The Geoscience Department is pleased to introduce our new annual newsletter! The newsletter will be distributed bi-annually to all alumni, faculty and staff, and students who are interested and engaged in Geosciences and in the development of the Geoscience Department. We shall give you an inside look at UT Dallas GeoClub activities, introduce you to knew faces joining the Geosciences Department family, and update you on new and upcoming events the Geoscience students and faculty will be participating in. We welcome and appreciate any of your feedback, and the contact information at the end of this newsletter can be used to contact the Geoscience Department and GeoClub.

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The mission of the Department of Geosciences is to deliver a challenging, stimulating, and useful education in geosciences to undergraduates and graduates at all degree levels and to add to our understanding of the Earth through the research of students, faculty, and staff.
By: GeoClub President Michael Bavoso

As the official organization of The University of Texas at Dallas’s Geoscience Department, GeoClub is extremely active in the local community as well as within the university itself. GeoClub membership has risen to 63 undergraduate and graduate level students. With an average of three meetings per month, GeoClub provides its members with speakers from all areas of academia, government, and business relating to the geosciences.

In October 2008, GeoClub helped send 11 members to GSA’s Joint Annual Meeting in Houston, Texas. Several members volunteered at the meeting, and others presented research in poster sessions or talks. Immediately after returning to Dallas, GeoClub helped a UT Dallas service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega, with their very successful Math and Science Camp for Kids. This camp targeted underprivileged elementary school students and tried to spark their interest in math and science. Several student members, Richard Benson, Alex Biholar, Brian Burnham, Fatimah Elnashar, Sevon Geil, and Michele Kashouh, taught two introductory geology classes to 3rd through 6th graders. November and February brought two Scholar’s Day events showcasing the university’s degree programs and student organizations to prospective students. GeoClub members helped advertise GeoClub as well as the Geosciences Department. Hopefully, GeoClub will engage more young minds when its members help groups of Boy Scouts earn their Geology Merit Badge on March 7th and 28th, 2009.

In addition to community events, GeoClub worked hard to keep its members happy. Christine Kuo designed this year’s T-shirt with field trips in mind. The Geoscience Department has called upon the Chevrolet Van, ‘Ol Bessie as she’s known around the department, to deliver eager students to outcrops from New Mexico to Arkansas and from Galveston to Oklahoma. 135,000 miles has delivered countless unforgettable stories and experiences. We also organized a fossil hunting field trip to Pennsylvanian rocks in Jacksboro and Mineral Wells, Texas on February 28th and March 1st, 2009. Students had the opportunity to find Trilobites, Crinoids, and Brachiopods during the two day, one night camping trip. GeoClub members will have the opportunity to go on an all expenses paid vacation to Big Bend National Park during spring break. Funds for the trip were raised during our annual Rock and Bake Sale from February 10th through 12th. The Rock and Bake Sale was an entirely volunteer driven effort to sell rocks, minerals, fossils, and baked goods donated by students, faculty, and staff. Everything from priceless “Pre-Diamonds,” or coal if you prefer, to delicious “Fudge Stone” brownies was on sale in the Student Union’s Comet Café. The event helped raise over $250.00 for GeoClub field trips.

As the academic year rolls on, GeoClub hopes to continue providing a diverse range of speakers for our still growing membership. If you would like to speak about your career experiences, please email utdgeo-club@gmail.com. This email carries over every year to the acting president of GeoClub, so save it in your address book.
Q: Why did you decide to get a degree in geology?
A: I was undeclared throughout my first three semesters at UTD. I really didn't know what I wanted to do. I dreaded the idea of having to work in an office every day of my life. I happen to take Physical Geology as a science elective and had so much fun in Dr. Ignacio Pujana's lab. Ignacio has a way of making things understandable. I looked for another lab that Ignacio was teaching and enrolled in History of Earth and Life the following semester. That sealed the deal.

Q: What's your favorite thing about GeoClub and why?
A: Just getting other people excited about geology. GeoClub gives me the opportunity to show others the wide variety of opportunities and research fields within the geosciences. I like having some people come to GeoClub meetings initially for the pizza but come back for the talks. This semester, I have been trying to bring more speakers to GeoClub from outside of academia. We have a couple speakers lined up right now, but I'm sure next year's GeoClub will be looking for the same thing as well. We have half a semester to go, so anyone is welcome.

Q: What advice do you have for the future presidents of GeoClub?
A: Spend time getting members involved. Don't try to take on every GeoClub responsibility. You'll be much more efficient if you oversee others for certain activities instead of trying to personally run everything. This will allow you to get more done, and even better, you will allow GeoClub members to do more than simply be passive members of the group. Those who volunteer are the ones who will lead GeoClub once you move on!

Q: When you're alumni, do you plan to stay in touch with the department and GeoClub?
A: Of course. The department is going through so many changes right now, and I want to see how it progresses. I've spent all four years here at UTD and the last two and a half almost completely within the Geosciences Department. In that time, I have made great relationships with professors as well as fellow students. I can't wait to come back and let GeoClub know what I've been up to.

Q: If you could ask geosciences alumni anything, what would it be and why?
A: Geologists always have great stories so I'd probably ask about their work or research. If you're interested, geologists will keep feeding you information.

Q: If the Geosciences Department were a rock, what would it be and why?
A: A breccia because it's full of sharp people all cemented together with a love for geology.
UP & COMING EVENTS

Geoscience Open House

By: Margie Cording

On Tuesday March 17, 2009, The UTD School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics invites all GSA Meeting attendees, Geosciences alumni, all UTD Geoscience Faculty, staff and students to attend an Open House in the new home of the Geosciences Department, Founders Annex, suite 3.102, from 5-7pm. We hope to acquaint fellow alumni and others to the new Department Head and Professor Dr. John Oldow in addition to showing off our new home, Founders Annex. This cozy two-story building has been renovated and now houses a classroom, a lab, a seminar room, faculty offices, and the department office on the top floor. The department office has a spectacular gem and mineral collection that will also be on display. In celebration of St. Patrick’s Day we will be serving green beer and Irish hors d’oeuvres.

GSA Meeting

By: Tejeev Patel

The Geological Society of America has six sections, each of which has its own meetings and officers. The South-Central section, which was established in 1966, includes the U.S. states of Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas as well as the newly added Mexican states Coahuila, Nuevo León, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, and Veracruz. This year, the South-Central section (2,079 members) will meet here at UT Dallas, for the first time on-campus since 1983.

The meeting will be held March 15-17, 2009 in the Conference Center right here on campus. It will begin Sunday the 15th at 5:30 at the Conference Center with an icebreaker reception and continue through Tuesday with technical sessions. You can register on-site or on-line at: http://www.geosociety.org/sectdiv/Southc/09mtg/registration.htm

This meeting will feature 9 technical sessions with topics important to our regions geology, a Geology and Public Policy Forum: Resource Planning and Geoscientific Input, two field trips (Sedimentology and Structure of Terrestrial to Shallow Marine Outcrop Reservoir Analogs, Pennsylvanian Mingus Formation (Mineral Wells, Texas), and Sedimentary Environments and Dinosaur Tracks (Woodbine Formation, Lake Grapevine, Dallas)), and two student mentor luncheons (The John Mann Mentors in Applied Hydrogeology Program and The Roy J. Shlemon Mentor Program in Applied Geoscience), in addition to the numerous technical sessions and exhibits. The field trips required participants to sign up on registration, but are now full.

UTD is heavily involved in setting up and running this meeting. Dr. Bob Stern is serving as Technical Program Chair, Dr. John Ferguson as Local Committee Chair, and the new South-Central logo will be designed by our very own Christine Kuo (or Momo as we know her). For more information, go to: http://www.geosociety.org/sectdiv/southc/ or http://www.geosociety.org/sectdiv/southc/09mtg/index.htm

This will prove to be a very informative meeting. Hope to see you there!
On February 21, 2009 U.T.D. Geology students had the rare opportunity to visit a dinosaur excavation site. UT Dallas Graduate students from the Geology of Metroplex class visited The Arlington Archosaur Site, a fossil site discovered in northern Arlington, Texas by UT-Arlington students Phil Kirchhoff and Bill Walker. The UTD Alumnus and current UT Arlington graduate student Derek Main works in conjunction with the site discoverers and volunteers from the Dallas Paleontological Society to excavate fossils from the area. All fossils collected are used to help reconstruct the past environment in which these creatures lived.

The Archosaur site lies in the Cretaceous (about 95 million years old) rocks of the Woodbine Sandstone Formation. The fossils are located in the clays and mud of an ancient oxbow lake that existed when the Dallas/Ft. Worth area was covered by an ancient river system. The most prominent fossils found are those of the herbivore dinosaur *Protohadros byrdi*. Other fossils include crocodile scutes (dorsal osteoderms, aka armor plating) and teeth as well as various other animal species such as turtles, fish and sharks. The site is unique in that it is located in a large metropolitan area. The Arlington Archasaur Site has also garnered media attention such as reports from the local news broadcasting stations and also a visit from members of the Discovery Channel, a cable network, who have used the site to make a documentary.

The UT Dallas students were excited to be invited to the area to experience an official dig site. After a quick geological history tour of the area by Mr. Main, students were free to explore the area and help the dig crew find additional fossils. They also assisted in the continued excavation of the *Protohadros byrdi* to find the remaining portions of the skeleton. Mr. Main invited future UTD students and classes to the site. Derek is also open to others who wish to help in the excavation of the site before the land is converted into a new housing development that is due to start construction sometime in 2010. Derek can be contacted via his Facebook profile at [http://www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).
NEW FACES

Geoscience Department Head - Dr. John Oldow
By: Jesse Howard

Dr. John Oldow became the Geosciences Department Head in September 2008. He was formerly the Head of the Department of Geology and Geological Engineering at the University of Idaho. He has also held positions at TCU (1976-1978) and Rice University (1978-1995). He received a Ph.D. from Northwestern University in 1976.

Dr. Oldow accepted the position at UTD because of the quality of the faculty and students, and the opportunity for growth. He plans to expand the Department and build a world class program based on strengths of structure/tectonics and geophysics. Expansion of the Department will begin with adding two faculty members in the next year, and as many as five over the next several years. Professor Oldow believes that UTD is one of only a few universities capable of this kind of growth, and it has the ability to attract some of the best talent from around the country.

Department Secretary - Gloria Eby
By: Tejeev Patel

Most of us know her as the charming secretary who works in the first office to the right in the Geoscience Department office. Gloria Eby has been a secretary to for 18 years. She has worked for a principal of a high school in Orange, Texas, the University of Houston at Clearlake (for the Department of Education and The Department of Human Sciences and Humanities), and at Galveston Community College, before joining us here at UTD where she has enjoyed her employment for 2 years. Around 18 years ago, Gloria went back to college to study business, but found her "niche" with education. She enjoys interacting with students and faculty as well as the things she learns, working for a department like ours. When asked what she likes about our department, first she mentions the people, and second all the things she has learned about “the formation of the rocks and minerals”. She especially enjoys Dr. Carter's explanations of the formation of different samples our department keeps on display.

Virginia Anderson, our secretary of 17 years, retired 2 years ago passing Gloria the baton. The job of secretary involves registering students, scheduling all the classes for our department, creating and managing the files for all the Ph.D. And M.S. students she works through the process of applying, assisting international students with their I-20's and orientations, as well as various other duties.

Gloria is married (for 42 years no less), mother of 4, and grandparent of 10. She has 6 grandsons and 4 granddaughters, from 2-17. She has been a Houstonian all her life, only moving to Addison to be with her grandchildren. She enjoys cooking and is currently compiling a cookbook. She's a good match for our department, not just because of her friendly demeanor, but because she loves the outdoors. She enjoys camping and gardening, though her greatest passion is her family. When she is done at school, she goes home to a busy family.
NEW FACES Continued...

Administrative Assistant - Sharon Caffery
By: Sarah Dunn

Many of you know Sharon Caffery. She is the new Administrative Assistant II / Department Support for the Geosciences Department. She has not been with the department long. It will be one year in March that she has been with us. Sharon graduated from Limestone College in South Carolina, with a degree in Liberal Arts. She came to Texas from Davenport, Iowa to be closer to her daughters. Sharon has been an excellent addition to the Geosciences Department family. She has always been employed in a university setting, and has worked both sides of the fence; the administrative side and, now, the student side. According to her, the UT Dallas Geosciences Department is a wonderful department to work for with great people and faculty. The Geosciences Department is really like a family for all of us. Some things you may not know about Sharon are that she really likes to read. She also really likes to swim. She has no real background in geosciences but is enjoying learning a lot from the professors and students that come through the department. She says sometimes professors will come through, and need to order something, and they will sit and explain to her why they need it and how it pertains to geosciences. She says her job is very interesting, with something new to learn just about every day. Her message to the geoscience students and alumni is that the geoscience students are very important to the department and faculty, and that there is definitely a certain amount of closeness with all students and their accomplishments. We are all lucky to have Sharon, and hope she sticks around for a long time.

Department Secretary - Emily Osta
By: Jesse Howard

Emily Osta is an office assistant in the Geosciences Department where she has worked since May 2008. She is an undergraduate business major and enjoys interacting with the faculty and students in the Geosciences Department. Her office Duties include answering the phones, handling shipping and receiving, and updating the alumni section of the Department website. She also aids Gloria and Sharon in preparing documents and performing various office tasks. She is currently working with Dr. Carter to prepare rock samples to be given to elementary school students.

Emily is originally from Michigan, but grew up in Richardson. She chose UTD because it is close to home. Between work and fulltime studies, her senior year has been busy. In her free time she enjoys watching movies, working out, and spending time with family and friends. Most of the time she is in the Department working, or fulfilling the requirements for the honors management program, such as writing a thesis, doing community service, attending book club, and taking honors classes. She is also active in her church and loves to travel. She plans to visit France and Italy this summer.

Emily expects to graduate in May 2009 and plans to take an internship while she decides about graduate school. She is excited about finishing her degree but she will miss UTD and the people who made her time here enjoyable.
The Geosciences Department at The University of Texas at Dallas would really like to stay in touch with you. With technology becoming a more integrated part of our lives, staying in contact with your former school and friends is getting easier. Here are a few easy ways to do so:

**The Geosciences Alumni Database** – This page contains contact information for the alumni with over 250 listings. Submitting your information is optional, but we’d like to hear from you and know what you’re up to! Visit the database at: [http://www.utdallas.edu/geosciences/alumni/](http://www.utdallas.edu/geosciences/alumni/) If you’d like to add or change your information, e-mail Gloria Eby at: gloria.eby@utdallas.edu

**UTD Geosciences Alumni on Facebook** – Facebook is a social networking site and the easiest way to reconnect with people. You can control what information you post and what others see. The UTD Geosciences Alumni group has 26 members and is growing! Come join us on Facebook to catch up and share old photos at: [http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=30753051469](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=30753051469)

**UTD Geoclub** – Alumni are welcome to join GeoClub events either as a speaker or just to sit back and eat some pizza. The UTD Geoclub has an active Facebook group with 61 members found at: [http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2210080549](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2210080549) You can also visit the club’s website at: [http://www.utdallas.edu/orgs/GeoClub/](http://www.utdallas.edu/orgs/GeoClub/)

If you’re feeling old-fashioned, you can still give the department a call at 972-883-2401.

You can drop by for a surprise visit, but remember, we’re now located in Founders Annex (just west of Founders). Don’t forget about the Geosciences Open House on March 17! We hope to hear from you!
Newsletter Credits

GeoNews is published bi-annually by the UT Dallas Geoscience Department which is fully responsible for its content. Contributions to the newsletter are always encouraged and the contact information on the previous page can be used to give input on any future GeoNews editions.

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