

## Alumni Board News

**Jay C. Nania, Chair—[naniajc@bp.com](mailto:naniajc@bp.com)**

The Alumni Board of the Geology and Geophysics department held two meetings during 1999. In May, the Alumni Board together with the department sponsored an Alumni Reunion and Symposium which was held in conjunction with the UW's Sesquicentennial Celebration. The event was a great success, showcasing the latest in department research as well as the historical impact our institution has made in the geoscience world. Our "Global Warming and Sustainable Development" panel discussion drew participation from Penn State Professor of paleoclimatology Richard Alley, deputy director of the EPA John Wise, BP Amoco technology spokesman Bill Hauschildt, and former astronaut and US senator Harrison Schmitt. During the three days of events, our board also sponsored its first Faculty Achievement Award, and Academic Staff Achievement Award, as well as our first graduate and undergraduate Student Awards. We recognized Dr. Jill Banfield for her pioneering research in geomicrobiology, Brian Beard for his new applications of iron isotope ratios, and students Madeline E. Schreiber and Julie O'Leary for their academic contributions to the department. In addition, the first department Distinguished Alumni Awards were presented. Ken Ciriacks, Ray Thomasson, and Katherine Fowler-Billings were all acknowledged for the impact their achievements have

### The Alumni Board

#### CURRENT

Jay Nania, Chair  
Dr. Kenneth W. Ciriacks  
Dr. James F. Davis  
David Divine  
Mark Emerson  
Carl A. P. Fricke  
Dr. John W. Mack, Jr.  
Dr. Walter D. Mooney  
Marjory Rinaldo-Lee  
Dr. James D. (Jamie) Robertson  
Christine Rossen  
M. Ray Thomasson

#### FORMER

Nikolas I. Christensen  
Craig Eisen  
Donald H. Freas  
Stanley Hamilton  
Carroll Ann Hodges  
Richard Hutchinson  
Michael G. Johnson  
Patrick Lehmann  
Ned Ostenso (deceased)  
Robert M. Sneider  
Phillip "Pete" Stark

*The Distinguished Alumni Award was presented to M. Ray Thomasson (right) at the Alumni Banquet. Katharine Fowler-Billings and Ken Ciriacks were also honored.*



made on the department and the world.

On September 24, 1999 the Alumni Board held its annual business meeting in Madison. Some members arrived early for a Thursday night reception in recognition of Jill Banfield, who recently received a MacArthur "genius" grant. Dean Phillip Certain of the College of Letters and Science and Associate Dean Terry Millar of the Graduate School both addressed the group, as did Professor Banfield.

The business meeting commenced at 8:20 AM the following day, with board members Jay Nania (Chair), Ken Ciriacks, Dave Divine, Mark Emerson, Carl Fricke, Pat Lehmann, Marjory Rinaldo-Lee, and Jamie Robertson, and faculty members Mary Anderson, Nik Christensen, John Valley, Herb Wang, and Klaus Westphal. Following introductory remarks by board chair Jay Nania, Mary Anderson and John Valley reviewed the state of the department and Dean Phil Certain reported on the state of the college. Dean Certain also discussed the ongoing faculty searches, the budget process, and the new, competitive proposal process that results in cluster hires in certain target areas.

Ken Ciriacks reported on the Development Campaign and the board's success in increasing the alumni's commitment to the department through graduate fellowships, outstanding student, staff, and faculty awards, support for students' field expenses, increased support for the department and increased contact between the department and the alumni.

The Board has agreed to focus on three main initiatives, designated the "3 M's", over the next two years.

- **Mentoring:** The board is in the process of creating a pool of alumni that will form a sustainable core of mentor volunteers willing to serve as advisors to the department's student population. Their first solicitation was very successful, with regard to both student and alumni interest. Board member Jamie Robertson is coordinating this effort. If you are interested in participating in this program, please contact Jamie at [jamie@arco.com](mailto:jamie@arco.com).

- Minorities, more appropriately "diversity:" The Board is exploring ways to diversify the population in the UW geoscience programs. This issue has received significant attention at both the college and university levels and a proactive effort by our Board membership is fully supported by the Dean of the College of Letters and Science. In the fall of 1999, the Board met with the authors of the "UW Diversity Plan," and will be meeting with representatives of the National Association of Black Geologists and Geophysicists during our next board meeting set for April 16, 2000 in New Orleans. We hope to develop an action plan at our meeting in the fall of 2000.

- Money: The capital campaign initiated in 1999 has already raised approximately one million dollars for the department. Our goal is to raise another million this year to support a proposed major building addition to Weeks Hall, with an expected ground breaking in 2003. Ken Ciriacks is taking the lead on our development effort. We are all very excited about being part of this significant department milestone!

In addition to these activities, the Board continues to promote the Weeks Hall Courtyard Brick Program. The first installation, comprised of approximately 70 named bricks, was completed in the Department courtyard in the spring of 1999. Alumni can show support for their alma mater by donating \$200 to have a brick in the courtyard inscribed either with their own name or with the name of a former professor or fellow alumnus that they wish to honor. A brick application form is enclosed at the back of this newsletter.

Finally, together with the department, the Board is planning an Alumni Reception to coincide with the 2000 AAPG Annual Conference in New Orleans on April 17. This will be a great opportunity to renew old ties and get to know some of the students who represent the next generation of UW geoscientists. The reception will be held in the Rosedown Room at the Hilton Riverside Hotel from 5:30-7:30 PM on April 17, 2000. Your Alumni Board hopes to see you there!



*Madeline Schreiber accepts the Alumni Board's award, Distinguished Graduate Student, at the Alumni Spring Banquet May 7, 1999.*

As always, feel free to contact your Alumni Board at anytime and let us know how we can help you to play a continuing role in the advance of geology and geophysics study at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

## Sesquicentennial Alumni Day Symposium

### *Herb Wang*

As part of the University's Sesquicentennial celebration, the department held an Alumni Reunion Weekend May 7-9, 1999. Our last reunion was September 23, 1994. The main event was an all-day symposium on Friday, May 7. The first morning talk was by department historian, Emeritus Professor Robert Dott. His account *UW Geology Crosses the Atlantic* described a journey more propitious and successful than the Titanic's. Research talks followed.

Professor Nikolas Christensen, Albert and Alice Weeks Professor, showed how he uses seismic anisotropy as a tool to do structural geology of the mantle. Professor Jill Banfield showed us the exciting new developments in geomicrobiology in which she has played such a prominent part. Assistant Professor Basil Tikoff presented a very big picture view of lithospheric folding during the Laramide Orogeny. And Assistant Professor Brad Singer presented the latest chronology of Pleistocene glaciation in Patagonia from radiogenic and cosmogenic surface exposure. Research in the department has been exciting from its beginning and as the talks amply demonstrated is continuing unabated into the new century.

The afternoon brought a special session on *Global Warming and Sustainable Development*. As earth scientists we have a special role in society as being the finders of energy resources and of being the protectors of our environment. The Symposium brought together government, academic, and industry perspectives. Dr. John Wise of the EPA discussed the need for sustainable development, Professor Richard Alley (Ph.D. '87) worried us all with his story based on ice cores from Greenland of abrupt climates changes. Bill Hauschildt of BP Amoco described his company's efforts to implement sustainable business practices. A spirited discussion with the speakers and audience followed, including comments from geologist, Apollo 17 astronaut, and former New Mexico Senator, Jack Schmitt, who is an adjunct professor at UW-Madison.

Special thanks are due to Alumni Board members Dr. James Robertson and Carl Fricke for organizing this highly successful and public symposium. The audience in the morning was around 50 and it swelled to 150 for the afternoon symposium. **The symposium was video taped and is available for either loan or purchase. Contact Karen Mullins in the department office (geodept@geology.wisc.edu) if you are interested.**



*“The Geosingclines” perform at the Alumni Banquet— (l to r), Tim Lee, Danny Douglass, Norlene Emerson, Anne Taunton, Jeff Munroe, Ben Laabs, Jean Bahr, Bob Dott, and Art Gibson (at piano).*

The evening banquet was a delightful coming together of alumni, faculty, staff, graduate, and undergraduate students. The program combined the flavor of a reunion with the annual Spring Banquet awards. Field camps of yesteryear were remarkably similar to those of the present. A new award for Distinguished Alumni was presented to Dr. Ken Ciriacks, chair of the Alumni Board, Dr. Ray Thomasson, and Dr. Kathryn Fowler-Billings. The number of scholarship awards was noticeable to all, so thank you to our donors for encouraging our best students toward a career in geology and geophysics.



*Outgoing Alumni Board co-Chairs, (left) Ken Ciriacks and (right) Jamie Robertson, and new Board Chair, Jay Nania (center), at the banquet.*



*Alums at the Spring Picnic, May 7—(l to r) Perry Roehl, Helmut Duessart, and Perry and Vivian Olcott.*



## Alumni to Baraboo

**David M. Mickelson**

On Saturday May 8, 1999, an enthusiastic group of alumni, led by Dave Mickelson and Ron Schott, left on the Baraboo field trip. Although it was cloudy, the group was fired up as we stopped at a cheese factory in Sauk City for fresh curds, then went to Parfrey's Glen. Interesting geology and a few emerging wild flowers made the walk up the gorge a pleasure. Devil's Lake was the next stop, then on to Baxter Hollow. A high point of the trip was listening to George Field, who had done his master's thesis here in 1934, discuss his interpretation of the geology and what it was like in the area at that time. Our last stop was at Van Hise Rock, which was to be dedicated the next day as national historic landmark.

*Photo right: Alumni Reunion field trip to Baraboo and Van Hise Rock, May 8, 1999: Perry Olcott, Vivian Olcott, Janet Battista, Jay Nania, Dave Mickelson, George Field, Linda Ciriacks, Cheri Rhodes Vaughn, Jackie Furer, Lloyd Furer, Ron Schott, Jeff Pietras, Ken Ciriacks, Jim Davis and J.J., Harry Abendroth, Darrell Henry, Jim Parks, Eric Roehl, Fred Schwab, Mark Emerson. Missing from the photo are Ray Thomasson and Merrill Shields. (photo: MaryBeth Wegner)*



*Singing along, at the Spring Banquet: Toni Simo and John Valley (rear), Jeff Pietras, Ray Thomasson, George Wise (EPA guest), Vivian Olcott, Carl Fricke (rear), Perry Olcott, Colin Walling, Wes Dripps, Cara Santelli, Dana Geary with Sarah and Molly, and Rob Bleiweiss.*



*The Annual Spring Picnic, Fri., May 7 at Olin Park: (l to r) Phil Brown, Linda and Ken Ciriacks, Herb and Rosemary Wang, Andrée Valley, Jean Bahr.*



## Van Hise Monolith Gains National Historic Status

*Terry Devitt*

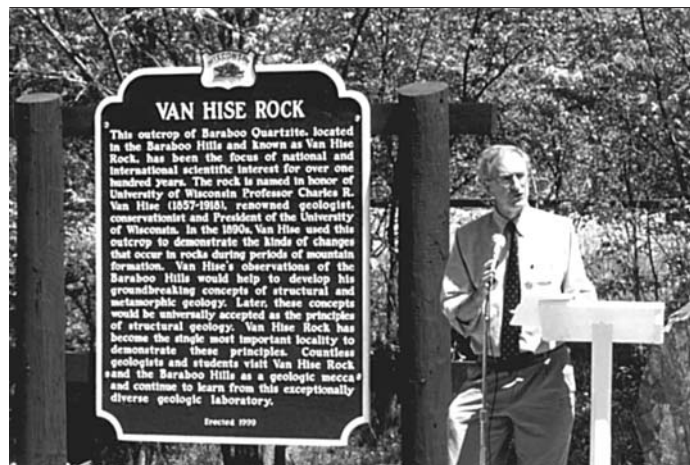
Tucked away in the Baraboo River Valley gorge is the rock that made Wisconsin famous.

First used more than a century ago by University of Wisconsin geologist Charles R. Van Hise to teach some of the principles of geology, the solitary outcrop of Baraboo quartzite is for scientists the single most famous geological feature in the garden of stony wonders that is the Baraboo Hills.

A mecca of geology, like much of the region, the rock was used by Van Hise to show his disciples the hidden secrets of the structure and history of the Earth. And his students and generations of textbooks writers carried its lessons worldwide.

The monolith nestled near the roadside on a curvy portion of State Highway 136 has long been a window to what the world was like more than a billion years ago. And now, the famous rock has gained historic merit. On May 9, 1999, Van Hise Rock became the 24th site in Wisconsin to be designated a national historic landmark, the highest honor bestowed by the National Park Service.

The educational value of the 1.7-billion-year-old rock, still visited by legions of students from all over the Midwest, lies in the story it tells about the geology of the Baraboo region and the insights it provides into the underlying processes that shape the Earth, according to Robert Dott, professor emeritus of geology.



*John Valley speaks at the dedication of Van Hise Rock as a National Historic Landmark, May 9, 1999.*

The Baraboo Hills, says Dott, reflect a remarkable geologic history that encompasses almost half of the estimated four-billion-year age of the planet. Van Hise Rock, Dott explains, covers much of that history in one neat package.

The rock reveals features of a now-buried fold in the Earth's crust that tells a story of mountain building that occurred in the region an estimated 1.6 billion years ago. Van Hise, using the Baraboo Hills as a classroom, made Wisconsin internationally famous as a center of geological research and education.

The dedication of Van Hise Rock was on Sunday, May 9, at 1:30 p.m. in Abelman Gorge, one mile north of Rock Springs on Highway 136.