Hello alumni and friends of the Western Illinois University Geology Department! We hope your past year has proceeded as smoothly as our has in Macomb. We had no personnel changes this year, which is a good thing! Those of you that have not been to campus in awhile may be surprised by some of the changes on campus. Memorial Hall has been gutted and continues to be refurbished. Some of the displaced people now occupy our own Tillman Hall, both temporarily and permanently. As you walk from Tillman towards the University Union you encounter more construction as the brand new Multicultural Center nears completion in the spot formerly occupied by the post office, credit union, and Casa Latina. The new building is the first example of green construction on the WIU campus. It will employ geothermal heating and cooling units, is made with “green” building materials, and even has a green roof. The roof is angled toward the south so we get a good view of the green roof (it is kind of brown now) from the upper floors of Tillman Hall. It looks like a good place to practice measuring strike and dip while you catch some rays!

Changes within Tillman Hall include the upgrading of one of our lecture rooms into an electronic classroom. The large lab bench at the front of the room has been removed and a new computer console and data projector have been installed. Dr. Brock has established a soils lab on the fourth floor and our fourth floor lecture room has undergone improvements to the lab benches thanks to our own multi-talented Bob Johnson.

As you read the blurbs in this newsletter and look at the photos from our many field trips please know that much of what we do would be difficult, if not impossible, without the support of you, our alumni. Your financial contributions help defray many departmental costs, such as those for faculty and students to attend meetings, research expenses, taking field trips, and purchasing updated equipment and software. However, your non-financial contributions are equally as valuable. We routinely receive much-appreciated correspondence from alumni letting us know when their company is hiring new employees or interns. The Geology Department is also fortunate to have many alumni that volunteer to come speak to our students about their career in geology. So, on behalf of the WIU Geology Department, thank you for your support. It is greatly appreciated.

This newsletter is for you, our alumni, so I hope you enjoy it. As usual, I have posted a full-cover .pdf file of the newsletter on the Alumni News portion of our web site. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any ideas or suggestions for ways to improve it. I look forward to hearing from you. Remember to “have a gneiss day”!

Steve Bennett (SW-Bennett1@wiu.edu)
Leslie Melim

My years seem to follow a pattern. Lots of teaching, research and working on my house. Field camp was fun except for the amazing feat of managing 1) to get rained on every single day in the field for the first three weeks and 2) getting snowed out of Yellowstone. We had to drive all the way around through Idaho! Fortunately the weather let up enough for us to get in a day late so everyone (except me) to see Old Faithful do its thing. For all you old seds students, I have finally given up on the 2-day field trip. Instead, this fall we did one very long day that hit most of the usual places despite having the Winthrop Ferry closed (from left over summer flooding). A second day, a few weeks later, was reserved to measuring the famous (infamous?) Quincy road cut. This went much better with everyone fresh and not tired at the end of a long trip.

What a busy year for my research! My poor car got lots of miles with three trips to New Mexico for research, 2 with undergraduate students along. It has been very nice to have the NSF funds to go for longer and do more. Three students worked with me during the year:

Adam Rawe completed his project on cave pearls from the Quincy limestone mine and presented a poster at the North-Central Section Meeting, GSA in Evansville, IN, in April 2008. The cave pearl project is very exciting as the pearls are growing extremely fast (up to 2 mm in 6 months) and even recrystallizing as they grow—amazingly fast! More experiments are in progress.

Randi Leischiedt went with me to the University of New Mexico to collect data on the SEM for her project on fossil microbes in pool fingers from Cottonwood Cave. She also presented her work a GSA—a talk at the Annual Meeting in Houston in October 2008. Her work is also part of a paper submitted to Astrobiology in Feb. 2009.

Dan Gustafson is working on his project which he started last summer with a week of field work in Carlsbad Cavern’s Big Room. Between this summer and work done by Ginny Rust, ’04, Andy Brehm, ’04 and Neil Shannon, ’05, there are now nearly 90 pools described from Carlsbad Caverns with a little over half containing some form of biothem (biologic construct). Dan will be working on the statistics to help understand why only some pools get biothems.

At home the project this year was the front porch. This time I hired two students, Jonathan Love, ’08 and Ryan Hubb, ’08, to do the heavy lifting. They managed to stuff all of the material into my old truck; “A porch in a truck” as Jonathan put it. The truck was practically dragging its bumper but fortunately the dump isn’t very far. Next up: the kitchen! And then the house will be completely remodeled and I will have to find something else for summer therapy.

Papers and Talks:


Amy Brock

What a wild year! I can’t believe that 2008 is gone and that it went by so fast. It was a busy and exciting year for me. In the spring I taught Geomorphology and had a great class! We had a wet and thrilling trip to Indiana and Kentucky’s karst regions and saw a raging river where a dry riverbed should have been. Over the summer I attended a conference in Colorado and got some great ideas for the next Geomorph class! I also traveled to Belize with my mom for a much needed vacation. In Belize we rafted through caves and did some snorkeling. Of course I couldn’t help collecting the beach sediment (all broken shell fossils) and smuggling it back to the states. In the fall, I traveled to Chengdu, China for the International Union of Soil Scientists Soil Micromorphology Division Conference. While in Chengdu I presented new research (that will hopefully be written up for publication soon), and was awarded the IUSS Soil Micromorphology Young Micromorphologist Publication Award. It was an interesting experience and I was able to meet with fellow researchers from all over the world. After China, I attended the joint meeting between GSA and Soil Societies, mixed and mingled with fellow researchers, went to talks, and presented my research. Whew.

I’m looking forward to 2009 and all of the exciting things that it holds! I’m teaching Glacial Geology this spring and working with the Geology Club. I have also been visiting local school and educating students on careers in geology. It is great to see the interest in the young students and it is my hope that at least a few of them will decide that they would like to become geologists in the future!

I look forward to seeing everyone around this semester. If you are down at my end of the hall drop in and say hi!

Kristie Parkins

Hello to all of our friends and alumni. This year has really flown by so fast! I hope you are all doing well.

This has been a busy year on many fronts. I’ve been continuing to take classes while working in the department full time. The faculty continues to keep me on my toes in the office, but thankfully, I have a wonderful student worker (Brea) to help out. At home, my daughter Paige is now in 4th grade and is enjoying her second year of competitive tumbling. Drew is in 2nd grade and is in wrestling, baseball, and Cub Scouts. We had to skip football this year because he managed to spend a night in the hospital this summer with a head injury as a result of falling off of his bike. He’ll never forget to wear his helmet again! My youngest, Kaiden, is no longer a baby, he’ll be 3 in March! Kaiden is quite a ham, and loves to have everyone’s full attention. He is my little helper, and enjoys helping me cook and clean. My dear husband, Todd, is still plugging away at his BOT degree while working in ResNet here at WIU.

Thanks to everyone who has stopped by, called, emailed or donated to the Geology Scholarship fund. We appreciate your support more than you can imagine. Keep in touch!
Bob Johnson

The Ichthyosaur marches on. We have started the assembly of the major parts and fabrication of detail parts, in preparation for the final assembly and finishing. The skull and lower jaw are joined and the teeth and interior of the mouth are painted. Some exterior surface coats of epoxy have been applied to test the finish, and so far I’m pleased with the results. Opie; as I have come to call him, is coming along nicely. I want to thank our recent graduates who worked on the project, Adam Rawe and Jonathan Love. Adam was responsible for much of the early construction and forming and Jonathan continued the work into the preliminary assembly and finishing stage. There is still much to be done, and this is not including making the school of squid Opie will be chasing. More fun to come.

Progress was made in my endeavors to improve my standing in the precision aerobatic model airplane circle. At 2008 Heart of Illinois Stunt Championships I finished not third, or second, but first. Granted, there were only two of us flying in that class but I didn’t win by default. The conditions were the worst I’ve ever flown in, cool rainy, and winds gusting up to 20 mph. The real downside was that instead of a nice shiny plaque as my reward, I got a paper certificate and a frame it wouldn’t fit in. (sigh) The contest was again held at the Davenport Airport due to the number of fliers closer to that area. Despite the conditions, I had a great time as always.

Kyle Mayborn

Hello WIU Geology Alumni,

It was a good year for both teaching and research. This last fall I taught one of my Introduction to the Earth (GEOL 110) sections as a first year experience (FYE) class. An FYE class is limited to freshman and has the goal of introducing the students to the college environment in addition to covering course content. I had 12 students in my class including our two new freshmen geology majors. As part of the FYE portion of the course we went to the climbing wall at Horn Field Campus and took a weekend fieldtrip to southeast Missouri. It was quite pleasing when two of the students changed their major to Geology. I also taught Mineralogy last fall and Igneous & Metamorphic Petrology and Structural Geology in the spring. We went to central Wisconsin for the Structure and Petrology field trip. It was a very wet spring and quite a few of the outcrops along the rivers were inaccessible. For Field Camp this summer we managed to get an underground tour of the Stillwater Complex in Montana. One of our alumni works as a geologist at the mine and he arranged the trip for us. It always fun driving around at more than 2000 feet underground.

On the research front, I had a paper published in Lithos entitled Geochemical constraints on the late-stage evolution of basaltic magma as revealed by composite dikes within the Kangamiut dike swarm, West Greenland. I’m currently working on a paper that I plan to submit to the journal Computers in Geosciences. It will focus on an Excel-based program that I have written to model basaltic magma evolution. Additionally, I had a student complete a project on the paragenesis of the Giant Dikes in South Greenland.

On the personal front, Christina is now in her second year at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI. She has decided to major in English with a minor in Linguistics. Mari is staying quite busy with projects at home, writing, and giving speeches at her Toastmasters group. Last November she gave a talk to a group at our local YMCA. I’m still playing disc golf and keeping up my yoga practice. I also had the honor of teaching a few bible study classes at the prison in Galesburg. It is quite interesting to teach prisoners one day and students the next.

I hope that all is going well for you. Please send me an email, I would love to hear how everyone is doing (KR-Mayborn@wiu.edu).
Howdy folks,

Greetings from the gray skies and frozen cornfields of the Illinois prairie land! Wherever you are, I hope it’s warm and sunny! I’m pleased to report that I have fully recovered from my broken pelvis and am now back up to my usual mischief.

If you’ve read my previous blurbs, you are no doubt acutely aware of my abiding (some might say “perverse”) interest and love of all things Appalachian, especially the history folklore of Eastern Kentucky and western Virginia. As I sat down to write, I searched my mind for a new hillfolk greeting to begin this letter, when I remembered one I hadn’t thought of in years. I assumed it was confined to my parents’ kinfolks (all Eastern Kentuckians) until I heard bluegrass artist Ricky Skaggs use it as a greeting at a live concert. I’ve heard it two ways; it goes like this: either Howsurman men? or Howsurmoonmen? Translation: How is your maw (mom) and them? Meaning: how are folks? Evidently, the expression is has deeper Appalachian roots than I thought.

On the research front, I’ve been busier than a one-legged cat in a sandbox. I completed a manuscript this past year entitled, “Shell orientation terminology among the Bivalvia (Mollusca): problems and proposed solutions.” It will be published during the first half of 2009 in the Journal of Paleontology. Sounds like real exciting reading, right? A good remedy for all you folks out there suffering from insomnia! I’m also working with a colleague named Bob Peck from West Virginia on Mississippian bivalves from the Bluefield Formation (Mauch Chunk) in the heart of the Appalachians. As part of our study, we focused on one rare and problematic clam called Spathelopsis. Because all specimens have the shells closed, we can’t see the inside to study the hinge and musculature. We needed Superman’s X-ray vision! As a more practical solution, we decided to study the shell interiors using the X-ray CT scan research facility at the University of Guelph, Ontario. That did the trick! The scan photos are slicker than deer guts on a skinnin’ knife! Now that we are able to see the internal characters needed to make sense out of this little fossil, we plan to submit our study for publication in the Journal of Paleontology. I’ll let you know how it works out.

Smells like the possum gravy & cornbread’s all done cookin’ now, so I reckon I’ll shut down ’til next time. Come see us anytime; the trailer park is open late. Keep smilin’.

“Don’t interfere with somethin’ that ain’t botherin’ you none.”

“Never get into an argument with an idiot – you’ll just lower yourself to their level and they’ll beat you with experience.”

“Never try to impress a woman, because if you do she’ll expect you to keep up the standard for the rest of your life.” -- W. C. Fields
Greetings! I hope the last year has treated you well. Every year seems to go faster than the last, and last year was no exception. I continue to teach Hydrogeology, Introduction to the Earth, Geologic Field Methods, and Oceanography, but have decided to stop teaching a course in Environmental Studies. In its place I will be teaching a section of Introduction to the Earth designed specifically for freshmen. Dr. Mayborn taught such a section last fall and three of his students decided to become Geology majors! I look forward to interacting with freshmen students so that they can “discover” geology early on in their college careers. I hope I am as successful as Dr. Mayborn in recruiting new majors.

I continue to make changes to my Geologic Field Methods course in an attempt to make it as useful and up-to-date as possible. This year I added a lab using the Giddings drilling machine and continued the use of survey-grade GPS units. Next year I plan to have students make some of their maps using GIS software. If any of you alumni have ideas for field skills that you think would be particularly helpful to our students please send me an email with your suggestion.

Last summer myself and Geology major Jonathan Love installed three shallow monitoring wells at the Ira and Reatha Post Wildlife Sanctuary (also known as Vishnu Springs). Jonathan also helped me develop the wells, take static water levels, conduct slug tests, and take water samples for chemical analyses. Jonathan has moved on to graduate school but I plan to continue to involve students in research at this unique geologic site.

I continue to be active in service and outreach through university committees, as treasurer of the Illinois Groundwater Association, as chair of the McDonough County Groundwater Protection Education Committee, and was recently selected to serve on the Groundwater Foundation’s Groundwater Guardian Council.

On the home front our sons are growing up fast and keeping Sara and I busy and entertained. They are involved in basketball, baseball, soccer, 4H, Cub Scouts, and whatever other activities they want to sign up for. Of course, they’d rather play video games than any of the aforementioned activities. I can’t wait until spring when we can kick them outside in the fresh air!

As always, I enjoy hearing from any and all of our former students. Keep in touch and drop by if you are in Macomb.

Peter Calengas

Hello to all of you! I hope this note finds you all in good health and spirit. The department is doing well, and thanks to your support, we have been able to further increase the support of scholarships and travel to professional meetings by our majors to present their undergraduate research and still maintain our many in-class field trips and our semiannual field camp. I continue to teach Geology 113 (Energy and Earth Resources) in the Fall and this year, after many years, also teach it in the spring, and Quad Cities during the summer intersession. I also continue to teach Geology 375 (Environmental Geology), and again for the first time, offer it as a world wide web course!

On the professional side, I continue to serve as a consultant to the Industrial Minerals sector, on roof control and industrial mineral prospects.

Best wishes to everyone, and if you are ever in the region, please stop in and say hello!
Geology Fieldtrips in All Sorts of Weather

Drs. Brock, Calengas and the Geomorphology students are not your average geologists so it is only appropriate that they pose with the original not-your-average-bear Yogi. Where’s Boo Boo?

Ahh, fall Geology field trips. Wet, cold, but full of great stops. Drs. Brock and Melim show the students the freshly-scoured spillway surface at Devonian Fossil Gorge, Coralville, Iowa during the Fall 2008 Geology Field Trip.

You never know what kind of weather you are going to get at Yellowstone National Park. You may even get snow in June like these lucky 2008 Geology Field Campers.

Sporting the latest in stylish mine gear, the Geology Field Campers and faculty prepare for a tour of Stillwater Mine. The tour was arranged by mine employee Quintin Overocker, a WIU alumnus (and long-suffering Cub fan).

Geomorphology students received a tour of the Indiana Building Stone operation in Bedford, Indiana.

2008 Graduates
Dana Heck
Ryan Hubb
Randi Liescheidt
Jonathan Love
Adam Rawe
Hannah Tammen
Brian Zimring

Schafer Freshman Scholarship
Rhett Rubalcava Heuer

Schafer Field Camp Scholarships
Randi Liescheidt
Hannah Tammen
30 Years Later: Field Camp 1979

Kneeling in front, left to right — Chuck Reis, Tom Williams, unknown, Ruth Murray, Jim Matthias, Debbie Dufek
Middle row, left to right — Dave Zelazek, Daniel Shuart, Greg Buswell, Mark Marcisz, John Eaton
Back row, left to right — Craig Stevens, Walt Smith, Wayne Bash  (Photo by Dr. Peter Calengas)

Retired Faculty Member Will McCracken

Dr. Will McCracken and his wife, Gail Everhart, live in a gated town home in West Houston. We have enjoyed traveling to Sedona, Arizona and to the Santa Fe area and to Monterey/Big Sur, California. Recently, however, we have mostly given up the hassles of air travel and prefer to enjoy our Hyatt timeshare at the Wild Oak Ranch (west of San Antonio). My wife's daughter is married to an Ophthalmologist in Lansing and we have two grand kids. My son lives near Austin. Students can call us at my cell at 713-252-7004.

Dr. McCracken also passed on this news about one of his former WIU geology students:

Dr. Gerald Kuecher and wife Jean maintain a home in Spring, Texas. Dr. Kuecher has been working as a sedimentologist for ARAMCO in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia for the past two years. Gerry also teaches at King Fahed University. He has recently wrote a training course manual for ARAMCO and will be leading a field trip in the Khali desert. Gerry completed a published book (Fruitcake Hill by CCB Publishing) on his family history. The Kuechers have a son attending the University of Texas and three daughters that have graduated from universities.


### Undergraduate Research Presentations

(Left) Adam Rawe is congratulated by WIU Provost Dr. Jack Thomas during the 6th Annual Undergraduate Research Day. Adam presented two posters at the event. Dr. Melim was his advisor for research titled “Cave Pearls from the Quincy Limestone Mine, Quincy, Illinois”.

(Right) Adam conducted slug tests with Dr. Bennett at the WIU well site for his second research project titled “A Comparison of Slug Test-Derived Hydraulic Conductivities for a Shallow Alluvial Aquifer along the Lamoine River, Western Illinois University--Macomb Campus”

The abstracts for these posters are available at [http://www.wiu.edu/honors/researchday/posters.php](http://www.wiu.edu/honors/researchday/posters.php)

### Donations

The Geology Department would like to thank the individuals and organizations listed below for their donations. Your generous gifts have allowed us to provide scholarships, defray student costs of field trips, purchase scientific equipment for use in undergraduate research, and cover registration fees and travel expenses of students presenting research at geologic conferences. Again, thank you!

- Timothy Aten ('85)
- Thomas Bartels ('72)
- William Branson ('66)
- John Carl ('85)
- Christine Carlson ('73)
- EOG Resource (Matching for K. Perez)
- Exxon Mobil (Matching for W. Jardine)
- Stephen Gustafson ('98)
- Charles Gnuse ('91)
- Cmdr. David Higgins ('78)
- Philip Kaminski ('07)
- Marvin Klusman ('67)
- Scott Koza ('01)
- Steven Larson ('82)
- Carol Lawrence ('75, '82)
- Marathon Oil (Matching for S. Koza)
- Robert McGaughey ('81)
- Joseph McKee ('83)
- Mary Mlot ('84)
- Timothy Morrow ('70)
- Robyn Myers ('94)
- Phil Oberlander ('75)
- Robert Olson ('86)
- Kim Perez ('76)
- Petersen Environmental, LLC
- Harry Ponsler ('74)
- Spencer Quam ('77)
- Brian Rice ('85)
- Stanley “Clay” Robinson ('77)
- Robert Rozen ('73)
- Penny Silzer ('85)
- Shell Oil Company (Matching for K. Woody)
- Dr. Holly Stein ('76)
- Craig Stevens ('80)
- Sheri Stevens ('93)
- Daniel Stowe ('83)
- Tim Tessendorf ('75)
- Dorothy Tynal ('83)
- Eric Tyrell ('85)
- Scott Walters ('81)
- Kristen Woody ('00)
- Dr. David Wronkiewicz ('82)
Recent Field Trips

(Left) Despite the wet conditions, Dr. Brock’s students give the thumbs-up to the Geomorphology trip she led to the karst regions of Kentucky and southern Indiana. The extremely wet spring we experienced last year allowed the students to see what a karst landscape looks like under flood conditions. (Right) Dr. Calengas accompanied the group and is shown bravely standing with the students on a bridge that is being buffeted by flood waters. (Photos by Amy Brock)