Dana Geary

The start of 2004 found me and my family in Boulder, Colorado, where I enjoyed the second half of my sabbatical. My major project while there was collecting and analyzing data on ontogenetic and phyletic change in two lineages of cardid bivalves from Lake Pannon—in other words, comparing how individual cockles grow and change in shape over their lifetimes with the changes seen across their respective lineages over several million years. This work has burgeoned into at least two manuscripts, with coauthors Imre Magyar, Rob Bleiweiss, and Holly Schultz (former undergrad, now at Iowa). Having lots of quiet time in Boulder to focus on research was intensely enjoyable.

I kept busy in the fall teaching Paleobiology to a lively group of grads and undergrads, and also doing Evolution and Extinction.

Ongoing grad activity includes Erik Hoffmann (Cretaceous brackish gastropods from the Western Interior), Paul Mayer (Devonian paleocommunities from the upper Midwest), Jim Freiheit (minor element and stable isotope chemistry of mollusc shells as paleoenvironmental indicators), Hilary Sanders (evolution of Congeria in Lake Pannon). Matt Kuchta returned to grad school with us and will study Paleogene gastropods from the upper midwest. Clint Boyd was awarded a Hilldale fellowship for undergrad research. Clint is using SEM to study the microstructure of hadrosaur teeth.

Life is happy for my daughters Sarah (11) and Molly (8). They enjoyed skiing and backpacking in Colorado, while at home they are quite addicted to books, all to our great satisfaction.

Laurel Goodwin

2004 was a roller coaster. The low point came early in the year, when I broke my kneecap. Despite the opportunity to conduct fracture analysis “up close and personal” (the pattern evident in x-rays clearly recorded fractures emanating from the point at which my thighbone had hammered the patella from above), it was an experience I would not recommend. In addition to being excruciatingly painful, full recovery takes at least nine months, even when (as in my case) surgery is not required. As I write this, I am finally nearing the end of physical therapy. I therefore missed the wonderful San Andreas fault trip (please see Basil Tikoff’s write-up for details), and my field work was confined to a couple of days of looking at outcrops a short distance from a field vehicle—a sorry state of affairs. The only useful result of this experience was that it became fodder for Elucidation last Spring. Astute graduate students noticed the many unpacked boxes in my office (unpacking in a full leg brace on crutches is not an option), each bearing the moving company’s name: S&M. As Dave Barry would say, I’m not making this up. Their take: “First we move you, then we break your kneecap”.

Experiences related to students and colleagues here were...