



Department of Geology and Geophysics

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Dear Alumni and Friends:

The state of the department is, well, an absolute mess! Between the ubiquitous dust, perpetual dirt tracks, planned (and unplanned) power outages, and the serenade of jackhammers, nail guns, and saws, the residents of Weeks Hall certainly know they are in a construction zone. Thirty years ago the original part of Weeks Hall was completed, followed seven years later by a southward extension that provided space for the Geology Museum, classrooms, and an expansion of the Geology Library. The current project is second only to the original Weeks Hall in its scope, and Ben Abernathy and Mary Diman have compiled an assortment of photos and text that document the progress of the West Wing Addition on pages 8 and 9. This addition is essential to the department's continued excellence in teaching, research, and service for the next thirty years and beyond. At the front of this year's *Outcrop* is a flier that highlights our ongoing fundraising campaign for the project. Our target for the alumni portion was \$1M out of the total \$5M for the first phase; we are almost 2/3 of the way toward that \$1M goal. If you have been considering a pledge, which can span several years, *now is the time to take that plunge since we need you now more than ever*. Donations of \$1,000 or more will be acknowledged on a *Wall of Honor* in the addition, but even if you feel you cannot make a commitment at this level, we still need your participation so that future generations of Geobadgers can succeed!

Last year was certainly one of transitions. We welcome new staff member Xifan Zhang on page 26, and Laurel Goodwin, a new faculty member in structural geology, on page 40. As I write this, we are in the midst of two new faculty searches in geomicrobiology and mineralogy. In 2003 we had several departures. Professor Lou Maher retired, and the graph plotting the frequency with which Lou received the *Ooops Award* on page 24 makes it clear why he decided to retire when he did (I suspect seismologists would like to see the San Andreas Parkfield experiment have that predictability!). In addition, Klaus Westphal stepped down as Museum Director, handing the reins over to Richard Slaughter (see pages 57-60 for news on the Geology Museum); Richard was hired as the new Museum Director after a national search. Finally, we are always saddened when former students, staff, or faculty pass away. A memorial resolution for Professor John Steinhart, written by Professors Herb Wang, Bob Dott, and Charlie Bentley, is on pages 12-13; and the deaths of several alumni are noted on page 13.

Despite the dust and the noise, your department is doing extremely well. It is an exciting time. I would like to sincerely thank you for your efforts on our behalf, and assure you that indeed your department is one to be proud of. Finally, be sure to take a look at the information in this year's *Outcrop* on the new *Roadside Geology of Wisconsin*, by Bob Dott and John Attig (pages 22-23; order form at back), which just came out as of this writing—a must-have item for all Geobadgers!

Best regards,

Clark M. Johnson

Professor and Department Chair