Greetings from the Chair: Daniel Holm

I am privileged to be able to write this greeting as the new Chair of the Geology Department. As a Masters student in spring, 1986, I drove from Minnesota to Kent, Ohio to give my very first oral presentation at Kent State University for the North-Central GSA meeting. In fall 1992 I joined this department fresh out of graduate school and have immensely enjoyed working at KSU and living in northeast Ohio. In spring 2011, I’ll be Chairing the North-Central GSA Regional meeting in Pittsburgh (combined with the North-East section). The members of the Geology Department will play a big role at that meeting, so please mark it on your calendars. We’ll be sure to host an Alumni gathering.

I’m proud that the geology faculty continues to win accolades from the geologic community and from Kent State University. Alison Smith has been recently appointed by the National Research Council/National Academies to the U.S. National Committee for the International Union for Quaternary Research (USNC/INQUA) for a 3 year term. Abdul Shakoor and Peter Dahl were both elected as GSA Fellows this year and Peter Dahl was a recipient of the Arts & Sciences Distinguished Teacher Award. Donna Witter was elected to a 3-year term as Physical Oceanography Secretary to the American Geophysical Union and Rod Feldmann has been elected Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Paleontological Research Institution. Carrie Schweitzer was appointed to the Editorial Board of Bulletins of American Paleontology, and Abdul Shakoor, Peter Dahl and I continue to serve as Editors or Associate Editors of Journals in our respective fields. You can read about other faculty accomplishments and awards in the following pages.

At this year’s spring Geology Banquet, the Department gave $20,000 in tuition scholarships and awards in support of student research to juniors, seniors, and graduate students. Overall the scholarship program in our department continues to be one of the strongest in the University. This program is strong thanks to the commitment and generosity of our alumni, faculty, and friends. Recipients of scholarships and awards are listed in this newsletter. Our students continue to win external scholarships and awards as well. James Fisher (current MS) was selected as a GSA 2008 Shlemon Scholar in Engineering Geology (that comes with a nice monetary award to support his research). Angie Hull (current MS) received a monetary scholarship from the Institute on Lake Superior Geology for her analytical work in the midcontinent. Undergraduate student Natalie Cope received this year’s KSU Tuscarawas Valley Desk & Derrick Club Scholarship. Congratulations to all!

Sincerely,
Daniel K. Holm,
Geology Welcomes Visiting Scholars

We are pleased to welcome two visiting scholars for an extended period this year. Dr. Zhang Yanjun (left) from Jilin University, P.R. China, is a one-year visiting professor (July 2008-July 2009) who chose to come to our department with his funding from the Chinese National Science Foundation. Dr. Zhang's primary activity will be to conduct research on numerical modeling of coupled solute and heat transport in groundwater-based heat pump systems with Yoram Eckstein. We also welcome Dr. Zeynal Ergular (right) from Dumlupınar University, Turkey. Dr. Ergular is here for six months (July through December, 2008) to conduct post-doctoral research with Abdul Shakoor on the engineering behavior of clay-bearing rocks. Visiting scholar and instructor Dr. Katrin Monecke, started a two-year visiting Assistant Professor position at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown August 1, 2008. Katrin was with us for two and one-half years doing research on tsunami deposits in Indonesia and teaching courses. Kudos to Katrin for getting her research published in Nature (Oct. 30 “A 1000-year sediment record of tsunami recurrence in northern Sumatra”).

Dr. Ergular is a post-doc with Dr. Shakoor.

2008 Geology Scholarship Awardees

Amoco Alumni Scholarship: Yonathan Admassu, James Fisher, Angela Hull, Aleks Prvanovic
Geology Field Camp Scholarships: Jennifer Burrell, Natalie Cope, Jerad Dudley, Scott Scheiner
Emerald Environmental Field Camp Scholarship: Rick Skidmore
Richard A. Heimlich Field Camp Scholarship: Crystal Amato
John Allan Clark Scholarship: Rick Skidmore
Donald C. Gifford Geology Scholarship: Rick Skidmore
Glenn Frank Scholarships: Jennifer Burrell, Natalie Cope
Katherine L. Moulton Research Scholarship: Cordelia Dennison-Budak
School of Hard Rocks Research Award: Aniya Ghosh
Research Award in Memory of Barry Miller: Ovidiu Frantescu
KSGS Field Camp Scholarships: Nicci Iannacchione, Rick Skidmore, Jared Dudley, Jennifer Burrell, Natalie Cope
SGE Field Camp Scholarships: Natalie Cope, Jennifer Burrell, Crystal Amato
SGE Research Scholarships: Nalaka Ransinghe, Ovidiu Frantescu
SGE W.A. Tarr Award: Crystal Amato
As the one who knows roughly 1000 of our 1050 alumni, it’s been a great pleasure to re-connect with hundreds of you so far and to hear about your career and family. I have been doing this, in major part, by expanding our alumni webpages. We now have over 350 alumni email addresses in the online “Alumni Directory,” more than 100 career summaries and updates (many with accompanying photos) on the “Alumni News” webpage, and many student group photos of various departmental events as well as photos of downtown Kent on the “Photos” webpages. Thanks for sharing your career and family stories with me and with fellow alumni by allowing us to place your information on the webpages. Don’t hesitate to e-mail me more of these: rheimlic@kent.edu. Also, we are particularly interested in obtaining photos (showing groups of students and faculty) from course field trips, summer field camp groups, the Fall Picnic, and the Spring Banquet where we are lacking them for individual years extending back to 1948! Some of you have asked me, specifically, if I could locate a photo showing that student’s field camp group. We can scan your prints and slides and, of course, you can e-mail digital images directly to me as well. Be sure to list the year and name/location of the event. My regular mail address is R.A. Heimlich, Department of Geology, Kent State University, Kent OH 44242. To access the KSU Geology Alumni Webpages go to http://dept.kent.edu/geology/ and select the “For Alumni” link.

Lab Facilities Improved

The department is focusing on overall improvement and upgrading of facilities. Hall displays and classroom equipment are constantly being modernized. We are in the process of seeking innovative equipment, like stream tables and a GeoWall, to improve teaching and learning. At the same time, we are improving basic infrastructure, such as remodeling the Earth History lab (Mcgilvrey Hall 233) to include new lab tables, carpeting (!!), and new shelving units. You wouldn’t recognize it! We invite you to stop by and see our progress.

Geologic Time Scale Walk Unveiled at Kent State Stark Campus

Two years ago, we installed a Geological Time Scale Walk at the Stark Campus, complete with full-color interpretive signs for each time period of the Phanerozoic and the epochs of the Cenozoic. Geologic time is scaled to a 0.45 mile paved walk around the pond on campus, so that students can more easily envision the amount of time encompassed by each time period (and the tiny amount of time which humans have occupied!). Information about the time periods is tailored to Ohio’s geology when possible. We also installed a Planet Walk, in which the planets are scaled from the pond according to their distance from the sun, complete with interpretive signage. The walks are open to the public, so that students, faculty, staff, and members of the public can enjoy the walks and signage in a natural setting. Each Earth Day, public guided walks are held as well as other activities, at the Stark Campus in North Canton, Ohio. Come visit the walks!

Signage includes full color images and informational text.
Ernest Carlson

Revision of my book Minerals of Ohio is currently underway. First published in 1991, it is expected that the revision will be submitted to the Ohio Division of Geological Survey by October 2009. I am chairman of field trips for the Midwest Chapter of the Friends of Mineralogy, a group of amateurs and professionals with members in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Kentucky, and the success of these field trips has led to a dramatic rise in membership of the organization. Field trips have included such well-known sites as Clay Center, Sylvania, Junction (Auglaize quarry), Lime City (all in Ohio), and Salem in Indiana. Teaching at Kent State continues to include Environmental Geology, Geology of Ohio, and Mineralogy with its field trip to the Martin Marietta quarry in Woodville and the Huron River in Huron County. Research continues to focus on dating the brine-deposited Sr-F-Pb-Zn mineralization in NW Ohio using the age of illitization of mixed-layer illite/smectite of brine origin from cores of the Middle Ordovician Millbrig K-bentonite. Preliminary results with help from Ron Riley, Ohio Division of Geological Survey, Ken Poland of The Ohio State University, and funding from the KSU Research Council indicate a Late Paleozoic age of brine movement. Research also continues on the mineralogy and origin of large septarian dolostone concretions in the Huron River area, with a jointly authored manuscript in press. I obtained funding for KSUO, Kent State’s seismic station, which has been in operation since 2002 and is part of the OhioSeis network of stations. This station continues to operate with the expert help of Merida Keatts.

Peter Dahl

I continue to teach geochemistry, optical petrography, radiogenic isotope geology, and (occasionally) summer field camp. In 2007 I started teaching Earth History, after many years of having taught Earth Dynamics. In 2008 I received the College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Teaching Award as well as the Glenn Frank Teaching Award (Department of Geology). My recent research has focused on the Precambrian geology of the Black Hills, western Montana, and the Adirondacks. In the Black Hills I’ve focused on reconstructing the details of Precambrian thermotectonism and terrane assembly/breakup in this part of the western mid-continent, and at constraining the origin/timing of the famous Homestake Gold Deposit. My Adirondacks research has sought to unravel the tectonic and crystal-chemical factors governing the mineral cooling ages documented there. Along the way, my co-workers and I have evaluated a chemical method for dating monazite (a thorium-bearing accessory mineral) and then applied this new method to establish ages of thermotectonism in their various research localities. My research has taken me to Sweden, Denmark, Italy, France, Poland, and Canada. I also recently completed a three-year term as Associate Editor of American Mineralogist and was reappointed for a second term in 2008. In my spare time, having given up racquetball (too hard on the knees), I’m now trying to master golf (with only modest success so far). My wife Susie, a retired earth science teacher, and I have been happily married for 25 years, and our daughter Elena is now a senior at College of Wooster (Ohio) pursuing a career in documentary photography.

Yoram Eckstein

I have recently co-authored two papers for publication in the Hydrogeology Journal and in Environmental Geology. These papers present results of numerical simulation of groundwater flow and their hydrochemical signatures in the Himalayan Foreland Basin. I’m presently teaching Contaminant Hydrogeology to a strong core of graduate students (and one hearty undergraduate). I look forward to the January arrival of Madan Maharjan, a new MS student from Nepal. I enjoy having Dr. Yanjun Zhang from the People’s Republic of China here as a research collaborator (for one year). A truly remarkable recent travel experience of mine was 15-days of snorkeling and scuba diving on the reefs of Roatan, Honduras. It is an island located in the Caribbean on the southern scarp of the Cayman Transform, a “Mekkah” for scuba divers and connoisseurs of sea food (and I am both, although more of the latter than the former).
Rodney Feldmann

Since the last newsletter, the pace has not let up. Dr. Carrie Schweitzer and I have continued field and museum work in Europe and Argentina. David Waugh accompanied us in 2006, as we worked in museums in The Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany. We sampled, photographed, and borrowed specimens that we have been studying since then. In 2007, we returned to Romania, after working in Vienna and attending a decapod crustacean meeting in Milan. David, Cristina Robins, and James Verhoff accompanied us there. In Romania, we worked with Ovidiu Frantescu and Adina Costache, both of whom are now graduate students at Kent. In 2008, Carrie and I worked in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, during Spring Break, worked in Austria and the Czech Republic in June, traveled throughout the western U. S. A. in July, worked at the Smithsonian in early August, and collapsed thereafter. One thing we have learned about the work in Europe is that it is possible to drive in any country, using any language on the road signs, and survive (barely). This Fall Semester, we began with five paleo graduate students, Adina, Cristina, David, and a new student from The Netherlands, Adiël Klompmaker. The lab continues to be a three-ring circus.

In other areas, I have begun coordinating Earth History labs, continue to work on hallway display improvements, and am now President of the Board of Trustees of the Paleontological Research Institution. That, plus trying to maintain a 1930 Model A truck and a 1937 Packard sedan keep me out of trouble most of the time.

Life continues on at its busy pace with my time largely consumed by the usual classroom and field teaching activities. I continue to teach a wide range of introductory geology courses and labs, as well as Geology of National Parks (with a field component at Cuyahoga Valley NP), Hydrogeology, and Field Camp. Participating in the 2008 Summer Field Camp were thirteen undergraduate students and two graduate students. We spent over three weeks at our field station (a.k.a., Black Hills State University) studying the geology of the Black Hills and constructing and interpreting geologic maps and cross-sections. This was followed by a weeklong traveling field component that introduced students to the regional geology of a portion of the western Cordillera within and between Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks (WY), and Craters of the Moon National Monument (ID). On the research front, my continuing interests are in the fields of structural geology and volcanology, with emphasis on field mapping, geochronologic, and geophysical studies in the western United States. My current projects focus on analyzing structures and volcanism related to the emplacement and growth of laccoliths and calderas in southwest Utah and southeast Nevada. A number of undergraduate and graduate students have been involved in these studies and have presented their results at professional meetings. Last year I co-chaired a technical session for GSA on “Shallow level magma emplacement and associated extrusive deposits” and led a post-meeting field trip on the shallow level emplacement mechanisms of the Iron Axis laccolith group in southwest Utah. I recently returned from the LASI III conference and field trip on the beautiful island of Elba, Italy. The conference was an international gathering to discuss the physical geology of subvolcanic systems and we explored a fantastic laccolith complex (as well as some fantastic pasta dishes).

At home, my wife Jackie continues on a busy schedule of operating her business (Garden Gate Gallery) and enjoying yoga and skiing. Our oldest son DJ is now a junior in aeronautical studies at Kent State and still plans on being a professional pilot after college. Jonathan, our tenth grader, made it to the Ohio Science Fair competition (a future scientist?).

Visit our website at http://dept.kent.edu/geology
Richard Heimlich

In addition to my teaching, and a fantastic trip to Yosemite National Park (a park included in my ‘Geology of the National Parks’ course), I have been spending a lot of time on student job placement by managing our summer internship program which offers undergraduate majors paid employment with local environmental/engineering-testing/petroleum-exploration firms. In operation for more than 2 decades, the program has led to full-time job offers for many interns upon graduation. I also help all graduating seniors by orienting each of them regarding graduate-school opportunities, if that’s their goal. For those seeking immediate employment, I help with resume preparation, interview technique, and job leads (including facilitating job interviews for them). For decades now, the Department has been successful in placing virtually every senior who seeks geological employment upon graduating. Many of you have helped in this activity by informing me of job openings and/or putting in the good word for students who have applied to your firm for work. In the last 3 years, the following have helped me in the placement of undergraduates (and graduate students): John Blackman, Bob Blackstone, Jeff Coe, Joe Struckel, Jim Hanlon, Mary McKenzie, Greg Holub, Charles Elkins, Tom Dwyer, Jeff Holub, Yvette Vlack, Akin Balogun, Fred Portofe, Dana (Rosenberg) Sincox, Brian Greene, Gary Rogers, Chris Mazzei, Lindsey Cofer, Nate Saraceno, Colleen (Bonner) Myers, Troy Schultz, Lea (Angelaki) Cervi, Howard Adams, Clive Bailey, Jackie (Teeters) Atienza, Tom Jenkins, Maurika Fell, Bill Holden, Todd Fisher, Amy Turner, and Diana Smith. My apologies if I’ve left a few of you out. Another ongoing project involves general communication with you alumni. Look for more information on this project elsewhere in the Newsletter.

Daniel Holm

I just returned from a beautiful weekend in northern West Virginia with my structure students. Mapping Mill Creek Mountain continues to be a great first mapping project for our undergraduates. On the research side, I’m delighted to have guest edited a Special Issue in Precambrian Research (August 07) entitled “Proterozoic tectonic & crustal evolution of the Upper Great Lakes region, North America”. There’s a lot of great stuff in it that I’m hoping will be a catalyst for upcoming geophysical investigations via the EarthScope program (http://www.earthscope.org).

I spent my spring 08 sabbatical as a Fulbright Research Scholar in southern Poland. My entire family enjoyed living in the beautiful city of Krakow and learning about the rich history and culture of the region. I managed to fit in two stints of fieldwork; one to the Sudetes and one to the Tatras with new MS student Jenna Hojnowski (yes she has Polish roots!). I also attended the European Geosciences Union meeting in Vienna and traveled with my family. It was a fabulous experience and opportunity.

Our Sigma Gamma Epsilon chapter is still making Grain Size Folders!
Contact SGE at 330-672-2680 if you are interested in purchasing some.
Joseph Ortiz

Most of my research is now funded through the Office of Polar Programs at NSF. I have recently been awarded a third OPP grant to study the paleoclimate of the central Arctic to provide a baseline from which to evaluate the recent warming which is resulting in the rapid loss of summer Arctic sea ice. To augment my work in the western Arctic, this fall I participated in a month long oceanographic coring and seismic research expedition to Baffin Bay in the Labrador Sea.

I’ve published several papers this year. In May, I was co-author of a paper published in Science with collaborators from the University of Colorado and the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. We developed a methodology to estimate the age of intermediate water masses in the eastern equatorial Pacific during the deglaciation and Holocene. Our work provides the strongest evidence to date that Antarctic Intermediate water, which forms in the southern ocean and flows north along shallow depths in the ocean, modulates between a relatively young age of several hundred years during warm-climate intervals and a very old age of more than 4,000 years during cold-climate intervals. This information suggests that the rate of upwelling in the southern ocean is the dominant natural control on atmospheric CO2 on glacial-interglacial timescales.

During the 2007-8 Academic year, the first of the students I have been mentoring at Kent State graduated. Nishanthi Wijikoon, completed her Ph.D. on water quality in Old Woman Creek, and was hired by the NOAA LIDAR group in Silver Springs, Maryland. Matt Wilsbacher (M.S. thesis on paleoproductivity off Baja California) took a position working on water quality monitoring with the Akron Department of Health. Akindele Balogun (M.S. thesis on paleoenvironmental reconstruction of the Rose Run Formation) was hired by Occidental Petroleum in Houston. Lyanne Yurco completed her Senior Honors Thesis studying Quaternary climate change in the Arctic and was accepted into the M.S. program of the RSMAS School of Oceanography at the University of Miami, Florida.

Donald Palmer

In the last three years I took over the junior course in Petrology and have changed it moderately by adding sections on thin-section examination and identification of rocks. I have also worked to make better links between petrology and the following courses in paleontology and structural geology. It has been fun to get involved in re-developing this course. I continue to teach geophysics each year. I have also been developing a new course in ore deposits for senior and graduate students in response to renewed interest in this field. In the last year I stepped down from the chairmanship of the department and have returned to the position of professor. I continue to do research in lakes, wetlands and springs with emphasis in water chemistry and environment. Last May I did field work with Cordelia Dennison-Budak on Pliocene Lake beds in the Hagerman Fossil beds in Idaho. Cordelia’s M.S. research is especially interesting and she was able to spend the entire summer at Hagerman working for the National Park Service. Late this summer Emi Ito from the University of Minnesota visited our department to work on manuscripts on seasonal variability in Page Pond, Ohio and on a series of lakes in New York.

Carrie Schweitzer

Over the past three years since the last newsletter, things have only gotten busier in the Invertebrate Paleontology laboratory and at the Stark Campus, where I teach. As you can tell from reading Dr. Feldmann’s description, we’ve been traveling and collecting fossil crabs and lobsters on three continents and working hard to publish the results. We’ve got five students currently, and three, Beth Rhenberg, Aubrey Shirk, and Rob Crawford, have graduated with M.S. degrees in the past three years. We have enjoyed having several undergraduate students working in our lab under our current NSF grant, Crystal Amato, Angie Hull, Jen Burrell, Kristie Hein, and currently Krista Booth. All of them have contributed to our work on decapod cuticle structure and decapod paleoecology.

At the Stark campus, undergraduate LER laboratory offerings have been greatly expanded. We now offer many sections of each lab, and enrollment is ever increasing. The laboratory and campus have been greatly enhanced with purchase of new laboratory equipment and installation of the Geologic Time Scale and Planet walks. Students transition from the Stark Campus to the Kent Campus each year to complete their degree in Geology or Earth Science; even more complete degrees in Conservation or Earth Science/Comprehensive Science education.
Abdul Shakoor

I continue my efforts of running a strong graduate program in engineering geology with research interests spanning slope stability, engineering behavior of clay-bearing rocks, evaluation of construction materials, and engineering applications of waste materials. Two of my graduate students and I are currently working on a major research project for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) that deals with developing design criteria for cut slopes in Ohio. Other graduate students are involved in conducting research on topics dealing with landslide susceptibility mapping, permeability of jointed glacial till, discontinuity data collection using LIDAR imagery, optimum sample size for discontinuity data collection, stress-strain behavior of cohesive soils, and engineering characterization of highly weathered limestone/dolomite rock known as epikarst.

In May 2008, I was invited by the Turkish Chamber of Geological Engineers to give a keynote lecture on slope stability problems in rocks subject to differential weathering to the 61st Geological Congress of Turkey that was held in Ankara. In addition to my teaching and research responsibilities, I serve on an international panel of experts to evaluate feasibility studies of a large hydro-electric project in Pakistan, is the incoming Chair of the Engineering Geology Division of GSA, and the co-editor of Environmental & Engineering Geoscience (a joint AEG-GSA publication).

Alison Smith

I continue working on projects using ostracodes as tools in reconstructing paleoclimate and paleohydrology in the Great Lakes, the Great Plains, and in springs and wetlands throughout the U.S. Current graduate students include Kay Amey (Ph.D. student in Hydrology and Environment, focusing on groundwater-surface water interactions) and Cordelia Dennison-Budak (M.S. student working on the Pliocene paleoecology of Lake Idaho at Hagerman National Monument in Hagerman, Idaho). Robin Green (Class of 2008) completed her Honors Thesis with me on the ostracodes and changing hydrology in Herrick Fen, Ohio. I am continuing to teach invertebrate paleontology, so if you have been carrying around a lot of great fossils you no longer need, remember, we always need good fossils for the teaching collection!

I have been traveling quite a bit lately, attending meetings and giving presentations in Germany, England, and France this year. My colleagues, Don Palmer and Brandon Curry (Illinois Geological Survey), and I are working on version 2 of the North American Non-Marine Ostracode Database (www.kent.edu/NANODe).

Neil Wells

With recent changes in our BS Geology requirements, I’ll be moving as much math as possible out of Geomorphology (which can then become a more traditional geomorphology class, with emphasis on interpretation of maps and images and landscapes), and into Scientific Methods. I spent part of the summer preparing for this change, redoing my help manual, and writing some computer programs to help with statistics. The programming, as usual, has been overly engrossing, so the last few months have flown by. I traveled around Colorado with my family for a while this summer, but unfortunately an illness cut the trip short and precluded some research. (Due to the gas prices, traffic was astounding low - great for me, but bad for the economy.) I also spent too much time last year traveling vicariously on Google Earth, but so far that has only resulted in a gigantic file of interesting things to look at and ask questions about in Geomorphology.
Donna Witter: our newest Faculty Member

My current projects include the Agulhas-South Atlantic Thermohaline Transport Experiment (ASTTEX) funded by NSF to study water mass exchanges between the Indian and South Atlantic Oceans. Our data collection involves using satellite observations of sea level, in combination with records from instrumental moorings deployed for 27 months in the waters off southern Africa. More locally, I am using observations from the SeaWiFS satellite sensor to develop new approaches for monitoring water properties in Lake Erie. Since 2005, I have served as the Science Education Coordinator for the NSF-funded Graduate K-12 (GK-12) project on Inquiry-Based Approaches to Earth System Science, which has provided funding for 10 graduate students to pursue MS and Ph.D. degrees in the Departments of Geology and Geography. Over the past few summers I’ve led teams of GK-12 faculty and graduate students in offering a professional development workshop for K-12 teachers on Earth System Science. This past spring I was elected Ocean Sciences Secretary in Physical Oceanography of AGU. Today, the Ocean Sciences section includes over 2000 physical oceanographers among its members. On campus, I have been active in the areas of curriculum development, undergraduate recruitment and retention and implementation of new teaching methods to better engage students. I teach Oceanography, Scientific Method in Geology, and Inquiry-Based Earth System Science. In my spare time, I hike, ski, tend a garden and do my best to keep up with our pre-schooler and third-grader.

Donna Witter has been a member of the faculty since 2006. dwitter@kent.edu

Karen Smith, Departmental Secretary

Yes, I am still here having FUN. Things are mostly the same except for new student faces and a whole new office space for me! We renovated the main office for the first time in 23 years. Gone are the old, dirty worn carpet, the orange counter tops and the mismatched furniture. We now have new multi-color carpet, real wood built-in furniture and counter tops of “formicastone”. It all goes together very well and looks, oh, so nice! Please stop in and see it!

In 2007 I took another vacation; this time to Vancouver, Washington, and Portland, Oregon to visit my friend frankie, the former secretary in Geography. Some of you might remember her, too. She acted as my chauffeur for 10 days of non-stop travel. We drove south on the Oregon coast to Newport, and north to Cannon Beach, visiting such places as Sea Lion Cave, numerous light houses, haystacks on the beach, the Tillamook cheese factory, and a wolf sanctuary. At Mt. St. Helens we rode a helicopter “into” the crater, and saw the remaining 8 feet of a brand new A-frame house, miles and miles from Mt. St. Helens, that was buried by the mudflow one day before the owners were to move in. We stopped at numerous breath-taking waterfalls all along the scenic Columbia River gorge, visited the state capital building (beautiful!), the International Rose Test Gardens, took a speed-boat ride on the Willamette River, stopped at Trillium Lake on the way back from Mt. Hood, went to see the mima mounds, stopped along the road to photograph columnar joints that went for miles, etc. etc. etc.!! SO much to do - SO little time! What a trip! Thanks, frankie!

On the personal side, my three children are grown and two of the five grandchildren are now adults. I’m still advising a horse 4-H club and doing much of the paperwork for the Portage County horse 4-H program. I’ve been in the department for 25 years now. During that time, more than 200 graduate students have come and gone, meaning that I have made more than 200 smart, wonderful friends. How many of you remember my telling you that when I retire I’ll be visiting you for oh, say, 6 months at a time? Look out - the time is drawing nigh...

If you haven’t visited the Alumni Webpage lately, you’re missing a lot! There are lots of new photos and news items from recent grads and those with a bit more experience to share. Please contact Daniel Holm (dholm@kent.edu), Richard Heimlich (rheimlic@kent.edu), or David Waugh (dwaugh@kent.edu) if you’d like to see something added to our Alumni Webpage.
Merida Keatts, LAN Specialist

I've been having a good time being my usual helpful self as the LAN specialist and all around go-to person for problems. I've learned a bit about shipping hazardous materials around the world (it's complicated) and web design (it's fun). I snap up surplus equipment from other departments, so I don't think we've spent actual cash on furniture for a few years. And I snap photos of people who spend a lot of time in McGilvrey and make them (the photos) into department displays, etc. My MS is still in process, but very close to done. I can finally say I won't be taking any more classes. What a relief. :)

Merida is the chief problem solver in our department. mkeatts@kent.edu

Kent State Stark's Earth Dynamics class visits the Cuyahoga Valley National Park to examine ledges, sedimentary structures, and weathering processes.

L to R: Current Ph.D. student Cristina Robins (M.S. '08), M.S. student Angie Hull (B.S. '07), and Smithsonian Environmental Research Center staff Member Anna collect blue crabs in the Chesapeake Bay.