submersible pilot for the Navy followed by advanced degrees from UCSD and WHOI and also formerly a full professor at Scripps Institute with three books on paleobiology, is touring the lecture circuit promoting his theories about Meg and her possible existence in the Mariana Trench. The story opens with Taylor delivering a lecture on his Meg theory at the Anderson Auditorium of the Scripps Institute. The water temperature of this trench is warm due to hot vents on the ocean floor. This pocket of hot water, theorizes Taylor, could support Megs. Taylor himself thought he saw one on his last submersible dives, resulting in a panic that killed two of his fellow divers. Taylor is the laughing stock of everyone around him, especially his wife Maggie, an egomaniacal reporter. When a fellow marine explorer loses some deep-sea probes in the trench, Taylor is wrenched out of retirement to take a dive, and see what happened.



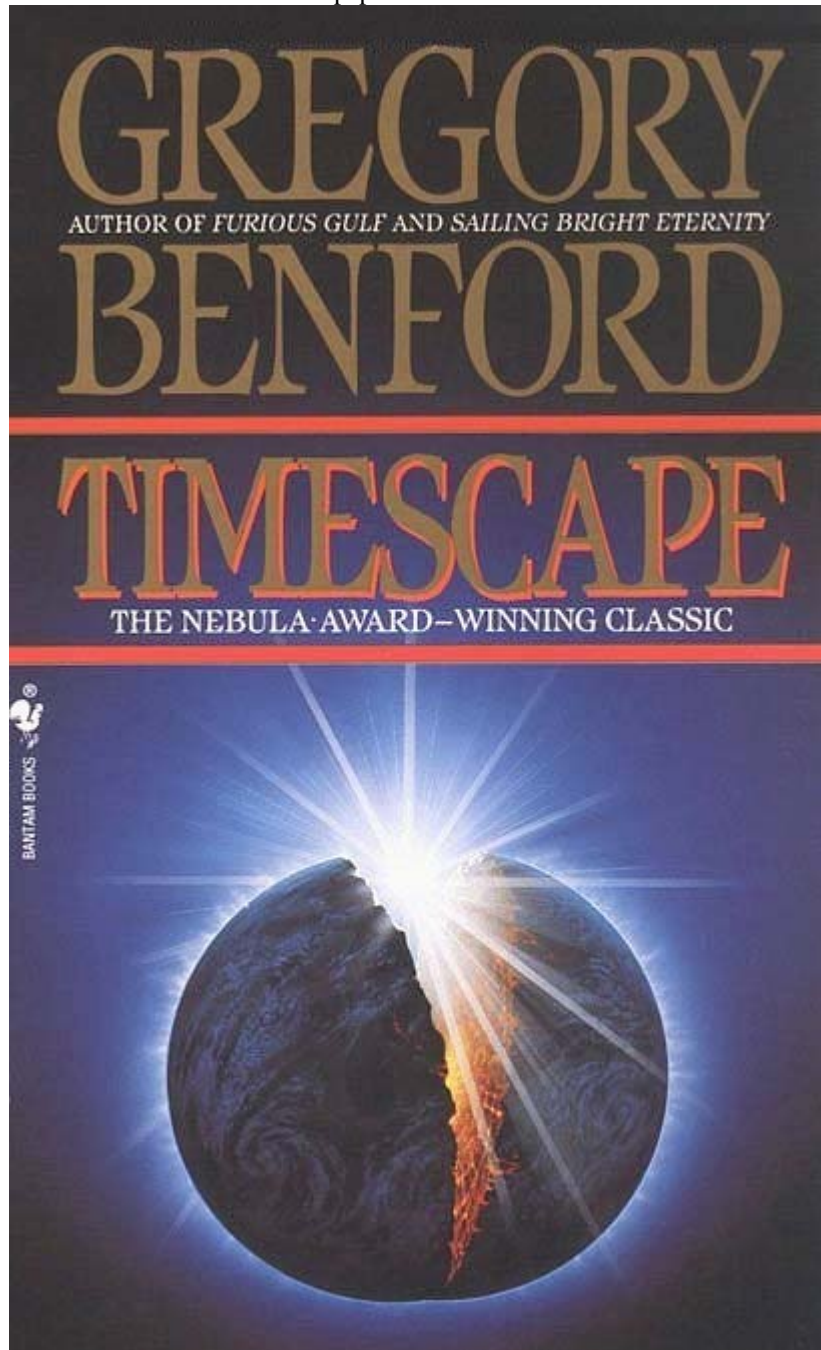
Timescape

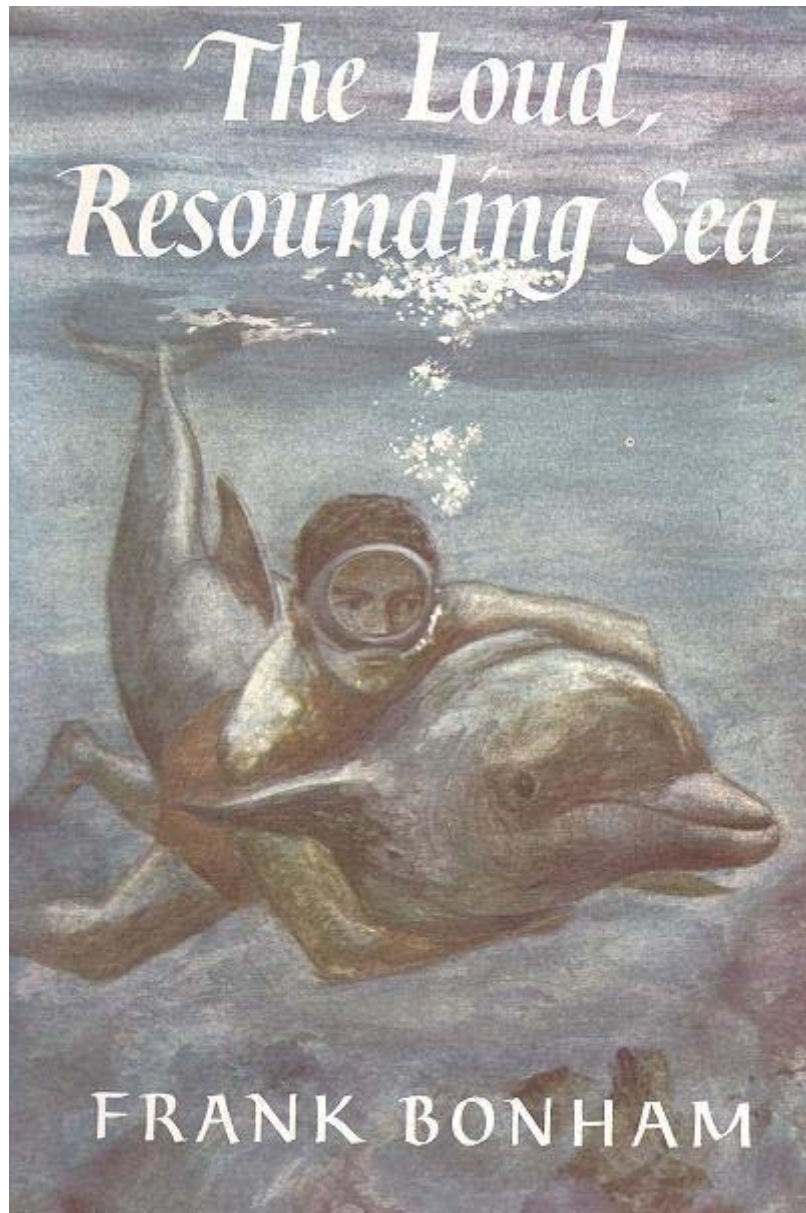
Benford, Gregory

NY: Simon and Schuster, 1980

SIO is called Scripps Institute of Oceanography in this science fiction novel written by an astrophysicist and set at UCSD, with SIO as one of its settings. In 1998, a group of scientists work desperately to communicate with the scientists of 1962, warning of an ecological disaster that will destroy the oceans in the future and trying to avert actions in the past. In 1962, Gordon Bernstein, a young assistant researcher in physics at UCSD, struggles with his new life, office politics, and irregular data plaguing his experiments. Detecting strange patterns of interference in a lab experiment, he begins to uncover something that changes his life forever.

paperback cover





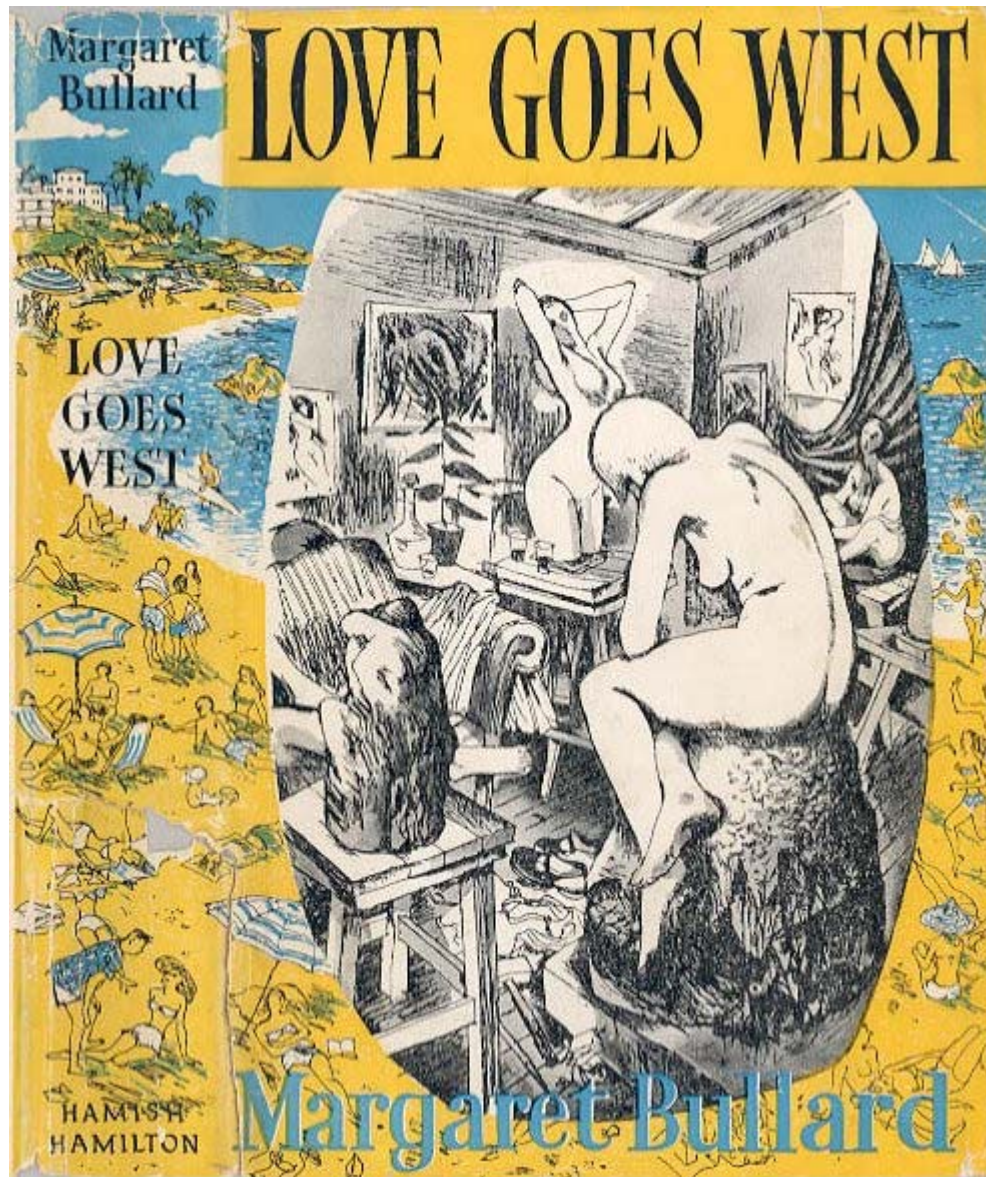
The Loud, Resounding Sea

Bonham, Frank

NY: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1963

SIO is called by its own name in this adolescent novel set in La Jolla.

Skip Turner, a local high school student, has a summer job at SIO in the lab of Dr. Fitzpatrick, a marine biologist. Immediately after a surfing accident shooting the Scripps pier, Skip is saved by a dolphin. Skip thinks he hears the life-saving dolphin speak to him, saying "See-mo." Skip learns of the ancient Mediterranean nickname for dolphins "Simo." When it becomes apparent that the dolphin can communicate, Skip is swept into a whirl of publicity that threatens his developing friendship with the dolphin.



**Love Goes West: An Entertainment
Bullard, Margaret**

London: H. Hamilton, 1953

Written by the wife of Sir Edward C. Bullard, who spent summers at SIO in the 1950's, SIO is known as the University of San Geronimo Department of Oceanography, also being referred to as the Oceanographic Institute. Three characters incorporate elements from SIO people: the Randalls incorporate some aspects of the Bullards, while the character of Cyprian Vulp has some aspects of Francis Shepard. Local features in the novel that mirror SIO include a research pier and a nearby submarine canyon. The book jacket depicts sculptures by an artist character in the novel.

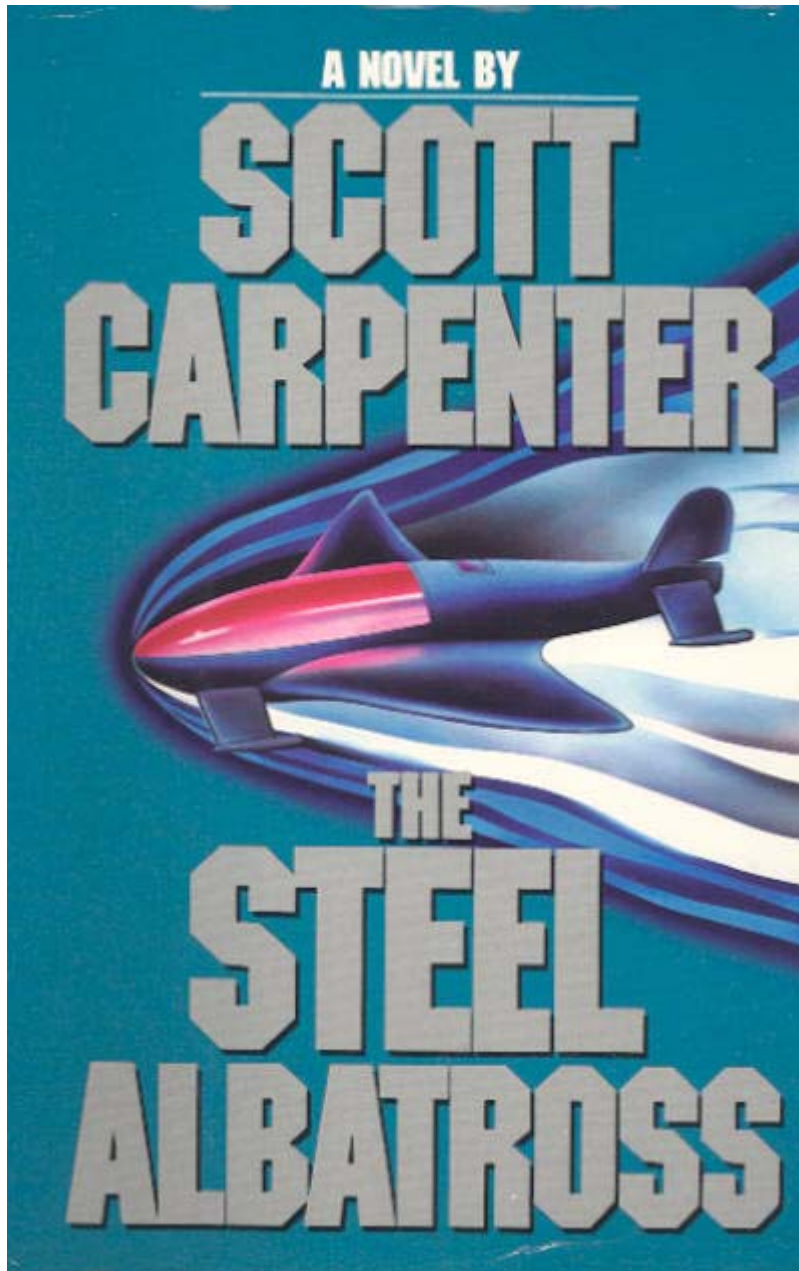
The following paragraph is excerpted from a letter from Roger Revelle to Edward Bullard, 20 September 1951 in SIO Office of the Director (Revelle) Records, Box 1

folder 48: "...Please tell Margaret that many of us here have read "Wedlock's the Devil" with considerable interest and enthusiasm. I hope she will not be too disturbed by the comment that she writes like a humane and feminine Waugh or early Huxley. We can hardly wait until she produces a novel about La Jolla. This is a particularly pleasing prospect because it might mean that the Bullards would spend another summer here in order to steep themselves in local color...."

Joe Randall, an English civil servant, is sent by the British Ministry of Nutrition to San Geronimo, California, where Joe is commissioned to purchase sardines. Taking along his wife Benita, they leave their staid English suburban family life for the sun-drenched beach lifestyle of San Geronimo, where it seems that everyone is having or has had a relationship with everyone else. While Joe is arranging details for the purchase of fish, he renews his friendship with Dolores, his Ideal Woman, of whom he has been dreaming for years since their first meeting. Benita, left to herself while her husband pursues his two quests, falls in love with Cyprian Vulp, a lonely oceanographer. Joe finds the reality of Dolores far short of his Ideal Woman dream, and ultimately Joe and Benita resolve their marital relationship.

A local fisherman, Pete, describes his skin diving for abalone to Benita as "bottom-scratching," going on to describe local "ace goggle-divers" as "bottom-scratchers." Pete notes that you had to pass several skin diving tests to be a bottom-scratcher, and that there were only a dozen of them in San Geronimo. This mirrors the real life Bottom Scratchers in San Diego, an invitation-only group of 20 spear fishing skin divers, whose members included SIO's Jim Stewart and Carl Hubbs.

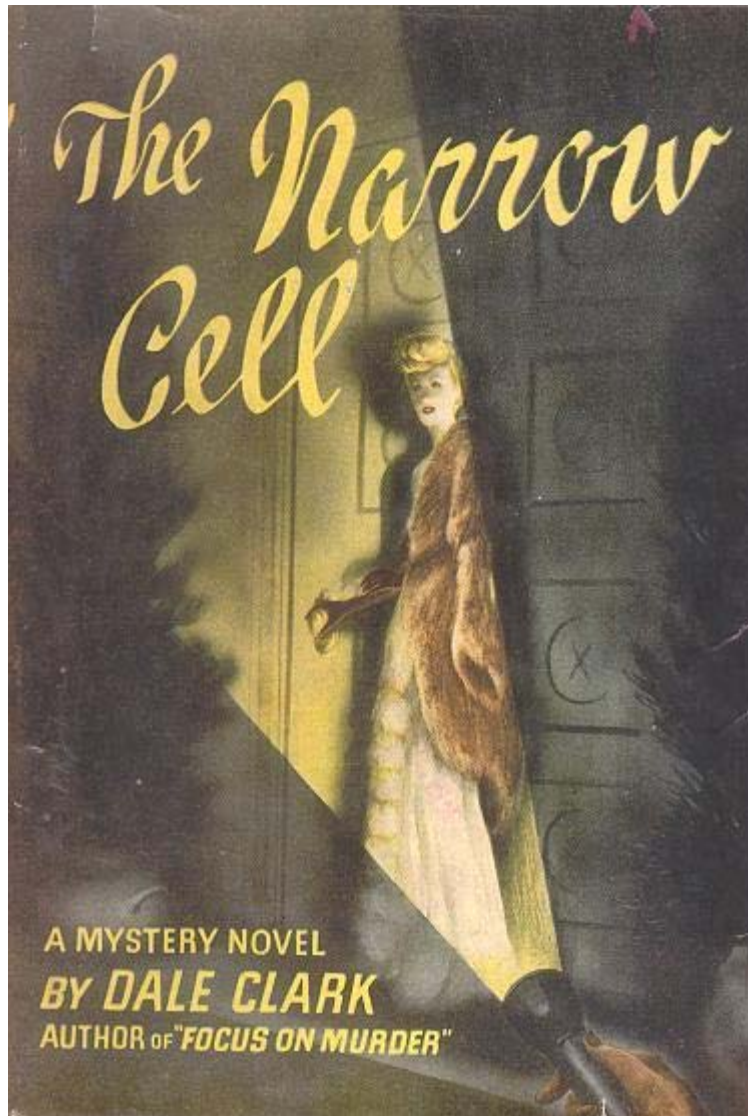
A principal character, oceanographer Cyprian T. Vulp, incorporates elements of Francis Shepard and his research on submarine canyons. Vulp does research on submarine canyons, and has a theory on their formation by earthquakes. Vulp's theory disagrees another scientist's theory on current scour formation of submarine canyons. This scientific disagreement uses elements of Shepard's disagreement on submarine canyon formation with Philip Henry Kuenen. At novel's end, earthquake driven changes in the local submarine canyon confirm Vulp's theory, which he intends to publish in the *Journal of Oceanography*, leading to the local canyon being known as Vulp Canyon. One branch of the Scripps Canyon offshore SIO is named after SIO scientist, Francis Sumner.



The Steel Albatross
Carpenter, (Malcolm) Scott
New York: Pocket Books, 1991

SIO is called by its own name in this novel, and given some extra toys, including a heliport, and a seaside building with a moon pool giving direct access to the ocean from scientific labs. In 1965, astronaut Scott Carpenter was an aquanaut in the U.S. Navy's SEALAB II project, which involved an undersea habitat at 205 foot depth located off SIO.

The Steel Albatross is a prototype submarine that works like a glider, moving with the force of gravity and ballast, undetectable to enemy sonar. Top Gun renegade fighter pilot Rick Tallman switches to the Navy Seals so he can pilot this super-secret sub. When the Soviets prepare to activate Project Temnota, a secret underwater power plant that could knock out every computer in the US, rendering defense systems inoperable, Tallman's unproven submarine is the country's only hope. Beneath the Pacific, Tallman and the Steel Albatross duel the men of Temnota.



The Narrow Cell

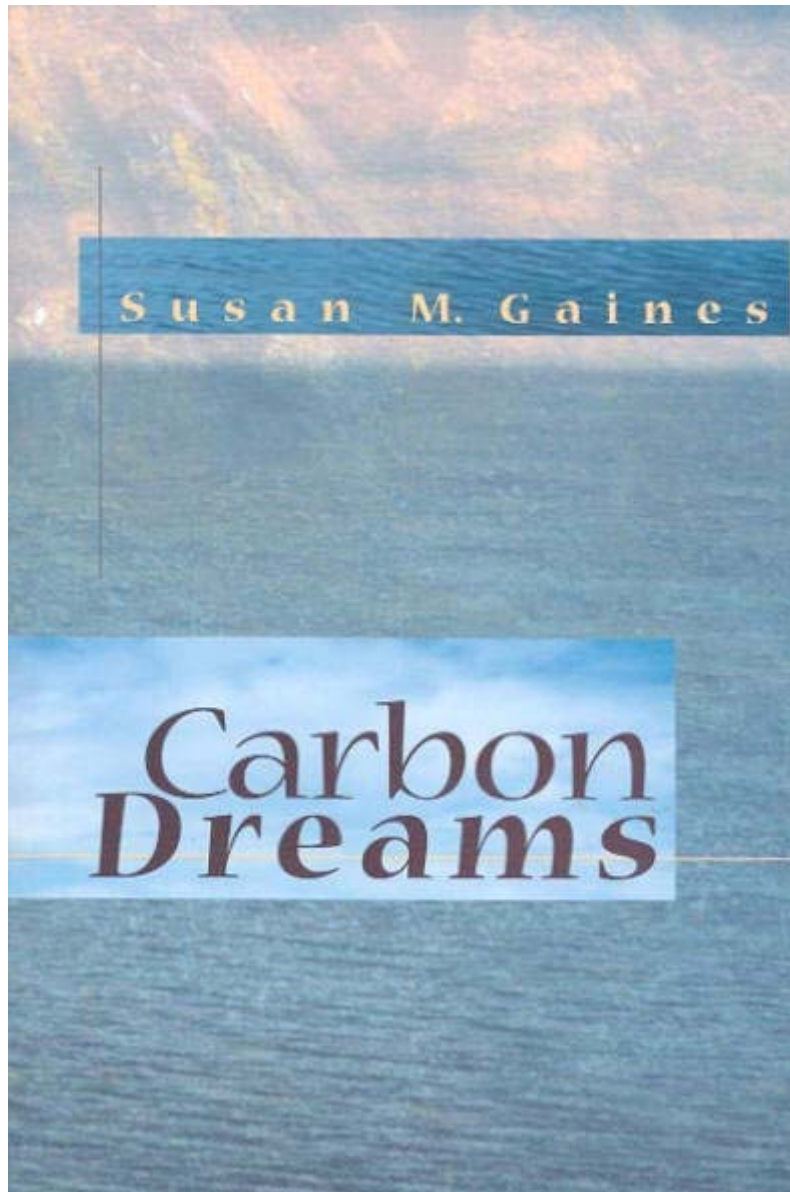
Clark, Dale

Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1944

SIO is the model for the Marine Research Institute in this murder mystery set in La Jolla.

Police Lieutenant John Kenmore goes to investigate a murder of Henry Bowling in La Jolla, recalling an earlier La Jolla murder case involving Catherine Hope, whose nude body was discovered in MRI's stingray aquarium tank, during a grunion run on the crowded nearby beach. The Hope murder investigation revealed a party occurred in one of MRI's cottages on the evening of the Hope murder, with the party culminating in a game of strip poker in which three MRI marine biology professors participated. The three professors resigned from MRI after their party was revealed in the newspapers but the Hope murder went unsolved.

Lieutenant Kenmore works out details of the Bowling murder evidence with Darwina Roydan, an MRI marine biologist and author of the renowned two-volume monograph on *leucetta losangelensis* [sic: genus uncapitalized in novel]. The Bowling murder investigation expands to encompass the unsolved Hope murder, several members of La Jolla society, the Shore Club, and the MRI Director Emeritus whose career was stalled by the Hope murder and who is murdered during the course of the Bowling murder investigation.



Carbon Dreams

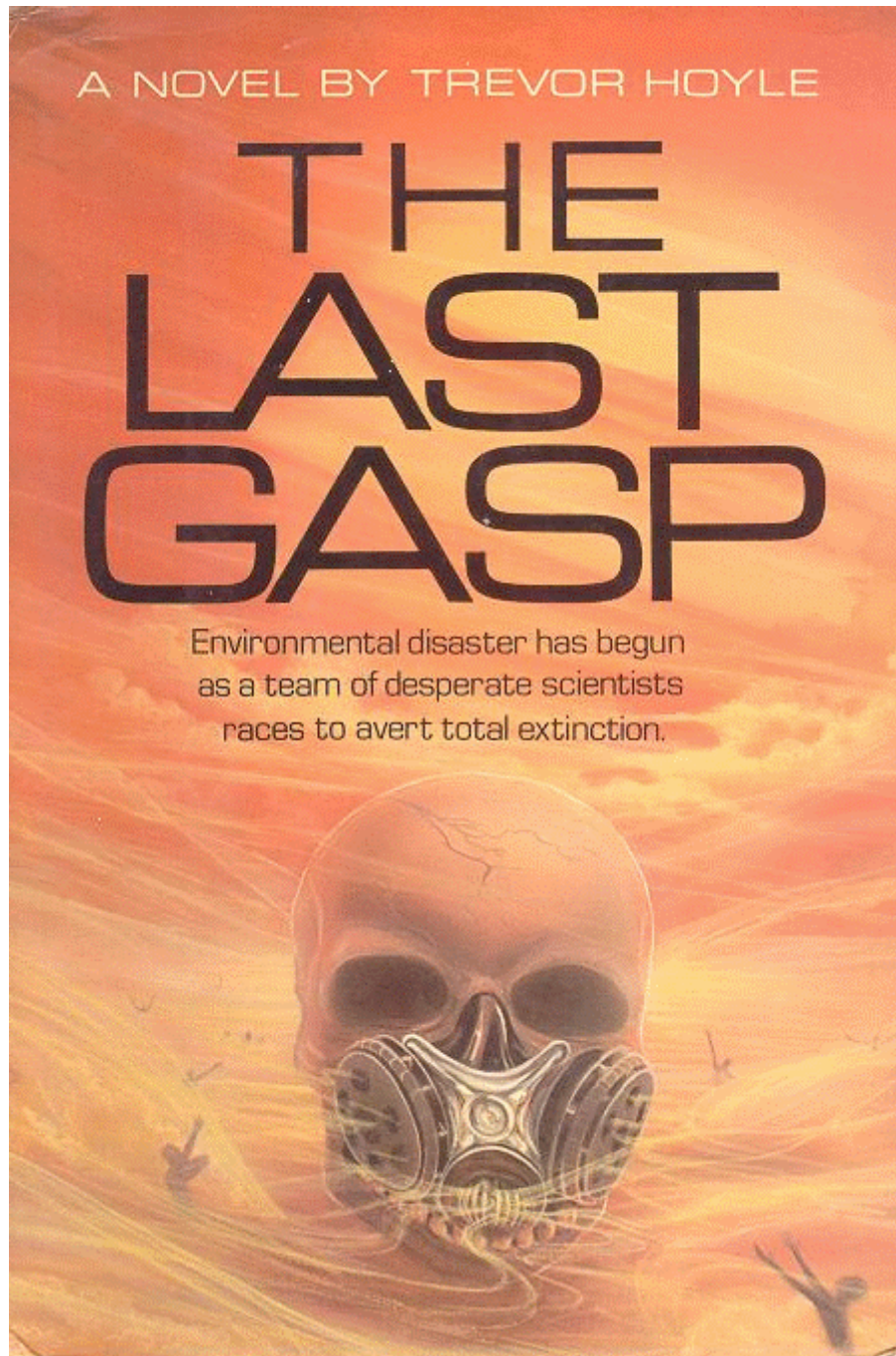
Gaines, Susan M.

NY: Creative Arts Book Co, 2000

SIO is the model for the Brayton Institute of Oceanography, located in Brayton, on the California coast about 130 miles north of San Francisco, and home to the University of California, Brayton. Susan Gaines received a Masters degree from SIO in 1987.

Set in the early 1980s, when climate change and global warming were not yet getting much public notice, Tina Arenas is a struggling researcher, studying the chemical signatures of picoplankton. The lipid coatings of picoplankton remain sequestered in sediments long after the death of the organism, and Tina discovers that the ratio of double to single bonds in the lipids varies depending on the temperature of their environment,

making them a tool to study paleoclimates. Unaware of this brewing scientific storm over climate change, Tina's research steers her toward connections between her picoplankton molecules and CO₂ levels in the atmosphere, which could have explosive implications for the present environment. Tina has a love affair with Chip, an organic farmer who's been landscaping the duplex in which she lives. Chip is passionate about politics and is unwilling to recognize Tina's explanations of the subtleties of the scientific process, reducing issues like global warming and petroleum research to simplistic terms. So they fight and make up. Tina and Chip's relationship mirrors the relationship between scientists and the general public. This novel includes brief appearances by Charles Keeling, the Library, and SIO's nesting black crowned night herons, who used to poop up a tree-covered plaza, where the Steven Sitter Pawka Memorial Green is now located.



The Last Gasp

Hoyle, Trevor

NY: Zebra Books, Kensington Publishing Co., 1983

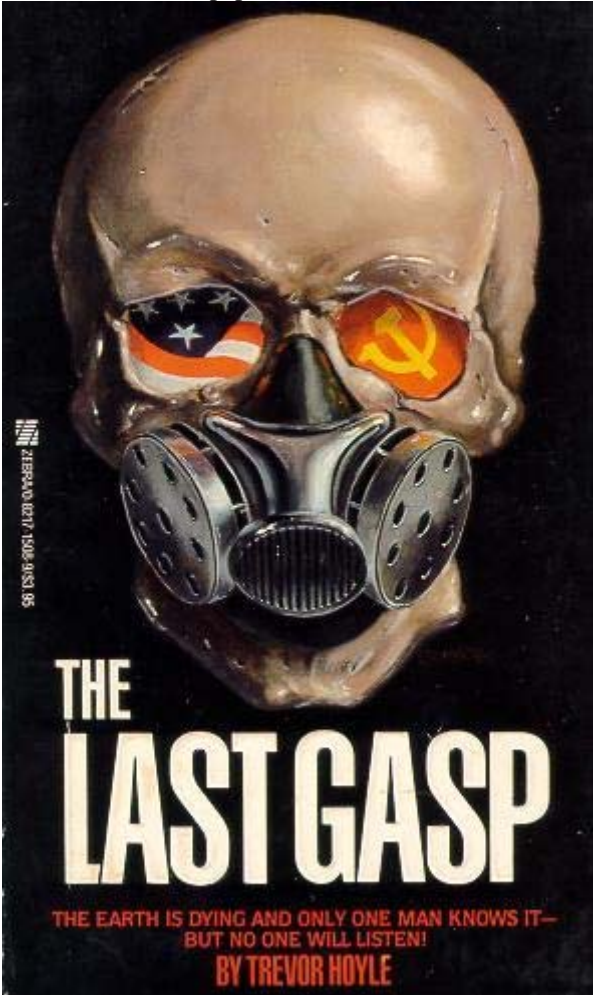
SIO appears under its own name.

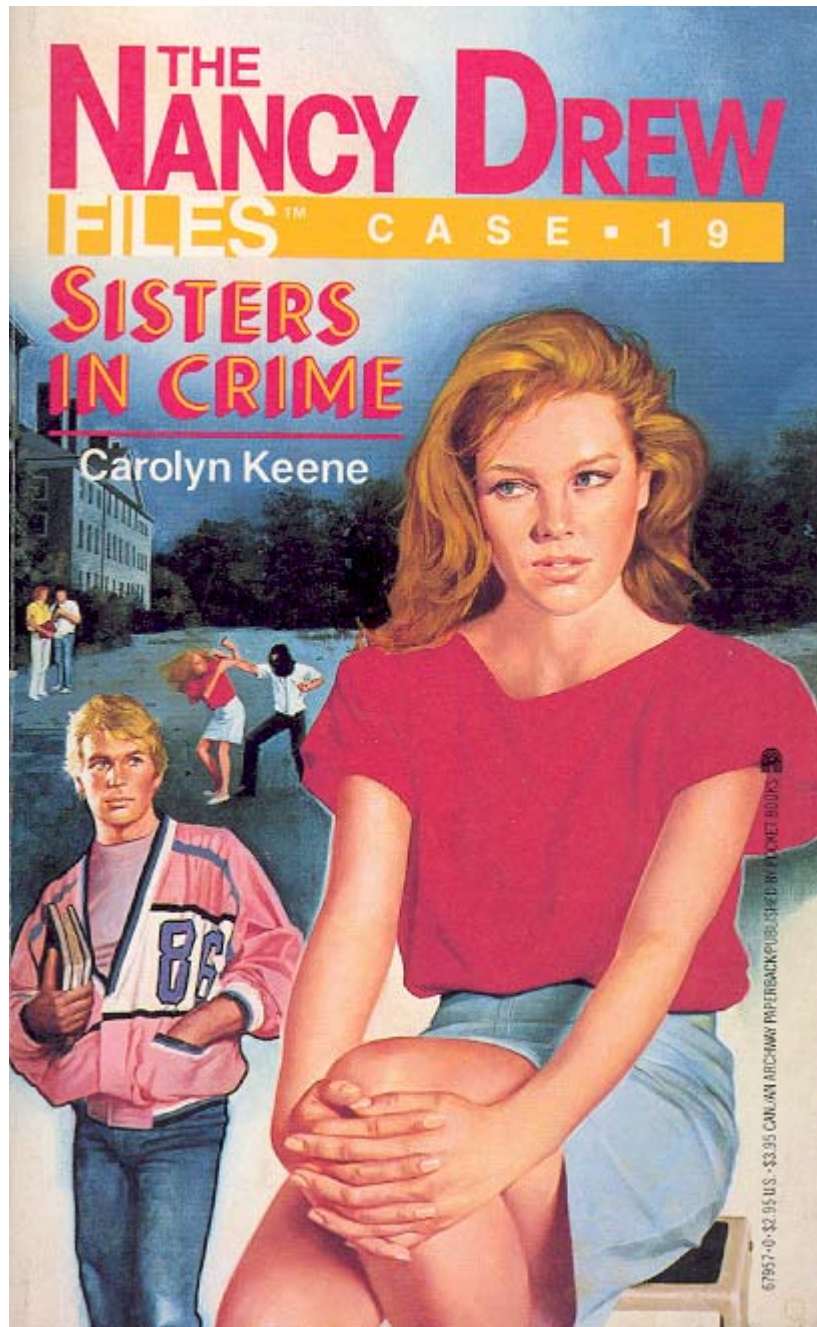
British marine biologist Gavin Chase steps out into the windswept wastes at the Halley Bay research stations in Antarctica and sees a sled team coming out of nowhere carrying a half-mad, half-frozen Russian scientist babbling an incomprehensible warning.

Meanwhile, aboard the R/V Melville, Dr. Cheryl Detrick (a postgraduate of the Marine Biology Research Division at SIO and the daughter of Theo Detrick, a famous diatom researcher) discovers a vast toxic red algae bloom covering hundreds of acres in the Pacific Ocean. Chase meets Detrick months later at a Geneva environmental conference. Chase, the Detricks, and Soviet scientist Boris Stanovnik theorize that the oxygen-producing microscopic plants of the world's ocean are dying and the level of atmospheric pollutants has finally exceeded the ability of the planet to assimilate. There is also good reason to believe that the superpowers are planning to wage a new type of environmental warfare.

Gavin Chase and Cheryl Detrick, now lovers, struggle to avert ecological catastrophe as agents of the military-industrial complex hunt them down. A growing belt of unbreathable gases spreads outward from the equator, uprooting millions. Their enemies are Lloyd Madden, an insane military mastermind planning to seed the earth with poison and then repopulate it with a race of mutants, and Joseph Earl Gelstrom, a wealthy chemical manufacturer who has Theo Detrick killed to hide his involvement. But Gelstrom himself falls victim to pollution sickness, and he repents. To raise money to finance a research team, Gavin Chase must make an unholy alliance with the dying Gelstrom, but this is too much for Cheryl Detrick, who leaves him. As more and more of the world becomes uninhabitable, as industries and governments collapse and chaos reigns, as the oceans fill up with dioxin, as the climate changes and mutant life-forms encroach upon the last refuges of humankind, Gavin Chase leads a last desperate mission to find and rescue Cheryl Detrick and to lead his team of scientists to safety.

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Sisters in Crime

Keene, Carolyn

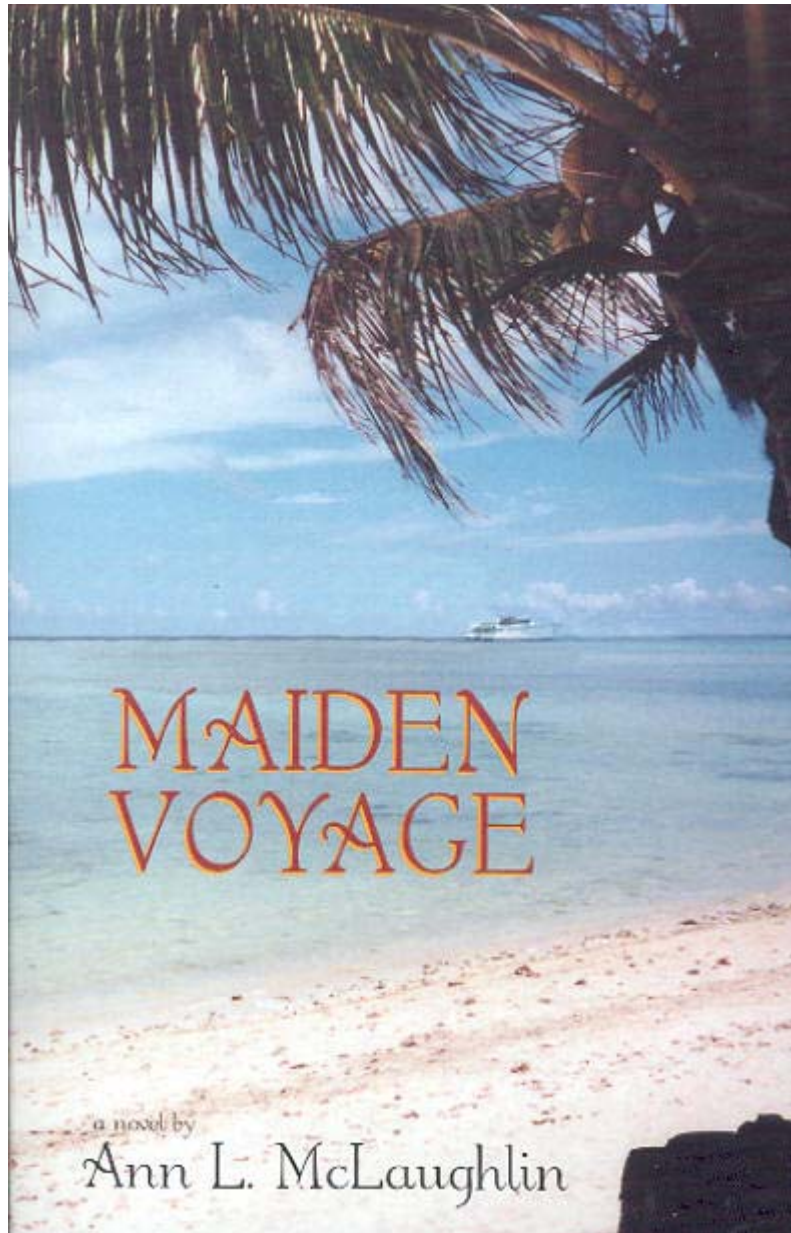
The Nancy Drew files, Case 19

New York: Pocket Books, 1988

In this juvenile mystery, SIO is the model for the Oceanography Institute, which is located on the campus of San Diego University. The Nancy Drew Files series is a spinoff from the classic Nancy Drew mystery series, targeted for older readers, adding romance and murder.

Nancy's holiday at San Diego University with her friend Susan turns into danger, when Susan's sorority sister, Rina, drowns in a mysterious scuba diving accident. Nancy poses as a potential transfer student visiting the campus, and learns about the seamy side of a campus sorority, and the presence of a cold-blooded murderer in the sorority. Nancy visits the Oceanography Institute to talk with Ira, who works in its diving facility, about the scuba diving accident and Rina's diving abilities. Ira is first seen "fixing some rubber tubing that was attached to a breathing regulator." Ira tells Nancy that Rina "... was a fine diver and a safe diver. Not like some other people around here."

Later in the story, Nancy is rendered unconscious by the murderer; Nancy revives on the pier while tied up and being prepared by the murderer for a staged diving accident. While suited up in wetsuit, tank, and weights, Nancy fights with the murderer on the pier. Susan and the police arrive, and the murder mystery is resolved.



Maiden Voyage

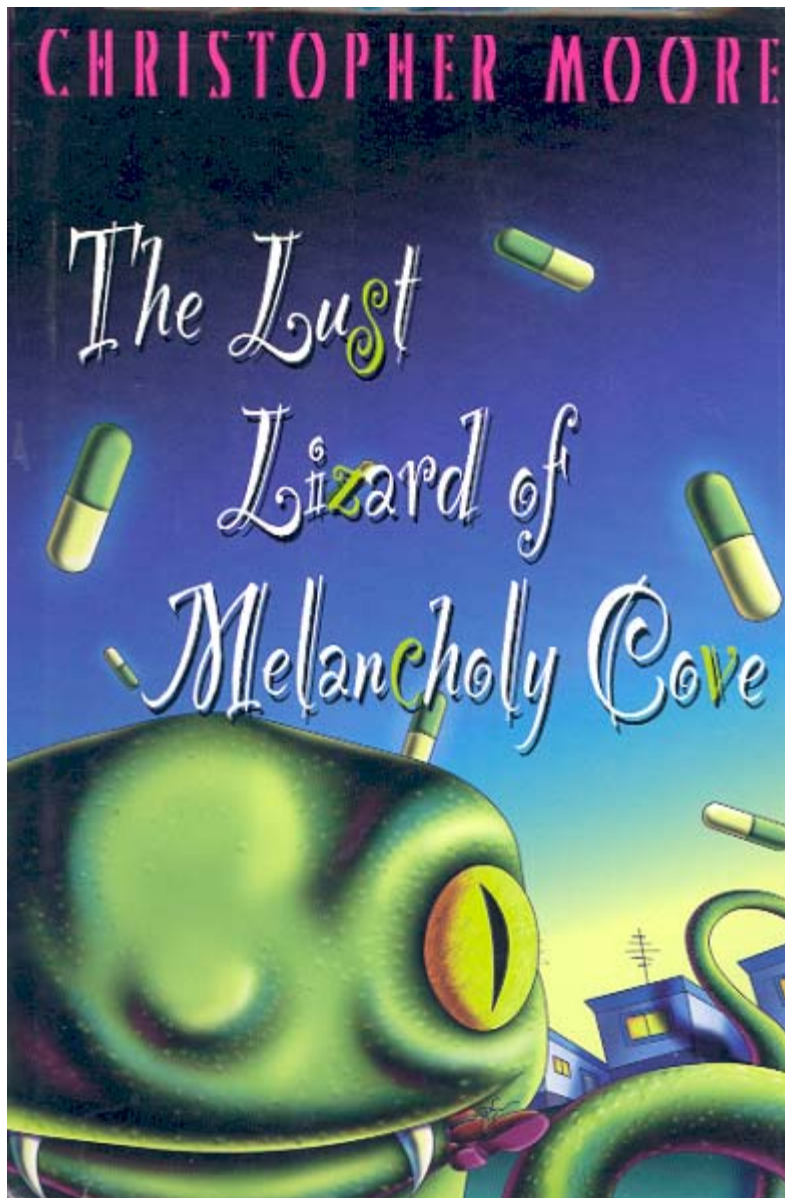
McLaughlin, Ann L.

Santa Barbara: John Daniel & Co., 1999

SIO is the model for the Dawson Oceanographic Institute in this travel romance. The author's mother was a secretary on E.W. Scripps' yacht OHIO during its last cruise.

World-famous newspaper mogul Samuel F. Dawson founded the Dawson Oceanographic Institute on Bainbridge Island near Seattle. Defying convention, young Julia MacLean signs on as Dawson's personal secretary as he embarks on a trip around the world aboard his yacht, the *Sofia*. It's a daring move for a young woman in 1924, especially a young woman raised in polite Southern society. But Julia is no ordinary woman and it's not all

smooth sailing. Before they reach the open sea, Julia discovers that the great Mr. Dawson is not only brilliant, inspiring and generous; he's also demanding, exasperating, selfish, and egotistical. Julia is almost overwhelmed by Dawson's complexity and the difficulty of satisfying his needs. As their travel adventure unfolds, however, they come to an understanding filled with mutual respect and affection. In the process, Julia sees the world -- Rome, Alexandria, Zanzibar, Borneo, the South Pacific. She experiences the stormy seas of romance, falling in love with George Lewis, a two year post-doctoral scientist from the Dawson Institute. Julia meets George during her voyage while George is traveling around the world, doing field work on swimming crabs, jellyfish, and coral. George proposes marriage but Julia puts him off, needing time to consider. Julia witnesses danger and death, and she discovers her talent as a journalist. Julia is offered a position at the New York Mirror, as a travel writer. Julia wants to pursue her writing career in New York and is conflicted about moving to Washington State to live with George. Dawson dies near the end of the cruise. After his death, Julia decides that she will not marry George, in order to pursue her writing career.



The Lust Lizard of Melancholy Cove
Moore, Christopher
New York: Avon Books, 1999

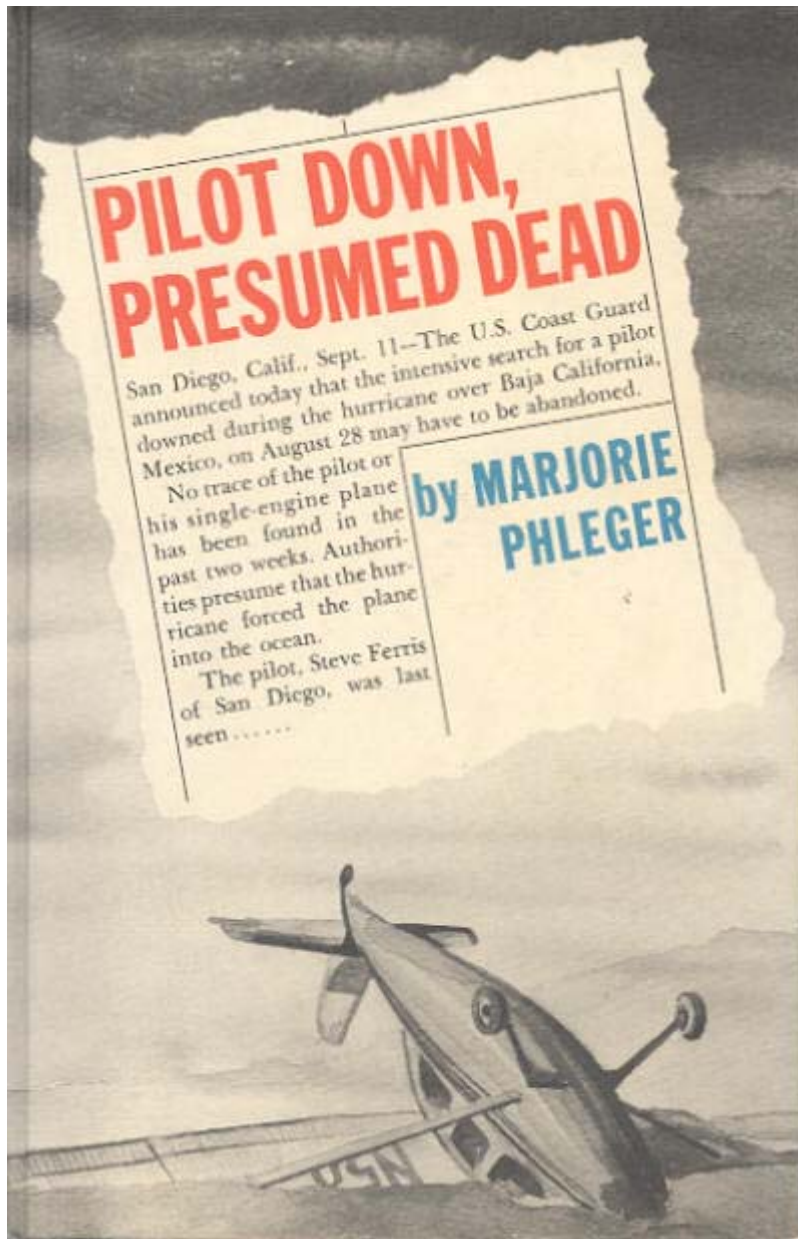
Scripps gets a mention near the end where Valerie Riordan ..."was able to schedule a sabbatical to join her fiance...on an oceanographic expedition aboard a Scripps vessel to look for evidence of the Theosaurus in the deep trenches off California."

The Theosaurus is the Sea Beast, a gigantic prehistoric dragon-like lizard, awakened from his slumbers by a radioactive leak from a power plant near Pine Cove, California. After a suicide, Valerie Riordan, the local psychiatrist, decides she has been over-prescribing antidepressants to many town inhabitants, and stops. The Sea Beast wanders onto land,

and comes across a gasoline tanker truck at a deserted gas station to which he is sexually attracted, and which explodes due to his amorous advance.

Singed by the tanker truck explosion, the Sea Beast wanders into a Pine Cove trailer park, camouflaging himself as a silvery trailer to sit amongst the other trailers. The Sea Beast is attracted to prey that has given up its resolve, like depressed humans, and uses a pheromone that inspires sexual lust to lure in his prey. Pine Cove inhabitants, many of whom were formerly on antidepressants, fall under the spell of his presence in their area, and become oversexed.

Molly Michon, a former B-movie queen known in film as Kendra, Warrior Babe of the Outland, discovers the true identity of the trailer and ministers to his wounds, becoming friendly with the Sea Beast, naming him Steve. The story goes on from there.



Pilot Down, Presumed Dead

Phleger, Marjorie

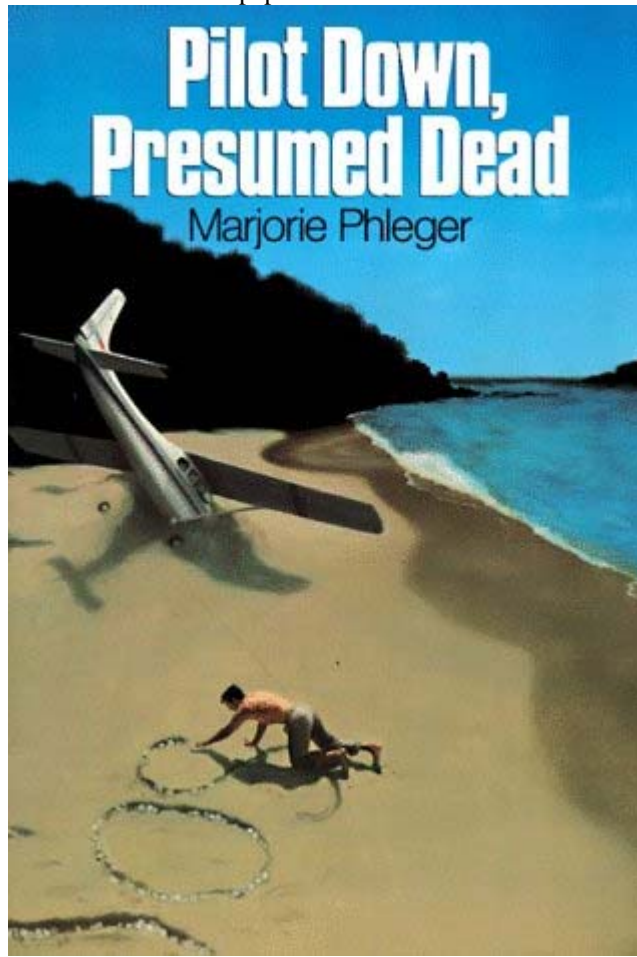
New York: Harper & Row, 1963

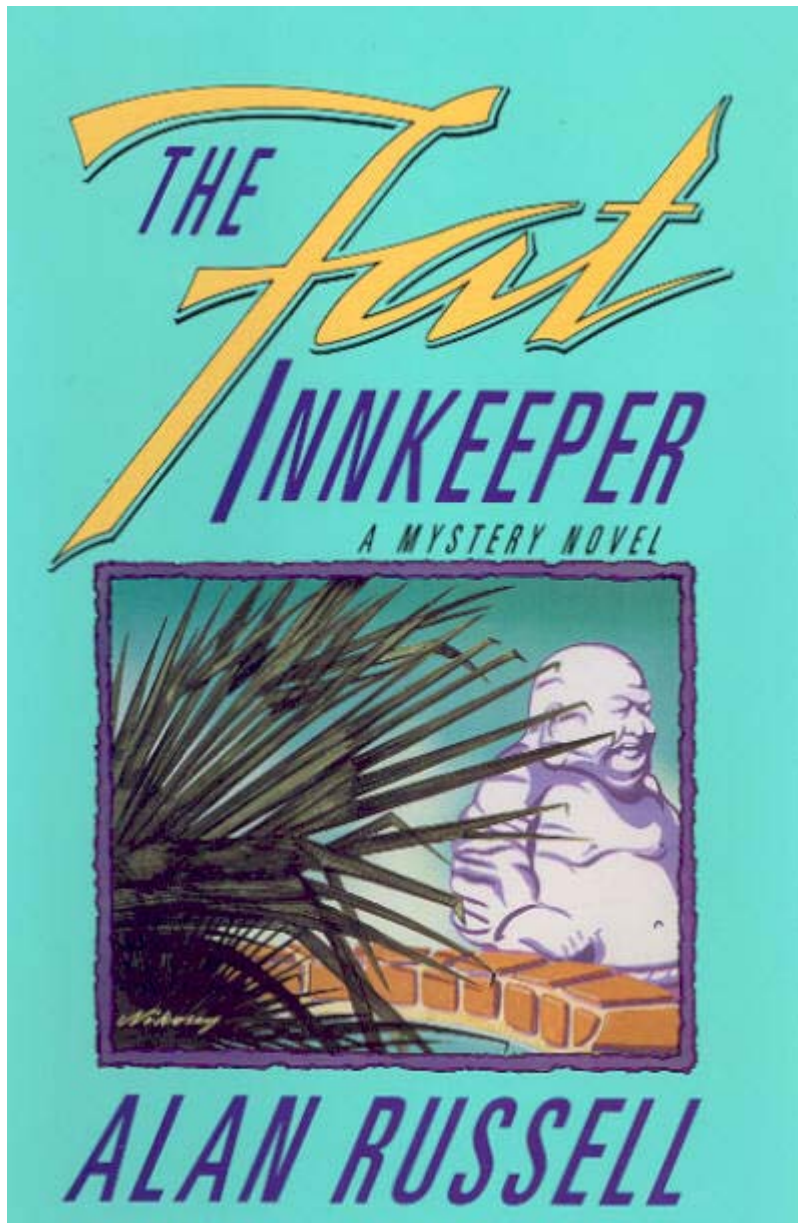
SIO is called by its own name in this juvenile novel. Marjorie Phleger is the wife of Fred B. Phleger, an SIO scientist.

During a storm, pilot Steve Ferris crash lands his single engine Cessna airplane on the beach of an island off Baja California. Steve struggles to survive, and find a way to be rescued and return home. Ferris finds a corked bottle washed ashore, with a piece of paper inside. Containing a printed form card written in English and Spanish, the bottle is part of a study on ocean currents, and the finder is asked to fill out the form and mail the

card to SIO. Steve keeps the SIO card in his pocket, writes his own SOS message in English and Spanish to put inside the bottle, and flings it back into the ocean the next day. Steve builds a raft to leave the island and sails to the Baja mainland. We last see Steve catching a ride to Guerrero Negro. We never find out what happened to SIO's card in Steve's pocket; such is the heartbreak of scientific research.

paperback cover





The Fat Innkeeper, an Inn-Side Tale of Murder
Russell, Alan

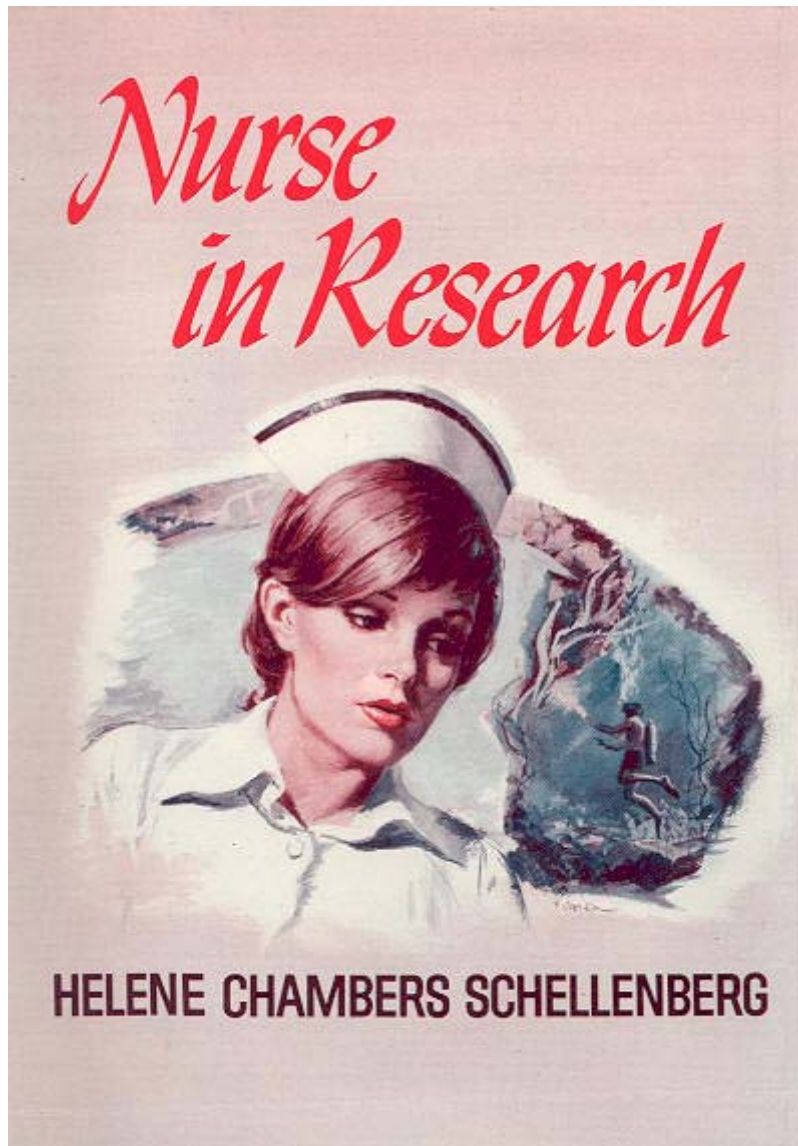
Santa Barbara: Mysterious Press, 1995

SIO is called by its own name in this murder mystery, where it has a minor but significant role.

The Fat Innkeeper is a nickname for Hiroshi Yamada, the owner of the posh, expensive Hotel California in La Jolla, and his head of hotel security is Am Caulfield. A debunker of near-death experiences turns up dead, a dead whale washes ashore, and a sex-swingers convention called Swap Meat is booked to arrive. With things seem out of control to Am, Hiroshi gives him an assignment: become a samurai and catch the killer loose in his hotel.

The Fat Innkeeper nickname was given by Am's friend Richard. "...It was dangerous to have a friend like Richard. The man was entirely too smart, a research scientist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, who habitually applied marine nicknames to almost everyone. Most of the time the nicknames were only used by, and only made sense to, Richard. Though Richard had bestowed hundreds of aquatic nicknames, the Fat Innkeeper was the first to catch on.... Ask a hotel employee who Hiroshi Yamada was, and you might draw a blank, but ask anyone on staff who was the Fat Innkeeper and they could tell you. Most could even give you his scientific name: *Urechis caupo*. Richard said the appellation had come to him almost like a burning bush (further interrogation revealed his inspiration arrived shortly after his sixth gin and tonic). ... Archimedes yelled, "Eureka." Richard, "Urechis." Archimedes was thinking about gold; Richard was contemplating a sea worm. That's what a fat innkeeper is, an invertebrate that lives in a U-shaped burrow, but not alone. The innkeeper shares his lodge with other guests ("symbionts" was Richard's preferred term), including some species of pea crab, small bivalves, and different species of worms and goby fish...."

Chapter 44 features a visit to the UCSD Biomedical Library, and the use of the library online catalog, to research a topic relating to the story.



Nurse in Research
Shellenberg, Helene Chambers
New York: Avalon, 1974

SIO is the model for Seaside Laboratory in this nurse romance. Helene Barnhart is the daughter of Stanley Chambers. She grew up at SIO during the 1920's and became a romance novelist, publishing under her name, Helene Chambers Shellenberg.

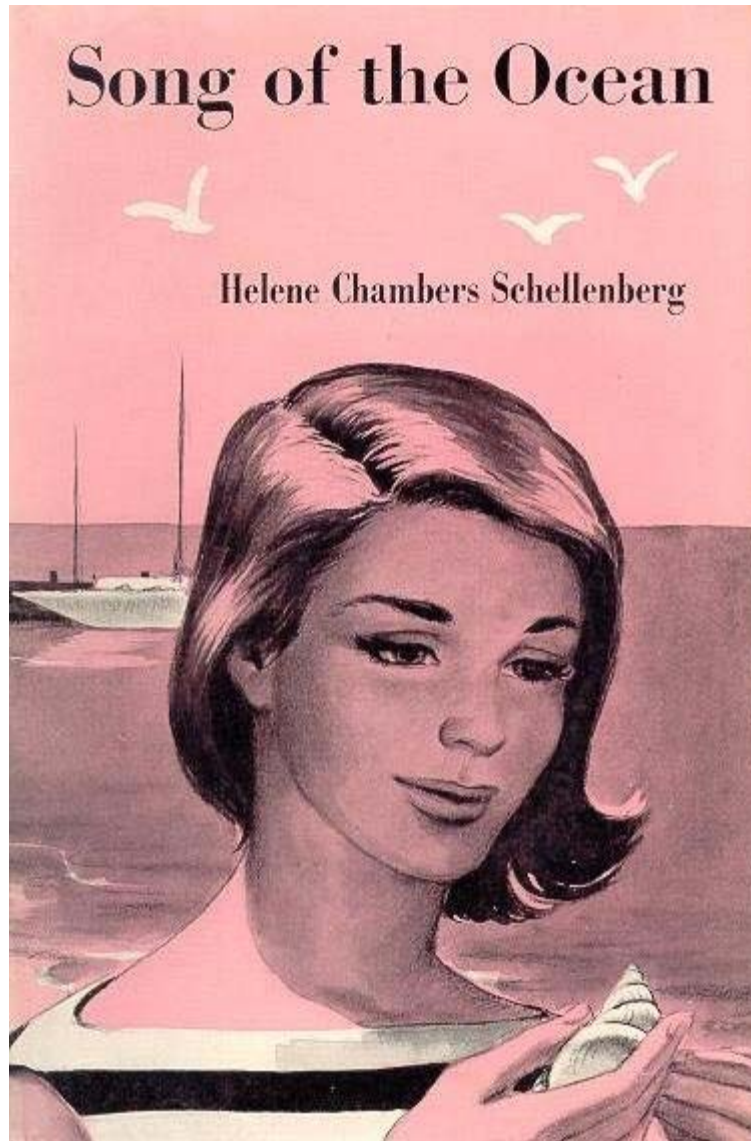
Andrea Chandler was staking more than her life when she volunteered as the first female member of Dr. Karl Meyers' underwater research team. An accomplished scuba diving instructor as well as a competent cardiac nurse, Andrea had broken her engagement with dark-eyed Brad Johnson over just the principle that she now had an opportunity to prove. It was the pretty nurse's firm conviction that women could tolerate the pressures of life at the bottom of the sea - or anywhere else - as well as men. Boyishly good-looking Dr. Karl Meyers had gained fame for his research in the field of human survival underwater.

It was Dr. Meyers' assignment to conduct a team of seven during a month-long sojourn at 4,000 foot depth in a circular steel bathyscaphe called the Sea House, departing from the Seaside Laboratory's pier. Energetic and idealistic, Karl was enthusiastic over Andrea's participation. She was encouraged by his friendly interest, for not all of the male team members welcomed her presence aboard Sea House. Elderly Dr. Harrison was especially antagonistic toward Andrea and persistently attempted to curtail her role in the mission. Even Ted Stewart, the handsome photographer covering the voyage for LIFESTYLE magazine, seemed to treat her with more amusement than respect.

But when Dr. Harrison suffered a heart attack on the ocean floor and Dr. Meyers turned to Andrea for guidance, she knew she was facing the acid test of her fitness for the mission. Andrea revives Dr. Harrison, saving his life. After the seafloor sojourn ends, Andrea continues to work part-time in Dr. Meyer's lab while continuing to work part-time as a cardiac nurse. Andrea teaches scuba diving to the daughter of the Director of the Seaside Laboratory, saving her life during a dive. Andrea also participates in a rescue mission with Dr. Meyers, saving two men trapped in a mini-submersible. Andrea considers pursuing a career in oceanography by getting a PhD but is conflicted about leaving her successful career as a cardiac nurse behind. Andrea falls for Karl and is courted by Ted who asks her to marry him. Andrea realizes she loves Karl, who eventually realizes his feelings for her. Karl receives an appointment to head a new oceanographic research center in Europe and says he will appoint Andrea as the head of a Department of Underwater Medical Research, saying the department is hers if she will marry him and also get a PhD. This solves Andrea's career dilemma in that she can combine her love of nursing and medicine with her underwater research interests.

Fictional SIO on spine of dustjacket





Song of the Ocean
Shellenberg, Helene Chambers
New York: Arcadia, 1963

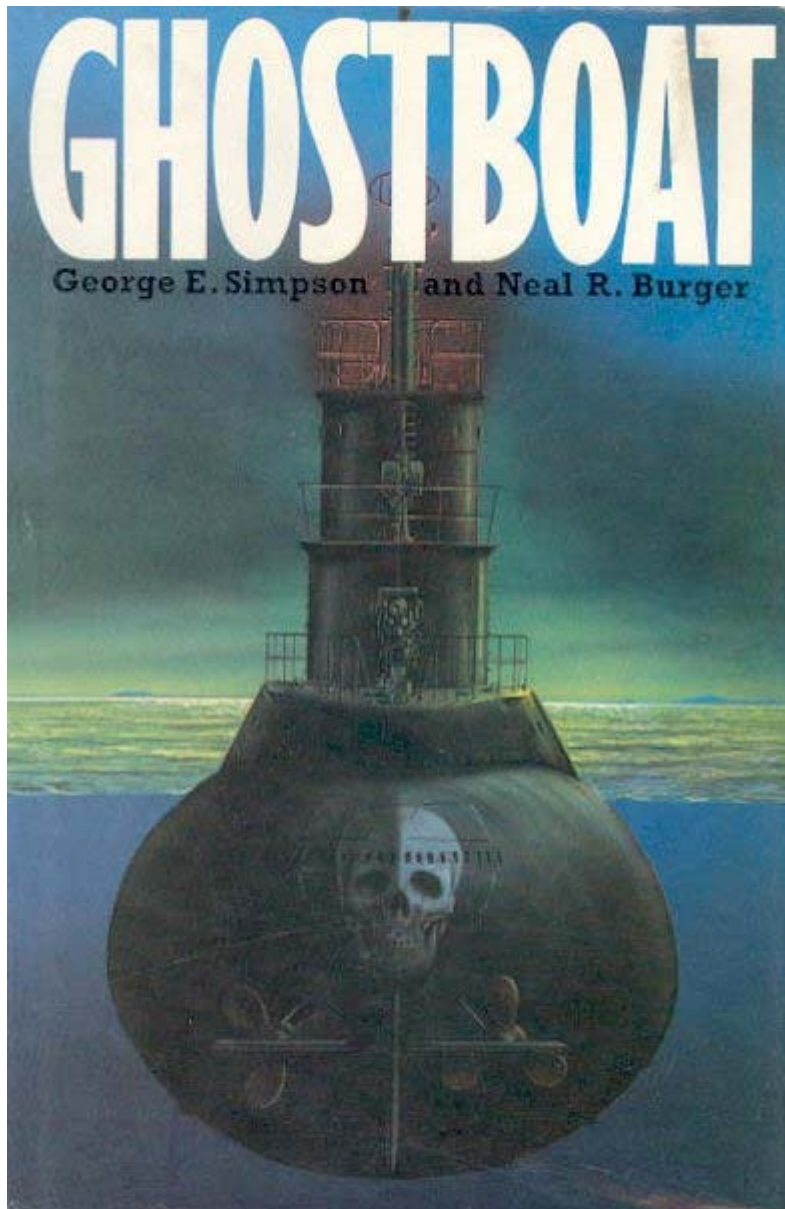
SIO is the model for the Pacific Institute in this romance novel. Helene Barnhart is the daughter of Stanley Chambers. She grew up at SIO during the 1920's and became a romance novelist, publishing under her name, Helene Chambers Shellenberg.

Robbin Hunter had first fallen in love with the world of science as a little girl, when she was allowed to watch her father in a makeshift laboratory in a shed behind their house. But it was not until her freshman year in college, when she had visited a friend who lived on the ocean, that Robbin had decided she wanted to be an oceanographer. She had fallen in love with the sea at first sight, and it was a love affair from which she had not yet recovered. So, clutching her bachelor of science credentials and looking forward to

receiving her master's degree in oceanography at Pacific Institute, Robbin applied for the position as assistant in Dr. Steven Crane's lab, the head of the Institute's Marine Bacteriology department. Doctor Steven Crane, however, was reluctant to hire a woman and invite romantic complications which could not be resolved by the absolute laws of science. Crane said, "A pretty girl like you! I should expect you'd be thinking of getting married instead of becoming a girl oceanographer."

The Pacific Institute is supported mainly by grants from oil companies and fisheries, with 35 on academic staff and a dozen graduate students. The Institute's forty foot research ship, the *Angus*, is anchored off the pier. Robbin takes daily plankton samples from the end of the pier and her master's thesis is a comparative study of ocean bottom bacteria using a corer on the ship. Steve kisses her while they sit around a fire warming up after a grunion run on the beach below the Pacific Institute. Robbin leans scuba diving and goes diving with Steve in an underwater canyon a short distance north of the Institute. Robbin's data and conclusions on ocean bottom temperatures are stolen by another graduate student for his thesis. Robbin makes a charge against the student to Dr. Post, President of Pacific Institute. In the following days, Robbin resigns during an argument between Dr. Post and Steve but then the graduate student admits his guilt and withdraws his thesis. Robbin goes on a solo scuba dive off the end of the pier, and is spotted doing so by Steve from his lab's windows. Robbin is chased by a hunting shark, panics underwater, and is saved by Steve.

Several of the Pacific Institute's scientists are selected to establish a research station in the Solomon Islands, including Steve. At a last meeting between Robbin and Steve, Steve confesses his love for her and proposes. Robbin accepts and they plan to go to the Solomon Islands together, Robbin working there with Steve.



Ghostboat

Simpson, George E. & Burger, Neal R.

New York: Dell Publishing, 1976

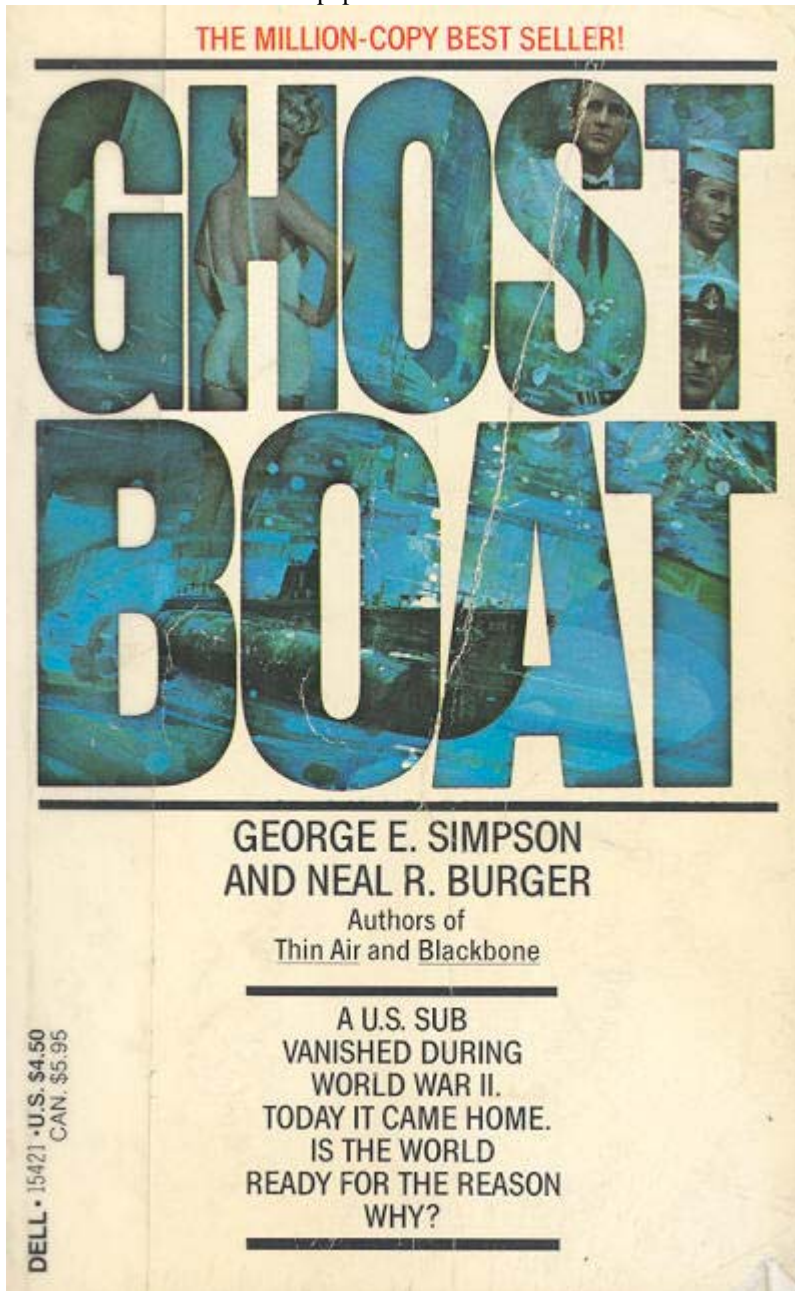
SIO is called by its own name in this submarine suspense novel.

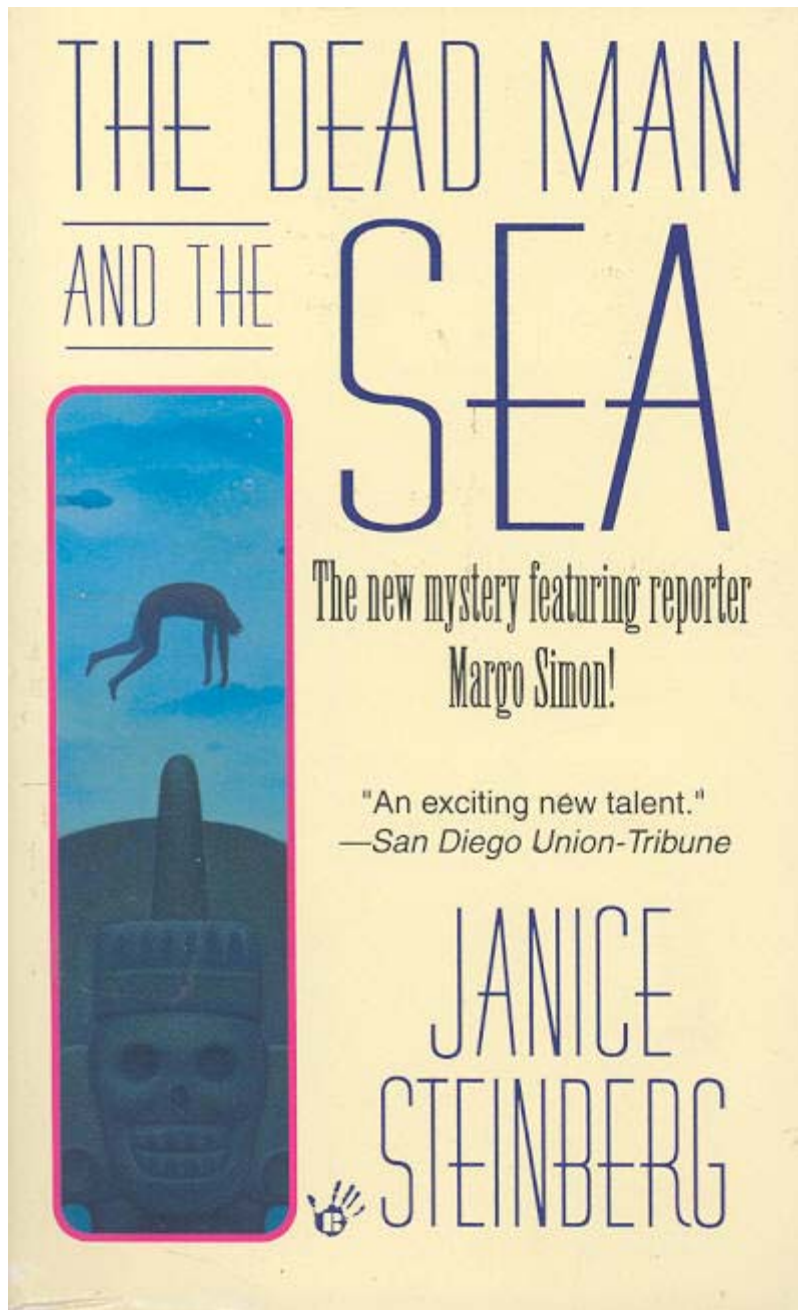
While underway 500 miles southeast of Tokyo Bay on December 11, 1944, the submarine USS Candlefish is hit with tremors, that increase dramatically, causing major disruptions onboard. The sub makes an emergency dive, washing Jack Hardy off deck and overboard, as the sole survivor. After WWII, Jack Hardy ultimately becomes a Professor of Oceanography at SIO, getting his PhD from Scripps. Hardy had a theory about the submarine's disappearance due to localized powerful electromagnetic fields, and tried to work on research projects along those lines. Hardy worked on early

submersible research programs, but was terminated from projects involving the US Navy. Hardy was also involved in an aborted submersible project that would have worked in the same area where the Candlefish disappeared. Hardy continues to work on submersible projects, but refuses to go to sea on a submersible.

When the Candlefish surfaces mysteriously in mid- Pacific on October 5, 1974 with everything in perfect working condition, but no crew, Ed Frank, an ambitious US Navy officer with the Naval Investigative Service, visits Jack Hardy at SIO. Frank arrives on the SIO campus, stopping "the car simply to admire the morning beauty of a cluster of buildings overlooking the Pacific. The landscape was colorful and manicured; trees swayed in the ocean breeze and brushed against each other. There was a romance about this place. Working here within a stone's throw of the sea...Frank fully expected to find Jack Hardy standing on the edge of a wind-swept cliff, long strands of white hair flapping in the breeze, a chart in one hand and a compass in the other, every inch the ancient mariner. Instead, he found Hardy tucked away in his office on the third floor, behind a door lettered JACK N. HARDY, PH.D., PROFESSOR OF OCEANOGRAPHY." Frank posits that the area where the Candlefish disappeared and where Jack Hardy has attempted research is another Devil's Triangle, akin to the Bermuda Triangle, and proposes repeating the sub's last cruise with the sub itself. Hardy reluctantly comes along for the investigation, and ...

paperback cover





The Dead Man and the Sea

Steinberg, Janice

New York: Berkley Publishing, 1997

SIO is the model for Torrey Institution of Oceanography in this murder mystery set in La Jolla. The author enrolled in a UCSD summer 1994 course: Earth Science 3 "Introduction to Oceanography". The instructors were SIO graduate students: Eric Archer, Philip Janney, and M. Dale Stokes. The author modeled story elements after content in the instructors' lectures.

A dead body is tossed into the ocean over Torrey Submarine Canyon. After a few days of decomposition, it floats up and reporter Margo Simon, from San Diego public radio station KSDR, sees it being brought to shore off La Jolla Cove. The body is missing eyes and lips, having been tossed into Torrey Submarine Canyon where leptostracans in the canyon's detrital mat started eating it (refers to research published in Eric Vetter's 1995 SIO doctoral dissertation). The body is identified as Hobart "Hob" Schreiber, who was Torrey Institution of Oceanography (TIO) biologist and was known by both Margo and her husband Barry Dawes, a TIO physical oceanographer. The drowning is found to be murder. If Hob didn't pass his tenure review, he had been threatening to "out" the male professors at TIO with whom he had been intimate. Professor Jim Howell had left his wife Donna, also a TIO professor, and their child due to an affair he had with Hob. Margo finds out that even her husband Barry had a drunken one-night stand with Hob before they had met.

Alan Tanaka, a TIO graduate student, is found by Margo floating dead under the TIO pier. Margo finds out that Alan had given his girlfriend, a fellow graduate student, a red Mexican ceramic dog to hold for him after he had returned from a research cruise off Mexico, shortly before he died. Margo determines it is a pre-Columbian figure from Colima, and worth several thousand dollars. Frank Donovan, Alan's faculty advisor, was the chief scientist on that Mexican cruise studying plankton; Margo learns that his ongoing research in Mexico is funded by a private foundation headed by a local pre-Columbian art dealer. The Chair of TIO Geological Research, Michel Descartes, is asking a lot of questions around TIO about Hob's murder and is hit by a car, ending up in a coma at Thornton Hospital.

At the hospital, Margo meets up with a shaken Frank Donovan who confesses. Frank's research funding and thus his career had dried up, until he had brought some Mexican artifacts back from a cruise and gave them to that local art dealer as a favor. She showed her appreciation by arranging research funding through a foundation she controlled, and Frank continued to smuggle pre-Columbian artifacts for her. Hob had met Frank at night on TIO's research ship *Coriolis* while it was in port in order to purchase an artifact. Hob threatened to reveal Frank's artifact smuggling, and Frank killed him with a crossbow, used for biopsy sampling from dolphins. In the dead of night, Alan and Frank took Hob's dead body to Torrey Canyon in a Zodiac boat, tossing it overboard. Frank's wife BJ was also involved; she had thrown a rock with a threatening note through Margo's window, trying to end her investigation.

Margo accuses BJ of this on a cliff top walk in La Jolla near the Shell Shop. BJ also confesses to covering up Hob's murder by running down Michel Descartes and killing Alan by pushing him off the TIO Pier. BJ is protective of her husband and his career, knowing about his Mexican artifact smuggling from the beginning. BJ tries to kill Margo by shoving her towards the edge of the cliff. A passing jogger halts the attempted murder, BJ tries to commit suicide by jumping and is restrained, and the police are summoned and arrive.