Fulbright Fellowship to Slovenia. Fulbright’s are very prestigious awards and recognize the contribution that the awardee is likely to make in both scholarly research but also in representing the United States abroad. Most are awarded to fairly senior scholars, well on in their careers. Velvet is right at the start of hers and for a Fulbright to be awarded to an untenured professor is particularly noteworthy. All of us offer Velvet our heartiest congratulations.

Dr. Chris Baldwin
baldwin@shsu.edu

It looks as though this will be the final missive from me (Oh what sorrow!) as we currently have our search underway for a new Departmental Chair. The ads just went into the various electronic and paper journals, and we should expect to see some serious enquiries soon.

In addition to the Chair, we have just recently appointed a new half time secretary to cover the office during afternoons. Her name is Theresa Garvin, and we extend her a warm welcome to the Department. So everyone should have a few personnel changes in the LOB332 suite.

Partly in preparation for the new Chair, the Geography faculty are carefully reviewing the whole structure of their curriculum, partly with an eye to general modernization but also from the perspective of ensuring that it fits well with the new Masters Program in Applied GIS. The Geologists are still focused on the expansion of field-related courses as well as a general expansion of our Petroleum Geology Program.

One final point – and I write this here because she is too modest to toot her own horn – our Newsletter editor, Velvet Nelson, has been awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to Slovenia. Fulbright’s are very prestigious awards and recognize the contribution that the awardee is likely to make in both scholarly research but also in representing the United States abroad. Most are awarded to fairly senior scholars, well on in their careers. Velvet is right at the start of hers and for a Fulbright to be awarded to an untenured professor is particularly noteworthy. All of us offer Velvet our heartiest congratulations.

Dr. Chris Baldwin
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Congratulations to 2008-9 Student Award Winners

The following students received awards for Geography and Geology during the 2008-9 academic year:

Reyna De La Cruz—Sam Houston Association of Geology Students scholarship recipient

Ryan Lewis—Sam Houston Association of Geology Students scholarship recipient; top student University of Buffalo Geology field camp

Peyton Lisenby—Cannan Geological scholarship recipient

Nancy Morris—Williams Geography scholarship award recipient

James Scott—Scott and Baron Geography scholarship award recipient

Philip Teissier—Holder Geography scholarship award recipient

David Thompson—Bounds Geography scholarship award recipient

Also recognized:

Ashley Yates—service to the Geology program

Jeff Cook, Jonathon Marshall and Claude Mathes—performance in the Geology program

Left: Nancy Morris, Geography scholarship recipient; Bottom: (from left to right) Peyton Lisenby, Reyna De La Cruz and Ryan Lewis, Geology scholarship recipients

Fall 2009 Newsletter
Geographers of Sam Houston (GOSH) and Gamma Theta Upsilon Re-Form

The fall 2009 semester marks the reformation of Gamma Chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon geographic honor society and Geographers of Sam Houston (GOSH). Charted in 1931, SHSU has the third oldest chapter of GTU in the United States, and the oldest chapter in Texas. Initiation this semester inducted seven geography majors, most of whom are seniors. Initiation will be held at the beginning of every semester. Eligible students will have a minimum of one geography course, three semesters of college coursework and a 3.3 GPA in geography and overall. Dues are a one-time fee of $40.

GOSH is an informal student group that meets about once a month to promote familiarity within the Geography Department. Not a lot of Geography majors know other majors, so this is a way we can get together and hang out and discuss school, classes and various geography topics. The first meeting of the semester, held on September 9, saw an attendance of 13 students. This year’s elected officers are Holly Stover, President; Haley Hanson, Vice President; Tiffany Hall, Secretary; and Andrew Cummings, Public Relations. The officers are working hard looking into different events to be held throughout the school year. Activities are not solely based on the officers choices but come from ideas and suggestions at meetings. Everyone is welcome to attend, and everyone’s ideas are welcome. A group has been set up on Facebook, which includes news and information about meetings.

So far for the year, the officers are looking into a couple of trips. First, there are two geography conferences set for the last weekend of October. First is the Southwest American Association of Geographers in Little Rock, AR and the other is the Applied Geography Conference held in Baton Rouge, LA, organized by Kent State University. The officers are also looking into a weekend excursion to Enchanted Rock and area attractions such as Fredericksburg and local wineries. Community outreach has also been proposed to bring awareness to geographic literacy in the local schools.

For more information about GOSH, GTU or any of the activities, or interest and/or ideas on activities, please contact Dr. Strait (jstrait@shsu.edu) or Holly Stover (hrs005@shsu.edu).

Sam Houston Association of Geologists (SHAGS) Activities

SHAGS held their elections at the beginning of the semester. The officers for this academic year are Austin Dunlap, President; Jonathan Marshall, Vice President; Tiffany Engle, Secretary; and Ryan Lewis, Treasurer.

So far there has been an officers meeting and a general meeting to discuss plans for the semester. We have one speaker scheduled and are negotiating with other speakers. The first speaker will be SHSU alumnus Michael Bagnasco, Senior Geologist, Quest Consulting, Inc. and he will speak to students about life in industry on October 7th. Day trips to the Houston/Galveston region (museums) and Lake Whitney (fossil collecting) are being worked out. SHAGS will head for Lake Catherine State Park, near Hot Springs, Arkansas the weekend before Thanksgiving, November 20-22. Saturday morning will be spent looking for quartz crystals north of Hot Springs. Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning tours of the Magnet Cove Igneous Complex will give students the opportunity to see and collect some of the minerals and rocks associated with an alkali igneous intrusion. There will also be a banquet/dinner near the end of the semester.

For more information about SHAGS, please contact Dr. Cooper (bjcooper@shsu.edu) or Austin Dunlap (add021@shsu.edu).
Jeff Cook is a Geology major. He spent part of the summer attending field camp with the University of Buffalo. The following is an account of his experiences:

In the summer of 2009, Ryan Lewis and I attended the University of Buffalo geologic field camp. This camp is required for a BS in Geology and helps to provide real world application to academic study. General information on field camps offered throughout the nation, as well as internationally, can be found on Geology.com. Our decision was primarily based on four criteria: University of Buffalo was one of the cheapest, they had been running the same field camp consistently for over fifty years, the camp was only four weeks long (as opposed to six), and it was a travelling camp.

Over the course of the four weeks there would be four separate mapping locations in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. Ryan and I made our own way to Denver where we met with the rest of our group. Our particular group hailed from all over the United States. The majority was undergraduate geology students from Buffalo, but there were also others from Tennessee, Indiana, Georgia, and Pennsylvania. Forty students in all made the trip.

After a night in Denver, we left in four vans, a cook truck, and two staff vehicles. The rugged pedigree of the vans was soon tested as can be seen in the picture, in which one of the staff had to be rushed to the hospital for staples in their head after hitting a cow at 50 mph. All were fine, even the cow miraculously. This was our worst injury.

Our first campsite was located in Southfork, Colorado. Our purpose at each campsite was to map a section of area ranging in size from 2-5 square miles. To map this section we were given an aerial photo. Our job was to walk through each mapsite with the aerial and colored pencils and construct a geologic map on top of the photo. These maps were expected to be standard geologic style maps that relayed information pertaining to strike and dip, relative dating of strata, location of stratigraphic boundaries, any faults present, and all other relative data, such as this one of Dinosaur National Monument.

The first campsite in Colorado, much like the rest, offered beautiful views of rugged nature. Our tents were set on the edge of a field in a valley and every morning we were greeted by groups of deer numbering in the twenties. The weather was beautiful as well. Our average daytime temperature was around 65-70 degrees, while our colleagues back in Texas enjoyed a week of 100+ degree temperatures and 85% humidity. Not a bad place to escape the heat.

The true saviors of the trip were, of course, the camp cooks. They did their job well and without complaint of snowy, rainy, or windy conditions. You burn many calories throughout the day hiking mountains, and it’s nice to come back to a well prepared meal.

Each campsite was unique. We usually spent 5 to 6 days at a camp before we had a night in town at a hotel to sleep in a real bed, wash filthy clothes, and have a cold drink. The camping experienced was unrivalled. “Q” Creek Ranch, our last site in Wyoming. The ranch was 360,000 acres, and we were in the middle of it. The closest town was an hour and a half away in Medicine Bow, WY. It is one of the darkest places at night according to NOAA. Here was untouched wilderness at its best.

The staff proved extremely knowledgeable in their respective fields of study. Each van was driven by a TA who would also accompany us into the field daily. They were there to answer questions and provide council on geologic processes that may have been present at the site. As the camp progressed, the mapsites became more structurally difficult to interpret and the TA’s offered less and less help. This progression from sage-like advice to cryptic shoulder shrugging was, admittedly, helpful. They took us on side trips to see things of interest in the area such as the “Newspaper Rock” petroglyphs in Utah.

Aside from the academic aspects of the trip were the people. Everyone on the trip was, at the very least, tolerable and at best, a close friend. People from all over came together and camped out for over a month in tents out in the wilderness. This is a rare pleasure in life.

I would recommend this field camp to all seeking a Geology degree. Ryan Lewis took top honors upon completion. No easy task, as he was competing with me.
Student Perspectives from Field Courses

Claude Mathes is a Geology major. He spent part of the summer attending field camp with Southern Utah University. The following is an account of his experiences:

Located on the western edge of the Colorado Plateau in Cedar City, Southern Utah University (SUU) Field Camp offered a unique opportunity for numerous exposures of diverse and complex geology, all within short driving distances. I made the 1500-mile trip to Cedar City last summer with fellow SHSU Geology students, Wes Walker and Ashley Yates.

The five-week field camp started on June 22 and was completed on July 24. The typical weekly format was three days in the field at one to two locations, one day on a field trip that complemented the field days, and one day drawing final geological maps in a classroom. Every Friday featured a mad rush to complete the cross-sections and geological maps by SPM.

The prominent geology on the western edge of the Colorado Plateau is a product of the thrust faults of the Sevier Orogeny, 90 mya, with an overprint of normal faults of the Basin and Range province, 70 mya. The dominant geological feature in southwestern Utah is the Hurricane Fault, a normal fault with an 8000-foot displacement. Cedar City sits on the graben of the Hurricane fault in the active fault zone.

Mapping projects included metamorphic sequences west of St. George and at a copper mine, thrust faults and normal faults of Parowan Gap and of Red Hill just east of Cedar City, and volcanic sequences in southwest Utah. The final mapping project was east of St. George near the Hurricane Fault and involved thrust faulting and two normal fault systems perpendicular to each other. The complex geology of the final site is not totally understood at this time and is currently under review by the Utah Geological Survey. A feature of the local geology is the Triassic-age Moenkopi Formation which represents the transition from marine environment to fluvial deposition.

The weekly field trips offered the opportunity to collect rock specimens not seen in the Huntsville area or anywhere in Texas. The highlighted specimens were zebra marble, banded Rhyolite, garnet schist, and snowflake and mahogany obsidian. A special field trip was to Fossil Mountain in the middle of the Great basin. From that site, fossils collected were from Lower Ordovician, approximately 490 mya. From the copper mine site, the high grade copper samples contained azurite, malachite, and cuprite.

With weekends open for site seeing, the opportunity was there to visit the national parks and monuments in the area. Zion NP features awesome exposures of the Navajo sandstone, but the Park attracts a large volume of tourists. The view from the North Rim of the Grand Canyon was overwhelming. Bryce Canyon NP and Cedar Breaks NM displayed the quite colorful Clarion Formation. The view from Brian Head, highest point in the area, illustrated the elevation contrast to the basin 6000 feet below. Ashley forced us to hike to Kolob Arch in the northern part of Zion NP. The 15-mile hike was a walk-in-the-park for Wes, but Ashley and I struggled with the 800-foot elevation gain at the end of the hike.

Alicia Gomez is a Geology minor. She attended Dr. Strait’s “Race, Blues and Rock ‘N’ Roll” field course this summer. The following is an account of her experiences:

When you first hear about this trip, it sounds like a ricking good time, a week listening to blues and rock and roll in its birthplace. The reality, however, is a perspective-changing trek back in time. The first full day in Memphis, I began to feel the power of place outside of the Lorraine Motel where Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. As I traveled through the National Civil Rights Museum, I began to absorb the depth of struggle and tension of the South. The next days are spent in rapid fire visiting cultural highpoints and learning where the Delta gets its unique flavor. When we sit down to eat, we do it on Delta time, and meals can last for two hours or more. Soul food and barbeque are staples but there are surprises such as a Lebanese diner that serves up a delightful kibbie omelet. There are also simple delights such as the Coal Moons (an ice-cream desert served with a classic Moon Pie) that are so sweet and unique despite having only two ingredients.

The heart of the trip begins in the Riverside and Red’s. The Riverside is a historic hotel and when I stepped inside, I instantly felt at home. At Red’s, the food is so good some are driven to abandon forks and spoons. The music is just as outstanding. The room is bathed in red and Wolfman sings and plays for hours on end without a break.

The last night is spent in Po’ Monkey’s. By this point, we’d been in the Mississippi summer sun and humidity for five days. We’ve been to over a dozen historic sites. We’ve slept little, burning the candle at both ends, and we’ve eaten more than we ever knew we could. We’ve been steeped in the struggle that convinced the blues and that afternoon we have the blues through and through. As the sun goes down our spirits lift and this little shack with stuffed monkey’s and plastic tarp on the ceiling becomes elation. The music booms, chatter and laughter rise and I learned I could dance with the right partner. I entered as a tourist but left a local. There can be no deeper an understanding of the blues than the live it, if only for a week.
Ryan Lewis is a Geology major. In addition to attending field camp this summer, Ryan held an internship with Canyon Exploration Company. The following is an account of his experiences:

As I returned from field camp this past summer I wondered what should I do next. Summer school or seek employment? I decided a working experience would be of greater value to me in my pursuit of geology; so I pursued several contacts in the oil and gas industry. In July I received a call from a petroleum engineer offering an opportunity to work for him and his partner at Canyon Exploration Company in Amarillo. This was not an opportunity to be missed so I jumped on board as fast as possible and headed for the Midcontinent. I left the following Monday for a ten hour drive through the panhandle to see what adventures loomed on the horizon. As I arrived on the breaks of the Canadian River I was not disappointed by the beautiful scenery and the people I had met. My employer and his colleagues were extremely polite and willing to help me in any way possible.

My first assignment was a work over rig just outside of town. It was a well completion job in which the wireline truck came to set the packer and tubing guns to perforate the formation at 6400 feet. This took about two days and the well was swabbed back to remove excess liquid from the well bore. After waiting about five hours the well came in and with full force at 6400 feet. This took about two days to remove excess liquid from the well and the well was swabbed back to 6400 feet. This method was the first of several planned wells for this wildcat area. After waiting about five hours the well came in and with full force at 6400 feet. This took about two days to remove excess liquid from the well and the well was swabbed back to 6400 feet. This method was the first of several planned wells for this wildcat area.

The next major step was to sit a drilling rig in Channing, Texas about 40 miles from the border of New Mexico. After navigating to a well site 45 miles from the nearest establishment on a 200,000 acre ranch. I was greeted by a rough bunch of cowboys and roughnecks. They seemed accepting and put me to work just as fast. In no time I was on the derrick floor turning valves and making pipe connections. Later that night I met the operations geologist who came to witness the open hole logging job scheduled for midnight. As expected the rig was running behind in tripping 3500 feet of pipe out of the hole. We didn’t get to logging until about three in the morning. The Weatherford loggers performed a micro log on permeability, induction logs to determine porosity, and gamma ray logs; which indicates radiation from the formation. This took until seven in the morning and I was running low on sleep. The next afternoon I received a crash course in well log analysis and got to see the 3-D data in SMT Kingdom of the areas being drilled. The prospect was a reef play about 7800’ MD (measured depth) and was the first of several planned wells for this wildcat area.

The next step in my drilling job was to hang out with the mudlogger and learn how drill cuttings are sampled and analyzed. The tools of a mudlogger consists of a stereoscope to characterize and view lithology of the cuttings, a fluorescence box to test for traces of hydrocarbons, a gas chromatograph connected to the mud line to determine gas concentrations; which was connected to a computer with logging software. Samples would then be systematically examined and labeled. If hydrocarbons were suspected then a cut would be performed with lighter fluid to see if any petroleum residue was left behind and if so; was called a ring cut for the trace remnants left in the ceramic dish. All this data was compiled in a mud log to supplement the open hole logs in determining zones of possible hydrocarbon reservoirs. During seven days on the rig I learned all aspects of drilling an oil and gas well. From the roughnecks, toolpusher; company man, mudlogger, mud engineer, and all the other service companies involved; I was not spared any knowledge about how everything is integrated to pull hydrocarbons out of the earth.

Now I was on to Oklahoma City to work with the developmental geologist to understand how geologic plays are prospected and developed. At this stage I was on an info overload but I craved more. First I got familiarized with the stratigraphy in the midcontinent and learned that most of the sands being produced are from very sinuous stream channels, Pennsylvanian to Triassic in age. I was put to work contouring subsurface data for geologic maps by hand and then converting them digitally into Petra, a mapping program. I was fairly confident in my mapping abilities and produced several maps that were up to par with his interpretation of the AOI (area of interest). Next was to use existing well logs of the area to produce cross sections and correlate formations. At this point, if meaningful maps are created a decision is made where to drill. Once drilling is completed then we would review the previous maps but more importantly the well and mud logs. Log analysis is key to determining what kind of subsurface conditions exist. First is to determine the porosity and permeability of the formations and second using Archie’s equation to quantitatively acquire saturation of the formation. Generally if porosity was above 8%, permeability looked good, and saturation content exceeded 30% then a decision where to perforate and produce the bore would be made. All wells will be either perfed or plugged and abandoned. Not all wells will produce, and drilling dry holes is inevitable in this business. Using proper methods and sound science dry holes can be minimized but never eradicated. My time in OKC came to an end, and after two weeks I was off to Amarillo to work with the land department. The next week I spent learning the process of acquiring properties, how royalties are paid, and in general the overall business of land management. This was by far the least interesting but just as critical to the overall process.

After five weeks of traveling and 5000 miles later, my time this summer was over. I was able to see a beautiful part of the country and meet numerous wonderful people. I had been exposed to a wealth of valuable information and was involved in every aspect of the petroleum industry. From engineering/production, geology, and land. I am better prepared for a future in oil and gas. As a result, I have received internship and job interviews recently because of this experience. I would suggest anyone interested in this field to pursue any opportunity available. This could be your ticket to the future.
Alumni Updates

September 17, 2009

Hello,

It has been a busy year for me. I have completed my first semester in grad school at the University of North Texas. I am a Geology TA and teach 4 sections of Introduction to Geology. I have a new found respect for college professors. I am also on a health research team which is funded by research grants. Each member on the team was carefully selected. Our team consists of biologists, epidemiologists, computer and GIS professionals, medical geographers, sociologists, and statisticians.

This April I will be traveling to the AAG conference in Washington D.C. to present my research over HIV/AIDS among Texas Prison Inmates. In July I traveled to Hamilton, Ontario to the International Medical Geography Symposium to present my research on the spatial-temporal patterns of alcohol-related fatalities in Texas for the years 1990-2000. This opportunity was very exciting for me!

I will be presenting this same research at the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) National Convention October 16, 2009. The Texas Department of State Health Services has granted me access to confidential HIV/AIDS data.

I would like to thank each of you for all the time and energy you have put into my academic career. Without you none of this would have been possible, and because of you I am doing great and succeeding in life! I am truly thankful for everything you have done for me.

Sincerely,

Libbey Kutch
Graduate Student
Department of Geography
University of North Texas
Denton, Texas

New Project: Caddo Indian Village Geophysical Survey

Drs. Jim Tiller and John Degenhardt are currently conducting historical and geoarchaeological research involving late Caddo Indian settlements in the vicinity of present day Marshall, Texas. Preliminary geophysical surveys of several settlement sites, which have been identified based on archival information, are planned for early November 2009. The objective of the investigation is to collect geophysical evidence that will verify the location of the last Caddo village in that region of Texas. The village is significant because it is presumed to have been the home of historic Indian Chief Dehahuit. Results of the investigation are to be presented at the 52nd Annual Caddo Conference & 17th East Texas Archaeological Conference in Tyler, TX in March 18-20, 2010. For additional information about field modules, contact Dr. Tiller (geo_jwt@shsu.edu).

New Courses for 2010

Geography 475—Dr. Gong is going to offer a new upper division ONLINE course in the spring: “Transportation Geography” intended to introduce students to the world of transportation. From day to day commute to international trade, movements of people, goods and information have always been fundamental components of human societies. Contemporary economic processes have been accompanied by a significant increase in mobility and higher levels of accessibility. Getting to know the basic concepts, theories, and applications of transportation geography will not only help you understand the world better, but also get you ready for the future challenges. For more information, contact Dr. Gong (gxg002@shsu.edu).

Dr. Degenhardt is going to offer a special topics course titled “Introduction to Geoarchaeology.” The course will apply the concepts and methods of geography, geology, and other earth sciences to the study of archaeology. A fundamental, broad-based perspective of the essentials of modern geoarchaeology will also be presented and a variety of topics on thematic issues and practical skills will be discussed. Students will be introduced to a variety of techniques used in the earth sciences and learn how they are applied in the field of archaeology. Although the course will be listed as GEO 475 (Directed Study), it is designed as a 100-level course with no prerequisites required. For more information, contact Dr. Degenhardt (degenhardt@shsu.edu).

The remains of an Iron Age City Gate complex at Bethsaida, northern Israel. It is now believed the Iron Age Bethsaida was the capital of the kingdom of Geshur.
At the end of last semester, Dr. Strait was granted tenure and promotion at Sam Houston State University.

Congratulations to Dr. Strait


Dr. Degenhardt—“Results of a Recent Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Survey Along the Hite Delta, Lake Powell, Utah,” paper presentation, Annual Meeting of the Geological Society of America, Portland, Oregon, October. Coauthors: Dr. Netoff, Dr. Baldwin and Dr. Dohrenwend.


Dr. Hill—“The Structural Geology and Paleoproterozoic Tectonics of the Black Hills, South Dakota, During the Assembly of Laurentia (2.3-1.6 billion years ago),” colloquium presentation, Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri, September.


Dr. Strait—“Places and Spaces of Blues Culture: The Geography of Memory in the Mississippi Delta,” poster presentation, Annual Meeting of the Southwest Division of the Association of American Geographers, Little Rock, Arkansas, October.

Summer Updates from the Faculty

Dr. Chris Baldwin spent a couple of weeks during mid-July continuing his fieldwork on trace fossils on the west coast of Borneo. But this year his work took him from the big island of Borneo (the Malaysian State of Sarawak) to the small island of Labuan—a Federal Territory of Malaysia just off the coast of the State of Sabah and just north of Brunei. Labuan is highly developed and sophisticated and was a few years ago projected to become an “offshore” economic and political center for ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations). It is at the present time both a center for tourism, particularly scuba diving, and for finance. Way back in the mid-nineteenth century coal was extracted from the northern end of the island at a site called Chimney Rock and was used as fuel in both commercial and British naval ships.

Our geological sequence work involved logging sections of rocks on a couple of absolutely exquisite beaches on the northern end of Labuan. They are the archetypal tropical beaches with white sands backed by jungle or groves of Casuarina Pines. With a gentle sea breeze work here was just about perfect. In contrast much of our work was done on quarry faces and road cuts, where by about 11am it was possible to feel the heat rising back off the rocks with about the same intensity that it came directly to the backs of our necks! Even the Texas summer was poor prep for work here just a couple of degrees north of the equator.

baldwin@shsu.edu
Dr. Brian Cooper and his kids spent part of their summer in Colorado... again. Did not get to stay as long as they did in 2008. They stayed at Lake San Cristobal which is located in the San Juans just to the south of Lake City, Colorado. This is Colorado’s second largest natural lake and was formed when the massive Slumgullion Earthflow blocked the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River about 700 years ago. A second earthflow started moving about 350 years ago and is still moving, sometimes as much as twenty feet a year. The cabin is located on the toe of the older flow. This year the Coopers towed a trailer with their own kayaks and paddled up and down the lake. They also rented a jeep and took a number of trips up into the mountains separating the Lake City Caldera from the Silver City Caldera. The photo above was taken on one of the trips that eventually led to the old mining town of Animas Forks.

bjcooper@shsu.edu

This summer, Dr. John Degenhardt and four geology students traveled to Lake Powell, Utah to investigate changes that are occurring along the recently inundated delta of the Colorado River in the vicinity of the abandoned Hite Marina. The project involves the application of geophysical techniques to detect and map various depositional and erosional features that are being generated along the advancing Hite delta for the purpose of developing models that can be used for identifying similar features in the geologic record and to characterize and monitor newly deposited sediments and freshly exhumed sediments that have been exposed by channel incision. Part of their investigation is devoted to testing a hypotheses put forth to account for high ground/pore water pressures (overpressurization) in the vicinity of the delta by describing the hydrogeologic systems that are believed to be responsible for fluidization of delta sediments, formation of mud volcanoes, slumps and lateral spreads.

Field work, which was funded by an $18,000 Enhancement Grant for Research through the university, was carried out under the supervision of Dr. Degenhardt in June 2009. Technical presentation of the results will be delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Geological Society of America (GSA) in Portland, Oregon in October, 2009.

degenhardt@shsu.edu

Dr. Joe Hill is adjusting well to his second year at SAM, having purchased the requisite hat and boots. He spent his summer mapping geology in the Central Appalachian Piedmont (CAP), looking for tell-tale signs of 400 million year old island arc collisions. He is busily searching for funding for a detrital zircon study to help delineate terrane boundaries in the CAP. Dr. Hill is also working with the Canyon Lake Consortium investigating fluid flow in the world’s largest exposed normal fault in carbonate rocks and has been able to obtain a modicum of funding for student research projects. This fall, senior Claude Mathes will be working for Shell Oil during his senior research project at Canyon Lake. In Spring 2010, senior Ryan Lewis will be taking on a similar project.

dgeojoe@shsu.edu

Dr. Hill is adjusting well to his second year at SAM, having purchased the requisite hat and boots. He spent his summer mapping geology in the Central Appalachian Piedmont (CAP), looking for tell-tale signs of 400 million year old island arc collisions. His is busily searching for funding for a detrital zircon study to help delineate terrane boundaries in the CAP. Dr. Hill is also working with the Canyon Lake Consortium investigating fluid flow in the world’s largest exposed normal fault in carbonate rocks and has been able to obtain a modicum of funding for student research projects. This fall, senior Claude Mathes will be working for Shell Oil during his senior research project at Canyon Lake. In Spring 2010, senior Ryan Lewis will be taking on a similar project.

dgeojoe@shsu.edu

Above: Dr. Degenhardt and senior geology major Jonathan Marshall collect ground penetrating radar and GPS data across the Hite Delta where the Colorado River enters Lake Powell, Utah.

Below: Students prepare equipment for ground penetrating radar surveys. Assisting Dr. Degenhardt on this project were Geology majors Jonathan Marshall, Reyna DeLaCruz, Beth Bachelor, and Austin Dunlap.
During the summer, Dr. John Strait made three different trips to the Mississippi Delta. Two of these trips were oriented around workshops sponsored by the National Endowment for Humanities entitled “The Most Southern Place on Earth: Music, Culture and History in the Mississippi Delta.” These workshops incorporated “place-based” strategies as a means to assist educators in efforts to formulate creative and informative educational curricula that facilitate interdisciplinary learning. In general, his role in these workshops entailed providing a geographic perspective, although he was involved in various other activities. He was specifically in charge of directing discussions and leading field excursions that focused on “places” and “spaces” that highlight the cultural and musical impacts of migration. This also entailed giving a number of presentations oriented around a theme officially entitled “The Delta in Diaspora: The Cultural Impact of the Mississippi Delta on America and the World.” The participants of these workshops included some of the brightest teachers from across the country, so it was an exceptionally stimulating experience and a lot of fun.

In August Dr. Strait led his third annual field-trip to the Delta as part of the course offered at SAM entitled “Race, Blues and Rock ‘N’ Roll: Advanced Cultural Geography” (soon to be GEO 438). Along with Wally Barnes, thirteen students and some professional photographers, he engaged in a six day field experience that took them from Huntsville to Memphis, Tennessee, and ultimately through the Mississippi Delta and back. This field experience involved complete “cultural immersion” - as they were not only exposed to the roots of “blues culture,” but deeply submerged in it.

They visited several sites and museums in Memphis – including Graceland, Stax and Sun Studios, and the National Civil Rights Museum. They also visited the unofficial birth-place of the blues, Dockery Plantation, and even ventured to Robert Johnson’s crossroads one late night in attempt to sell our souls – fortunately or unfortunately, they found no buyers. They consumed mass quantities of Delta foods, from fried catfish, soul food, barbecue and even Kool-Aid pickles. And of course they jammed to the music of the Delta and danced the night away at Po’ Monkey’s Lounge, the last remaining rural juke-joint. The highlight of the trip included an unbelievably mesmerizing live performance by Robert “Wolfman” Balfour (see photo), whose unrelenting, soulful boogie put some of us in a trance.

Dr. Strait has made plans with the photographers to collaborate on a project that examines, through visual documentation and the written word, the sites that comprise our field experience. They plan for this to ultimately lead to a travelling photographic essay focusing on “blues culture” that could potentially make the museum circuit.

The International Journal of Applied Geospatial Research, the journal for which Dr. Albert is editor-and-chief, is publishing its inaugural issue. Special pre-publication issues will be featured at the 32nd Applied Geography Conference in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in October.

Dr. Don Albert has recently published a study of New York and Colorado as critical states in the diffusion of state licensing of naturopathic physicians in Complementary Health Practice Review. Fifteen states now license naturopathic physicians (NDs). Qualified NDs residing in unlicensed jurisdictions sometimes obtain licenses from other states licensing NDs. The purpose of his study was to implement a methodology based on number of out-of-state licenses to gauge the demand for licensing among NDs in unlicensed states to identify likely candidates for successful legislative efforts regarding licensure. Previous studies have indicated that New York and Colorado scored high on legislative innovativeness. Should licensing of NDs be passed in these two states, the possibility exists that legislation would spread to adjacent and other proximal states.

Dr. Albert, along with Dr. Tiller, has been working with undergraduate geography major Nancy Morris on a manuscript titled “International Date Line: Time Travel Made Easy.” This paper, which has been submitted to a geography journal for consideration, provides examples of the International Date Line as uncovered in history, literature, music, riddles, and current events.
Dr. Velvel Nelson began her summer by spending some time on the Greek island of Hydra. She spent the rest of the summer writing papers from her previous research on issues of identity in the Caribbean and the interactions between tourists and the environment in the same region.

Presently, Dr. Nelson is working on research projects that developed out of her earlier fieldwork on the Caribbean island of Dominica. Specifically, she is researching the debate surrounding the proposed development of a Venezuelan-funded oil refinery on the island. The island is widely known for its spectacular natural environment (featured in Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest) that provides the basis for a small-scale tourism industry.

Dr. Nelson will spend the spring semester at the University of Primorska in Koper, Slovenia. Slovenia is a small country in Eastern Europe that is bordered by Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Croatia (see map). Koper is a coastal city located near the Italian border on the Adriatic Sea. Dr. Nelson will lecture in the Department of Geography at the University as well as conduct research, in particular, building on her existing expertise in tourism geography. This is a great opportunity to examine issues associated with Slovenia’s developing tourism industry, as the Eastern European region has been designated one of the emerging tourist destinations by the United Nations World Tourism Organization. She is also looking forward to collaborating on research with her Slovene colleagues in other areas, such as political geography.