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Adirondack Mountains
(Photo: Jie Lei)
Hi, everyone.

It is a time of transition in the Department of Geological Sciences and Environmental Studies, and in the leadership roles in the department as well. I have taken over the chair reins from Bob Demisco, and that will be a tough act to follow! I thought it would be appropriate to introduce myself to many alumni, for I am a relatively new kid on the block (1998 arrival to Geological Sciences at Binghamton). I received a traditional late-’70s style undergraduate training as a geologist at the University of Wisconsin at Platteville, where the geology program was closely intertwined with mining engineering. Needless to say, Green Bay Packers paraphernalia is found throughout my office. My undergraduate mentor advised me to “head where the jobs were” for my MS degree (at the Mackay School of Mines at the University of Nevada at Reno). This MS training received financial and logistical support from industry partners, a model that is still relevant to student training needs in the Geological Sciences at Binghamton University today.

After working in the mining industry for most of the ’80s, I returned to graduate school at the University of Michigan, where I was encouraged to develop a dissertation within the hybrid field of environmental geochemistry, followed by a post-doc under the tutelage of an atmospheric chemist in the School of Public Health. This evolution in my training as a geoscientist likely mimics the adaptability in career paths of many of our alumni, and such flexibility created by breadth in geologic training is a continuing goal for our programs. I also met my wife at the University of Michigan, and to this day she reminds me about the Michigan football and hockey tickets that were sacrificed to move to Binghamton.

So, on a personal as well as a professional basis as department chair, I continue to learn about the art of compromise as the department evolves along with the changing goals of the University. Growth at Binghamton is envisioned in the focus areas of energy and health, which dovetail well with present and future research and training plans in the department. In many ways, as expressed in this newsletter, alumni have helped us reach our department goals through collaborative training opportunities, financial assistance and memorial gifts. Of note in this newsletter is a section that has been devoted to recent undergraduate research in geological sciences, as well as an ongoing fundraising effort in memory of Herr Roberson. We hope this newsletter brings back a few memories of your time at Binghamton, and also brings you up to date on happenings including Bartle field trips and other faculty and student activities.

Happy reading! ●

Letter from the Chair

Undergraduate Research Highlights:
“Learning the Ropes” of Research

One of the major recommendations of the Task Force for Undergraduate Education for the Digital Generation was to promote undergraduate research at Binghamton University. As a result, the University established the Undergraduate Research Center and has hosted a “research fair” poster session the past two springs. Geology major Nora Holt was one of the first two recipients of the Undergraduate Award to Support Research and Creative Work.

Even before the task force was convened, the faculty in geological sciences were working to increase interest and participation on the part of our undergraduate majors in research. For the past several years, faculty have opened their labs and offices to student tours in one of our core courses for majors, GEOl 214: The Interior of the Earth. These sophomore-level students get to see for themselves the broad range of research taking place in the department and understand that there’s a lot more to geological sciences than can be read from a textbook.

What follows are brief descriptions of the research that has been done during the 2012 calendar year and spring of 2013, organized into groups according to the principal faculty advisor.

Experimental Geochemistry/Mineralogy
Undergraduate student research with Prof. Dave Jenkis:
Zach Holmes ’12 synthesized carbonates along the binary mineral join calcite-dolomite join at 10 mole % increments for the purpose of testing the accuracy of a relatively new analytical method known as autocorrelation analysis. This method uses the systematic broadening of the infrared spectra of these solid solutions as a way to determine the amount of strain energy and, therefore, the energetics (enthalpy) of mixing along a chemical join. The results of this study, which indicated that the mid-infrared range was the only range to accurately reproduce the known enthalpy of mixing for these minerals, was presented at the national meeting of the Geological Society of America last November in Charlotte, N.C.

Greg Salwen ’12 investigated the formation of expandable sheet silicates, namely smectite, formed along the compositional join talc-paragonite for the purpose of determining what bulk compositions produced the highest yield of smectite. An optimal yield was obtained at about 60% of the talc component. Once this material was made, Greg did a follow-up study on determining the upper-thermal stability of this same smectite, which turns out to be stable to much higher temperatures (nearly 900°C) than most geologists would consider possible. This work will contribute to a larger study devoted to the formation of so-called metamorphic smectite and vermiculite. Greg was also the recipient of the Glenn Bartle Award in 2012.

Greg Salwen. (Photo: Greg Salwen)

Geol 214 student research with Prof. Al Chan:
The Glenn Bartle Award in 2012.

Greg Salwen. (Photo: Greg Salwen)
become a much larger study on the general issue of halide partitioning between minerals and fluid during metamorphism.

Geomorphology
Undergraduate student research with Prof. Peter Kusinerz:

Matt Keaveney ’12, Ryan Hupfer ’12 and senior Ryan Kenyon (Class of 2013) have been working over the last year to study the impacts of historical and pre-historical floods in the upper Susquehanna River basin. Matt’s work involved analyzing tree rings from long-lived floodplain trees (some < 100 years old) to see if the large historical floods impacted tree growth. David Barclay from SUNY Cortland worked with us on coring trees in the Triple Cities area, and Matt worked at David’s lab to analyze the cores. His preliminary findings are that the flood events (both recent ones and floods from the ‘30s) seem to have had little effect on tree growth, suggesting that the duration of submergence was insufficient to alter the growth pattern in flood years. Ryan and Anna (the two Ryans) have been working on sediment cores we’re obtaining from an oxbow lake on the Chenango River near Greene, NY. Ryan just presented his results at the Northeast Section GSA meeting in New Hampshire. We drilled 8 meters into the oxbow last summer with help from John Rayburn and Amie Staley from SUNY New Paltz, recovering 4-1/2 meters (not sure what happened to the rest). These are definitely mulch sediments, not coral reefs, but with the incomplete core, we’re not done yet. Ryan K. and I have obtained part of the shallow (upper 1.5 meters) section, and we’re still working to obtain a full core through these deposits. Our hope remains that we’ll be able to determine the frequency of large flood events that have brought river floods to this area. Nora has been studying fluid inclusion data in halite from a number of localities to address this. Her studies are focused on providing (1) petrographic evidence that halite samples selected for chemical analysis contain primary halite inclusions, (2) geochemical evidence (Be in halite, 348 in anhydrite, fluid inclusion major ion chemistry) that the halites formed from evaporated seawater, (5) fluid inclusion compositional data indicating that the Carboniferous was a “CaCl2 sea” with Ca2+ > SO42- and (4) that fluid inclusions record the transition from calcite sea (Devonian) to aragonite seas (Permian) with Mississippiian and Pennsylvanian Mg/ Ca ratios. 2.2 to 2.5, Nora was one of the first two recipients to be awarded a Summer Scholars and Artists Program Fellowship for summer 2012. This new fellowship was created last year by the Undergraduate Research Center to provide stipends to conduct faculty-mentored original research.

Nora Holt:
A large gap in the fluid inclusion record of seawater chemistry of ~100 million years exists between the Middle Devonian (~390 Ma) and the Lower Permian (~295 Ma). Nora has been studying fluid inclusion data in halite from a number of localities to address this. Her studies are focused on providing (1) petrographic evidence that halite samples selected for chemical analysis contain primary halite inclusions, (2) geochemical evidence (Be in halite, 348 in anhydrite, fluid inclusion major ion chemistry) that the halites formed from evaporated seawater, (5) fluid inclusion compositional data indicating that the Carboniferous was a “CaCl2 sea” with Ca2+/SO42- and (4) that fluid inclusions record the transition from calcite sea (Devonian) to aragonite seas (Permian) with Mississippiian and Pennsylvanian Mg/ Ca ratios. 2.2 to 2.5. Nora was one of the first two recipients to be awarded a Summer Scholars and Artists Program Fellowship for summer 2012. This new fellowship was created last year by the Undergraduate Research Center to provide stipends to conduct faculty-mentored original research.

Anna Kozmor:
Nora Holt is continuing her studies in sedimentary rocks, and has focused on petrologic and geochronologic studies of oceanic and continental rocks. Her recent work has addressed the interpretation of fluid inclusion data in halite from the Carboniferous of Illinois, and her results indicate that the Carboniferous was a “CaCl2 sea” with Ca2+/SO42- and (4) that fluid inclusions record the transition from calcite sea (Devonian) to aragonite seas (Permian) with Mississippiian and Pennsylvanian Mg/ Ca ratios.

Geochemistry
Undergraduate student research with Prof. Tom Lowenstein:

We are in the early stages of our departmental collaboration with ONR (OCEAN) to develop an imaging technique to detect the presence of Arsenic in samples from the Great Barrier Reef. Nora and I have been working on developing a method to detect Arsenic in sediment cores from the Great Barrier Reef, and we have recently obtained a grant from ONR to support our work. Nora has been working on developing a method to detect Arsenic in sediment cores from the Great Barrier Reef, and we have recently obtained a grant from ONR to support our work.

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Jeff Barker:
This past fall we implemented a campus-wide mentoring program in which about 1,000 freshmen and transfer students (one-third of the entering class) were assigned a faculty mentor from a pool of about 100. The role of these faculty mentors is to provide guidance in the freshman year and offer support as students (one-third of the entering class) were assigned a faculty mentor from a pool of about 100. The role of these faculty mentors is to provide guidance in the freshman year and offer support as students.

Bob Demico:
I was on sabatical in the fall and now on chair’s leave. Nice way to get a break. But now I am back at work and really enjoying my time back at work.

Steve Dickman:
When I was a grad student, Cal Tech luminary Don Anderson visited my department to talk about his new theory describing the frequency dependence of mantle anelasticity (hi, anelasticity is that property of rocks causing seismic waves to damp out over time). I was already focusing on Earth rotation for my dissertation, and when he mentioned the importance of using the Chandler wobble to constrain anelasticity at long periods, I was keenly interested. Over the years I have made a few forays into the subject, most notably with Young Sun Nam (as my student and then a colleague) with whom we have published several papers, and I have been slow.

Many of you might be interested to know that John Bridge and I wrote a paper together just before winter break, yes, he is back in the game (I knew he couldn’t stay away). I have spent the past few weeks growing crystals on my computer. The two-dimensional case is about wrapped up. Three dimensions anymore? My boys and Karen are all super. Ed is taking classes at Binghamton as a non-matriculated student. He lives at home now, much to the chagrin, delight [pick one] of his parents. David has just returned from a trip to Chile, which he quite enjoyed. Karen spent a month or two at summer school at Waterbury, a clay studies in the wilds of Maine. She is in Houston as I write this, attending the annual meeting of American potters and clay artists.

Jane Holt:
I was on sabbatical in the fall and now on chair’s leave. Nice way to get a break. But now I am back at work and really enjoying my time back at work. I was on a project working on the university’s Youtube offerings. I was on a project working on the university’s Youtube offerings. I was on a project working on the university’s Youtube offerings. I was on a project working on the university’s Youtube offerings.

Carol and I were married last September at Six Mile Pass (just turned 100) in The Adirondacks. We continue to get paying gigs. Last October I gave a presentation at Kopernik Observatory on the physics of the universe and its future. I have been involved in a project working on the future of the universe, and I have been involved in a project working on the future of the universe.

Terence Moore:
I was on sabbatical in the fall and now on chair’s leave. Nice way to get a break. But now I am back at work and really enjoying my time back at work. I was on a project working on the university’s Youtube offerings. I was on a project working on the university’s Youtube offerings. I was on a project working on the university’s Youtube offerings.
Thomas Kulp

My second year on the faculty is speed by as I continue to equip our new laboratory space and implement my geomicrobiology research program here in the department. My primary research interests continue to involve the microbiological cycling of trace metal species and metalloids, particularly arsenic and antimony. I am currently writing up a study of bacterial Sb reduction in freshwater sediments that represents my first major publication. The research is one of my growing projects and it has already led to a new lab. My graduate student advisor, Meghan Dickow, has decided to expand her master’s thesis research and stay on for a few extra years to pursue a PhD. This is great news because Meghan is making some very interesting and significant discoveries regarding the bio-geochemistry and bioaccumulation of As and Sb around a contaminated gold mine site in Idaho, including some new body As concentrations in talus and随后 any previously reported values for living organisms. Meghan successfully presented some preliminary findings at the 2012 Geological Society of America Annual Meeting in Charlotte, N.C. In addition to me, I have also been overseeing fruitful research by two undergraduate students, Francisco Basso and Ryan Keyser, during the past year. This semester I am back to teaching my upper-level geomicrobiology course, which I introduced into the department’s curriculum for the first time last year. I told them that the region of Palaeo-geology (aka Palaeontology) from Prof. Bob Demicco. As I settle in to my new lab and teaching duties, my family is also settling nicely in the Binghamton community and our new house. My wife, Heather, works as a city planner for the city of Binghamton. My four-year-old daughter, Paige, is completing her final year of pre-school here on campus and will be starting kindergarten next fall. And my one-year-old son, Gabriel, has just started to walk.

Tim Lowenstein

The department’s Bartle field trips, with undergraduates, graduate students and faculty, continue to be important and exciting events during spring breaks. In 2012, we visited the Florida Keys and had a memorable time in the water and on land. This year we are traveling west to the desert closed basins of California and Nevada — Death Valley, Mono Lake, Pyramid Lake — joined by Bob Demicco and Tom Kulp. I hope to spend July in Kenya, drilling climate cores in Lake Magadi. Lake Magadi is a fascinating example of a natural experiment in change in human evolution. This part of the course is dedicated to students interested in human evolution. The course is one of a number of significant interactive projects that are part of the Bartle field course, including the study of the geological evolution of the Earth and the fossil record of life. The course is designed to equip students with the skills necessary to conduct geological surveys and to understand the fundamental principles of Earth system science.
Herm Roberson Memorial

As noted in last year’s newsletter, Herm Roberson passed away on March 16, 2012, at the age of 77. Tim Lowenstein and Carol Sliwinski organized a memorial service for Herm on Saturday, July 28, in the Anderson Center Reception Room. This event was very well attended, with family, friends, colleagues and former students coming from many parts of the country. A number of Herm’s closest friends and colleagues hope to establish an award with the Binghamton University Foundation, in Herm’s name, honoring his passion for environmental law. That award would be given each year at graduation to the outstanding senior environmental studies student who has completed the Environmental Law class. A permanent plaque will be placed in the geology and environmental studies display case on the first floor of Science 1, engraved with the name of each awardee. In addition, a gift will be presented to the awardee at the undergraduate recognition ceremony during graduation weekend.

In order to establish this award in Herm Roberson’s memory, additional funds must be raised to reach the $2,500 required to establish a named Binghamton University Foundation award. We welcome any contribution you wish to make to help us establish this award. Memorial gifts may be made to the Binghamton University Foundation Memorial Account #10351. Note “In memory of Herman Roberson” in the memo section of your check. Mail to: Binghamton University Foundation, PO Box 6005, Binghamton, NY 13902-6005. Secure online credit-card gifts may also be made at www.giving.binghamton.edu. Select “Other, please specify” from the account drop-down menu, and then type “In memory of Herman Roberson, BUF Memorial Account 10351.”

Foundation Award in Honor of Herman Roberson

During the later years of Herman Roberson’s career, he loved teaching Environmental Law, a course now taught by Charles Wages, who Herm recruited for that class. Several of Herm’s closest friends and colleagues have completed the Environmental Law class. A permanent plaque will be placed in the geology and environmental studies display case on the first floor of Science 1, engraved with the name of each awardee. In addition, a gift will be presented to the awardee at the undergraduate recognition ceremony during graduation weekend.

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Graduate Student Award for Excellence in Research

Congratulations to Prof. Tim Lowenstein, recipient of the 2012 Israel C. Russell Award, given by the Geological Society of America Division of Limnogeology “for major achievements in Limnogeology through contributions in research, teaching and service.” The citation was delivered by Dr. Kathleen C. Benison, former Binghamton University student, friend and colleague. The complete citation and response can be found at http://www.geosociety.org/awards/12speeches/russell.htm.

Graduate-degree completions

We congratulate the following graduate students who completed their degrees in 2012:

Khoshayar Mortazavi, MS
Sedimentologic observation and stratigraphic interpretation of the Mantius Formation along the Hudson Valley in eastern New York.

Daniel A. Wheeler, MS
 Petrofabric and magnetofabric analysis of flaser gneiss, Piseco Lake, New York.

In addition to the Russell award, Tim was inducted as a fellow of the Mineralogical Society of America and of the Society of Economic Geologists in 2012, and will be a fellow of the Geological Society of America in 2013. We are all delighted to see that Tim’s research is being so widely recognized and his accomplishments honored by these societies.
Alumni in the News


Donors to Geological Sciences

The department gratefully acknowledges the following individuals and corporations who have contributed to departmental accounts over the past year.

Ms. Laura Merrill Bazeley ’75
Dr. Wallace A. Bothner ’63
Mr. Richard J. Bottjer ’81
Dr. John S. Bridge +
Mr. Richard C. Campbell, MA ’78
Ms. Jennifer L. Candela ’93
Ms. Mary Rose Caza, MA ’80
Chevron Corporation
Ms. Andrea D. Cicero ’97
Mr. David R. Conorozzo ’98
Mrs. Maureen E. Conorozzo ’98
Ms. Amy M. Curran ’79
Mr. Donald W. Curran, MA ’80
Dr. Robert Y. Demicco +
Dr. Steven R. Dickman +
Ms. Martha J. Dunn, MA ’80
Mr. Thomas Flynn, MA ’76
Dr. Bruce Alan Geller, MA ’81
Ms. Joan C. Giebink ’76
Mr. Matthew Lee Goring, MA ’92
Dr. Joseph R. Grantz +
Mrs. Barbara Monen Heiles ’80
Mr. Jonathan L. Heiles ’82
Mr. Kenneth R. Heiles, MA ’82
Mr. Eric A. Helland, MA ’99
Ms. Laura K. Howel, MA ’77
Dr. Marc C. Jacobsky ’99
Dr. David M. Jenkins +
Dr. Ying Jiang, PhD ’98
Dr. Eric Lee Johnson, MA ’85, PhD ’90
Mrs. Maria A. Johnson, MA ’85
Mr. Peter L. Kadolph ’78
Dr. Peter L. Knaufft +
Dr. Thomas R. Kulp +
Ms. Maureen Palanker Leshemtik ’70
Dr. Jarem Lj, PhD ’96, MS ’97
Dr. Tim L. Lowenstein +
Dr. William D. Macdonald +
Ms. Cindy Magruder, MA ’03
Mr. Chris Maples
Ms. Sara A. Marcus ’90
Dr. David M. Miller ’73
Dr. Keith B. Miller, MA ’83
Ms. Ruth Douglas Miller
Dr. Stephen Oakley Mosher, MA ’80
Mr. Michael C. Mueller ’91
Ms. Kim Kucharowski Mullen ’79
Dr. Howard Richard Naslund +
Mrs. Jean M. Neubeck ’81
Newfield Exploration Company
Dr. Sara L. Peyton
Ms. Denise D. Pieratti ’73
Ms. Denise M. Radtke ’92
Dr. Christopher J. Roberson
Dr. Matthew M. Roberson ’89
Ms. Karen A. Setts ’83
Dr. Anthony J. Talbot ’92
Dr. John Taizelli, MA ’91
Mrs. Joy E. Tarff ’73
Ms. Marina E. Valen, MA ’93
Ms. Donna E. Vescio ’81
Mr. Stuart A. Weinstei ’83
Ms. Ann S. Wilke, MA ’84
Dr. Francis T. Wu +

A note about giving to the department:

Some alumni have asked why their contributions do not always appear on this yearly list of donors. The donors recognized in this newsletter are those who have specifically indicated that their contributions be given to the Geology Department. To ensure this, you will need to specify that your contribution goes to the Geology Department or, even better, that it be directed to the Geology Fund, Account 10796.

Your contributions to the Geology Fund help us with some of the basic operations around the department, such as funding the welcoming luncheon for incoming graduate students, supporting our visiting seminar speakers, helping us host alumni reunions on campus and at national meetings, etc. We are extremely grateful for this support. Contributions should be sent to the Binghamton University Foundation, PO Box 6005, Binghamton, NY 13902-6005, and please note that it is for the Geology Fund, Account 10796.

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Bartle field trip to Virginia, 2011 (Photo: Jie Lei)