

## NEWS RELEASE

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Professor Rona may be contacted at 732-932-6555, ext. 241, or [rona@imcs.rutgers.edu](mailto:rona@imcs.rutgers.edu). Professor Lutz may be contacted at 732-932-8959, or at [rlutz@imcs.rutgers.edu](mailto:rlutz@imcs.rutgers.edu).

### **EXPLORERS' CLUB FILM FESTIVAL HONORS 'VOLCANOES OF THE DEEP SEA' IMAX Film Selected 'Best in Scientific Exploration'**

New Brunswick, N.J. – “Volcanoes of the Deep Sea,” the first IMAX film ever co-produced by a university, has been named “Best in Scientific Exploration” at the fifth annual Explorers’ Club Film Festival. The film, co-financed by Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and the National Science Foundation, produced by The Stephen Low Co. of Montreal, and directed by Stephen Low, will be screened at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 20.

The festival, a celebration of the best films on the subjects of adventure, conservation, the environment, scientific exploration and culture, is open to the public. The films are screened at the club’s headquarters, 46 E. 70th St., in New York City.

The film, first released in 2003, chronicles the deep-sea exploration of hydrothermal vents on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. Richard Lutz, professor of marine science, and Peter A. Rona, professor of geological sciences, were scientific advisers to the film-makers. Lutz is a marine biologist, and he was interested in the ecosystems found near the mouths of hydrothermal vents on the ocean ridge, a submerged volcanic mountain range; Rona, a geologist and pioneer in the discovery and study of hydrothermal vents, appears in the film, diving to the ocean bottom in a submersible to solve the mystery of what may be one of the oldest living forms on Earth previously only known from as a fossil.

The film was intended to raise the level of public literacy about ocean sciences in general, and about the exploration of the deep ocean in particular. From 2003 to 2005, the film played in IMAX theaters all over the world, and was critically acclaimed for presenting serious science in an accessible, even spectacular, fashion.

“Scientists have an obligation to contribute significantly to the scientific literacy of their societies,” Lutz said. “The film gave us a chance to share our excitement about the deep ocean with the public by taking the public with us on this adventure.”

For Rona – who, at one time or another, has been in every one of the dozen or so deep-ocean submersibles available to scientists – the movie-making technology lit up a world he had grown used to squinting at in comparatively low light. “We brought Hollywood lighting and camera technology to the deep-sea floor to clearly illuminate, for the first time, the spectacular hot springs and their strange ecosystems,” Rona said. “The images are aiding my research on how flow from the hot springs disperses heat and chemicals that affect the ocean environment.”

Lutz said he still gets e-mail from people who have seen the film and are inspired by it. “We recently received an e-mail from a teacher in New Mexico who said she accompanied two seventh-grade classes to a showing of the film,” Lutz said. “She said they were noisy at first, but completely silent after a few minutes. She said that when the film ended, the kids gave it a standing ovation – which, she said, is very rare for seventh graders.”

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