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NOAA Honors Jim Toomey with Environmental Hero Award

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has selected Annapolis resident, Jim Toomey, as one of its Environmental Heroes for 2010. The Environmental Hero Award honors individuals and organizations that volunteer their time to help NOAA carry out its mission.

Toomey, creator of the “Sherman’s Lagoon” comic strip, was recognized for bringing awareness of ocean and environmental issues worldwide. His cartoons appear in over 150 newspapers in the U.S. and foreign countries.

“Jim Toomey is a tireless proponent of conservation of the ocean environment,” said Eric Schwaab, Assistant Administrator of NOAA Fisheries Service. “Through his environmentally conscious cartoon strips, books and other publications, Jim draws attention to the importance of issues such as drift nets, shark finning, marine debris, overfishing and many other current problems.”

“Sherman’s Lagoon” features a shark named Sherman, his sea turtle buddy Fillmore, and many other coral reef creatures who fight the impacts of environmental problems on their ocean home. Information about the cartoon can be found at www.slagoon.com

Toomey has devoted a number of his comic strips to publicize the importance of NOAA’s National Marine Sanctuary Program, and volunteers at numerous public events to further his environmental messages and those of NOAA. He has also contributed his comic characters and other illustrations to educational materials published by NOAA for the purpose of raising environmental awareness.

One of Toomey’s cartoons (*April 2008*) featured Sherman encouraging people to show their support for shark conservation by drawing a picture of their favorite shark and mailing it to NOAA Fisheries Service. More than 10,000 people responded.

“Jim’s cartoons have helped spread positive messages about ocean conservation to a wide audience,” said John Oliver, Deputy Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries Service. “Our job becomes much easier when the public understands the importance of protecting the ocean and marine life.”

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth’s environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit us at <http://www.noaa.gov> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/noaa.lubchenco>