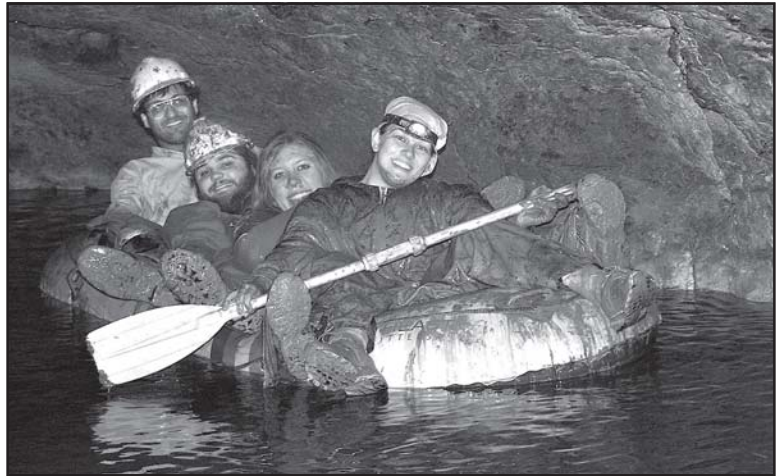


Geology Museum 2007 Annual Report

Field Notes

The Geology Museum's field program received an enormous boost this year from a \$100,000 donation by Marta Weeks, a former director of Weeks Petroleum Limited and an ordained Episcopal priest. This gift enabled us to establish an endowment which will be used to support museum expeditions in perpetuity. Many of our greatest specimens were collected by museum crews, and thanks to Reverend Weeks our exhibits will continue to benefit from such fieldwork.

For the fifth consecutive year, museum staff and students returned to Wyoming in search of 150 million year old dinosaur bones. Work resumed at the Westphal Quarry which continues to yield bones ranging from small, serrated teeth to ribs that are roughly seven feet long. Carrie Levitt took a keen interest in the remains of *Othnielosaurus*, a bipedal, plant-eating dinosaur that weighed about twenty pounds. In October, she presented her undergraduate research on these fairly rare specimens at the annual meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology in Austin, Texas.



Troglodytes George Rothdrake, Matt Tibbits, Lisa Lesar, and Carrie Levitt lazily raft through a muddy cave in Iowa.



This jumble of dinosaur bones at the Westphal Quarry was no match for the excavation skills of Autumn Wilke and Stacy Schaapveld.

Exhibiting Signs of Life

For the next five years the Geology Museum will be spearheading the outreach efforts of the Wisconsin Astrobiology Research Consortium. Dr. Clark Johnson founded this group and recently received a large grant from NASA to study geochemical signals that are indicative of life. Much of this research will focus on Earth's early history and the rise of life on our planet. Plans already are underway for a museum display that will contain specimens of the oldest known rocks and fossils.

At the request of the Bureau of Land Management, we also collected some dinosaur material from a site within an active oil field near our dig site. This work required many additional safety measures including a hydrogen sulfide gas detector.

Another notable excursion took place in April when Rich Slaughter and ten undergraduates spent a weekend in Iowa caving. The highlight of this adventure was piling into rafts and floating along an underground stream. By the end of the field trip, everyone had gained a deeper appreciation of dry socks and diners that serve breakfast fare for supper. On another cave-related note, Rich gave the keynote address at this year's annual meeting of the Wisconsin Speleological Society.

Educational Endeavors

What do Charles Darwin, seismograph software, and a windy moraine in Middleton have in common? They were all inspirations for Geology Museum outreach ventures in 2007.

In February, the Geology Museum hosted the afternoon session of Darwin Day, an annual event that teaches the public about evolution. Thirteen stations presenting an array of evolutionary topics were designed and staffed by professors, graduate and undergraduate students, and staff from labs across campus. The hundreds of visitors that day had the chance to peer at leafcutter ants, witness carnivorous plants eating, and play a game to win a stuffed microbe – never have parents been so happy to have their child get tuberculosis or ebola!



Darwin Day volunteers Lisa Lesar, Alyssa Kemnitz, Andy Fraass, Carrie Levitt, and Stacy Schaapveld go out on a limb to teach visitors about the evolution of arms.



Brooke Norsted and a young volunteer demonstrate how glaciers transported rocks and other debris to Pope Farm.

For two days in May, museum workers participated in a Middleton-Cross Plains School District fieldtrip program at the newly established Pope Farm Park in Middleton. Every fourth grade student in Middleton rotated through activity stations, learning about the park's geologic and agricultural history. Through gale force winds, Rich Slaughter reanimated the plants and animals of the Ice Age; Brooke Norsted mimicked glacial ice grinding into the region; and George Rothdrake spun tales of trees repopulating a recessional moraine.

The museum also had another well-attended Open House in May. For the main talk, Carlos Peralta and his daughter Gabriela Farfan, a mineral savvy sophomore at West High School, spoke about the mineral rhodochrosite. This event also featured special displays of the R.A. Greiner Mineral Collection and specimens of petrified wood recently donated by John and Reade Rettig.

Each spring, museum workers attend a dozen elementary school science nights in the Madison area. Thanks to a grant written by Professor Cliff Thurber, the museum now has a MacBook with SeisMac software installed on it. This program turns a laptop into a seismograph with enough sensitivity to detect your heartbeat if it's lying on your chest. Needless to say, it was a great hit at this year's science nights. In one classroom, the kids coordinated their jumping to make a "mega-quake". At these workshops, students also learned about plate tectonics, P and S waves, and fault behavior.



A museum visitor and her dad work on a geological scavenger hunt during the Annual Open House.

Collections on the Move

In between giving tours in May and June, Brooke Norsted took a course on managing museum collections through the Northern States Conservation Center. The instructor for this online class was the national collections coordinator for the Smithsonian Institution. Over several weeks and many revisions, a collections management policy for the Geology Museum was born. In addition, we have invested in a new software database program for organizing our collections information.

This summer also saw our largest relocation of specimens since the museum moved to Weeks Hall in the early 1980's. For the past thirteen years, we have rented storage space in a nearby warehouse that now is being converted into studios and other facilities for the Art Department. This eviction provided us with an opportunity to reorganize our largest fossils, consolidate our field gear, and slow down traffic on Dayton Street as we wheeled oversized objects down the bike lane. Although our storage areas in Weeks Hall are now a bit cramped, it is nice to have all of the museum's possessions under one roof.



Museum workers George Rothdrake and Sander Hunter dodged scooters and rattled over train tracks to get this shelving unit moved to Weeks Hall.

Out for the Count in 2007

Number of people receiving guided tours: **13,836**

Number of "dinosaur eggs" hidden at the annual museum picnic: **300**

Maximum gust speed during the Pope Farm outreach event: **45 mph**



With Stan the T. rex smiling in the background, George Rothdrake shows off some tyrannosaur fossils.

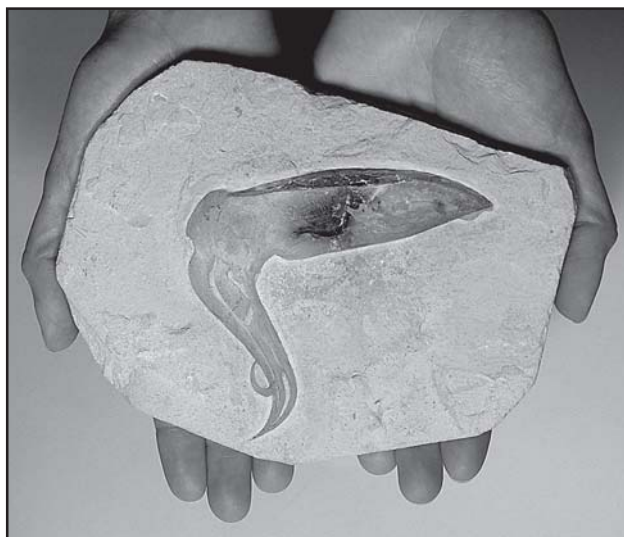
A Night at the Brewery

The Friends of the Geology Museum continues to grow as it added a record 37 new memberships in 2007. In August this group held a benefit for the museum in the beer garden at Capital Brewery in Middleton.

Attendees marveled at our finest *T.rex* fossils and bid on silent auction items including a sleepover party in the Geology Museum. After sunset, people were treated to an outdoor showing of the movie "Night at the Museum". This fundraiser attracted hundreds of people, raised thousands of dollars, and even was featured in color on the front page of a local newspaper. Thank you, Friends!

Donations

Jerry Gunderson again added to our collections in 2007 with a gift of Wisconsin fossils including a tiny, larval trilobite. UW Chancellor John Wiley also donated two synthetic garnets that he made at Bell Telephone Labs in the 1960's – one of which he used as a keychain for decades. The heaviest donation of the year came from Dr. Cornelius Klein, an emeritus professor at the University of New Mexico. He presented us with a large collection of cores from banded iron formations across the globe including important sites in Australia and South Africa. Lastly, the Friends of the Geology Museum purchased a stunning rhodochrosite specimen and a Cretaceous squid fossil with preserved tentacles and ink sac.



The tentacles on this squid fossil from Lebanon are grabbing the attention of museum visitors.

In terms of financial gifts, our greatest supporters were:

EnCana Oil and Gas
Friends of the Geology Museum
Halliburton
Julie Hill
Tina Johnson
David Jones

David and Sherry Lesar
Jay and Sylvia Nania
Mark Solien
UW-Madison Natural History Museums Council
Marta Weeks

These contributions are appreciated deeply and we thank all of our supporters for helping the museum have another great year.

The Museum Crew

Graduate Assistants

Laura Mitchell
Eva Szilvagy

Undergraduate Assistants

Sander Hunter
Carrie Levitt
George Rothdrake
Matt Tibbits
Meredith Wismer

Tour Guides and Volunteers

Kat Bevington	Caitie Johnson	Rob Schultz
Beth Brander	Allie Matthies	Ryan Shedivy
Joe Christman	Carrie Moeller	Sarah Shimko
Amalia Doebbert	Rebecca Moeri	Colman Sutter
Gabriela Farfan	Alex Morrow	Brooke VanBuren
Danielle Gosse	Mark Norton	Nick Wiersum
Amy Homan	Kacie Piirto	Autumn Wilke
Jason Huberty		

Saturday Host

Lou Goodman

Field Specialist

Craig Pfister

Emeritus Director

Klaus Westphal

Friends of the Geology Museum

Peter Lundberg – President
Lucy Ghastin – Vice President
Carlos Peralta – Treasurer
Ray Riddle – Secretary

*We value the time and energy
you invest in making the
museum successful. Thank you!*

*Rich Slaughter, Director
Brooke Norsted, Assistant Director
Joe Skulan, Instructor and Researcher*