My apologies for missing the past two newsletters. As you will see, things have been very busy (and exciting) around the department and we needed to devote all of our attention to academics and infrastructure. Rather than the comprehensive, full-length newsletter I wanted to give you a brief overview of what has been going on around the department, an introduction to our new faculty, and a preview of what is coming.

In the past two years we went from an all-time staffing low of two full time faculty in Spring 2016, back to five this year and will be at an all-time high of six next year. In the spring of 2015 Rob Badger (Structural Geology and Petrology) retired and Lisa Amati (Paleontology) resigned to become the New York State Paleontologist. Faculty positions and replacements are now done through a college-wide competitive process and for financial and logistical reasons we had to go into the 2015/2016 academic year with those positions vacant. We were awarded two positions to replace Rob and Lisa and ran two successful searches that resulted in the hiring of Sara Bier (Structural Geology and Geophysics) and Page Quinton (Geochemistry and Paleontology). My relief that the department was stable was short-lived because just a few weeks after the searches concluded Dylan Blumentritt (Hydro and Geomorphology) accepted an academic position in his hometown and Chris Kelson (Mineralogy) moved on to the private sector.

Although we went into the 2016/2017 year with three full timers (Sara, Page, and me) and two visiting faculty (Pete Valley and Scott Williams), we once again had to go through a competitive process to replace the visiting positions with tenure track positions. Thankfully we made the case once again and were able to hire Christian Schrader (Mineralogy and Petrology) and Adam Pearson (Geomorphology and Hydrogeology) who both started Fall 2017.

We are in the midst of revamping the curriculum to make sure that we can apply to be a licensure compliant program with NYSED I am proud to say that with this compliment of five we are able to offer a geology degree that includes all of the traditional courses that have been at the heart of the program since the early 1970s as well as new (for us) courses that focus on climate, surface and groundwater, geomorphology, etc.
A few years ago, President Esterberg challenged the departments to come up with new and innovative programs that would bring new students to campus. Knowing that we were going to have some staffing challenges coming up, we decided that the best defense was a good offense and accepted the challenge. After several years of hard work, we recently found out that NYSED approved our proposal for a new, interdisciplinary B.S. Degree in Geographic Information Science. This degree will be a fusion between geography, geology, computer science, math, and art; it is the first of its type in the SUNY system and we are presently searching for a sixth faculty member to support it.

I am optimistic that the department is largely through what was likely the most turbulent chapter in its history. We had to make some tough choices along the way, but by focusing on a traditional curriculum, the needs of the students, and the future of our discipline we will be stronger because of it. I greatly appreciate all of the kind words, concern, and support that alumni, emeritus faculty, and friends of the department have offered over the past two years. With new people getting settled in and renovations in full swing things are still a bit chaotic, but I see the light at the end of the tunnel. When things get back to normal for us, we hope to move toward a more comprehensive newsletter format with updates from all of you and the emeritus faculty. In preparation for that, we would appreciate you sending updates to Roberta Greene (Dept. Secretary; greenera@potsdam.edu) who will be compiling them for future newsletters.

To celebrate its 50th birthday, Timerman Hall is in the midst of a complete renovation. It is getting a new roof, new HVAC and plumbing, and much of the rest of the building is getting gutted to the steel frame and rebuilt. Although the budget was halved, we managed to preserve many of the critical requests from the Geology Department including several hundred linear feet of museum-grade displays in the common areas, all new classrooms, and steel cabinetry designed to hold rock, mineral, and fossil specimens. Rather than having classrooms “owned” by individual faculty, we have moved to a model of shared space based on teaching needs. This more efficient use of space means that we are able to do everything that we have done in the past and to build a new state-of-the-art computer lab to support GIS in TIM 121. The remaining spaces will be used for introductory labs (TIM 120), petrography lab (TIM 122), upper level lecture rooms (TIM 123), a lecture/lab space for Historical Geology, Paleontology, and Sedimentary Geology (TIM B007), and rock prep and equipment storage (TIM B023). The icing on the cake is that just before Christmas, we got word that a grant proposal to get more microscopes was successful and that we will soon have 18 functioning petrographic microscopes.

“Artifacts” found during demolition of the front hallway

Preparing for new lights and heating before display cases are installed.
I am in the midst of my 2nd year in the Geology Department here at Potsdam. I have always longed to work in northern New York since my family has a camp on the shores of Lake Ontario and my second favorite place on Earth is the Adirondak Loj at Heart Lake. I was fortunate to get the position that is a combination of Rob Badger and Frank Revetta (big shoes to fill). I moved to Potsdam from southwest Virginia (Emory & Henry College) with my husband, two daughters, two dogs, and two cats. After initially renting, we found a rural home in Pierrepont and our daughters are thriving at the Colton-Pierrepont Central School.

I am a field geologist, and am interested in structural geology, metamorphic petrology, and tectonics. I completed my undergraduate at Juniata College, a small undergraduate liberal arts college in central Pennsylvania. I then worked as a park ranger for the National Park Service before earning my M.S. from University of Tennessee and my PhD at Penn State. In addition to tectonics, I am also passionate about K-12 science education and scientific literacy and am therefore teaching the Dynamic Earth introductory geology course for Early Childhood Education majors. At Potsdam, I have taught Structural Geology, Physical Geology, Geology of National Parks, and Dynamic Earth. This spring, I will be teaching Applied Geophysics and Dynamic Earth. Geophysics students will have the opportunity to use a STING R1 Earth Resistivity meter, thanks to a generous alumnus. Next year, I hope to also teach Field Methods and Tectonics.

GEOL 405 Structural Geology is still a field-intensive course, we spent the first eight labs of the semester out in the field (many thanks to Badger for showing me around). We also went on a weekend trip to the Hudson Valley and Vermont to look at the Hudson Valley Fold and Thrust Belt and the Champlain Thrust. We enjoyed staying at the SUNY Cortland field station and camping at Button Bay State Park on the shores of Lake Champlain.

I am still wrapping up some loose ends from research in central Alaska and am beginning research in the Adirondacks. This semester, three undergraduate students and I began a research project on a shear zone near Clare, NY. The students, Dr. Schrader, and I will be presenting preliminary results of this project at NE GSA in Burlington in March. I hope to expand the research project to other shear zones including the northern extent of the Carthage Colton shear zone. I look forward to exploring the Adirondacks, connecting with alumni, and sharing my passion for field geology and Earth Science with generations of Potsdam geology students to come.
Page Quinton
quintopc@potsdam.edu

Dr. Page Quinton joined the Department as an Assistant Professor in 2016 and teaches Historical Geology, Geochemistry, Paleontology, and Climate Change.

As I am new here, a brief introduction: This is my second year in the Geology Department at SUNY Potsdam. I started at SUNY Potsdam in 2016 after graduating from the University of Missouri with a PhD in Geology. Prior to earning my PhD I received a Master’s degree from the University of Missouri and a BS from Columbus State University in Georgia. My research expertise is in paleoclimatology with an emphasis on stable isotope geochemistry. My research involves a multidisciplinary approach to understanding climate change in the geologic past and employs methodology ranging from micropaleontology to stable isotope geochemistry. Most of my current research projects are centered on relating changes in global climate to perturbations in the global carbon cycle and the relation of both to major mass extinction events in deep time intervals (e.g. the Ordovician, Permian-Triassic boundary, and Cretaceous-Paleogene boundary). The broad range of my expertise allows me to teach a variety of courses including: Principles of Paleontology, Geochemistry, Climate Change: Past and Present, Historical Geology, and Ancient Life.

My first year at Potsdam was a whirl-wind. I taught a bunch of new courses, got to know our geology majors, bought a house, and experienced my first North Country winter! The winter was the hardest part, but I am from the south. Despite the cold (shivering does make writing hard), I was able to publish a paper in Geological Magazine and am a contributing author on a publication in Geology. I’ve also taken on a couple of research students. The field work has been completed for two of these projects and these students now get to spend some time doing lab work! During my second year I took on the role of Geology Club advisor and in that capacity took the students fossil collecting in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Perhaps the most exciting development during the last year is the renovation to the Sedimentology/Paleontology classroom. The new storage space and teaching area means that the fossil collection will be housed in one location! In all, I am grateful to be a member of the SUNY Potsdam Geology Department and look forward to many exciting years to come.

Christian Schrader
schradcm@potsdam.edu

I’m a petrologist, primarily of igneous petrology, but I also study metamorphic rocks and hydrothermally altered rocks from ore deposits. I worked on plutonic and seafloor ore deposits in Alaska for my M.S. and on physical and chemical processes in alkaline intrusive rocks for my Ph.D. I worked with NASA for five years, first as a consulting geologist for lunar exploration and then in a research position focused on Mars (including two years on the Mars Exploration Rover Science Team). I have ongoing projects in physical volcanology and magmatic petrology based in the Snake River Plain of Nevada and Idaho and on the geology of copper deposits in the Brooks Range of Alaska. I am finishing projects on Martian basalts, volcanism and mantle processes in New Mexico, and intrusive rocks in the Big Bend region of Texas. I’m now finding projects closer to my new home in the Adirondack lowlands.

I teach Mineralogy, Petrology, Physical Geology, Economic Geology, and Volcanology. I am very interested in fostering undergraduate research (and I took on a number of students right away), and I’m looking forward to developing field classes with my new department colleagues.

Dr. Christian Schrader joined the Department as an Assistant Professor in 2017 and teaches Mineralogy, Petrology, and Economic Geology.
Hi everyone! As you’ve read, it’s a very exciting time around here with SO many changes going on. Each and every one of you need to come back and visit us to see for yourself! I would love to see you at Reunion! Things are pretty much the same for me on the home front with the exception of a new grandbaby. A boy this time! His name is Kaleb Ethan and he was born on Dec. 4, 2017. Big sister, Isabella, just turned six on Dec. 11. Six! Can you believe it? Keep in touch, we LOVE hearing from you!

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Robert Greene
greenera@potsdam.edu

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Robert Greene has served as the Secretary of the Geology and Physics Departments since 2006.

BIRTHDAY CARD SHOWER

Dr. Frank Revetta (Hon ‘05) will be celebrating his 90th birthday on June 18, 2018. If you would like to send him a card, we will be compiling them all and delivering them on his birthday. We know that he will be surprised and grateful for any cards and notes that he receives. Please mail your cards to the following address, by June 1, 2018, to:

Office of Alumni Relations
6th floor Raymond Hall
SUNY Potsdam
44 Pierrepont Ave
Potsdam, NY 13676
ATTN: Revetta BD

Clockwise from top left: Intro students atop Mt. Arab, Structural Geology students in Vermont, Undergraduates Erin Levesque and April Miller solving the world’s problems one conodont at a time, and Adam Ketchum using a Jacob Staff in Montana.

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Thanks for your support!

No matter the size, your gifts enhance the quality of our undergraduate’s experience and are responsible for the success of the department. We would like to thank the following donors who contributed during the 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 (YTD) academic years. Please accept our apologies for any errors or omissions; please email corrections to greenera@potsdam.edu so that we can correct the database and make sure that everything is correct next time!

Lisa Amati
Claudia Assini ('69)
Robert ('15) and Carolyn Badger
James & Susan Carl
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Daniel Cottrell ('70)
William de Lorraine ('74)
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Michael & Adrienne Rygel
St. Lawrence Rock & Mineral Club
Eric Thompson ('12)
Erin Wagner ('13)
David Wiegand ('86)
Erik Wollum ('17)
Kevin Yost ('75)

Dr. Jutta Siefert Dudley ('69) and Emily Downs ('21). Emily was the first recipient of the Jutta Siefert Dudley Scholarship, which is awarded to outstanding women who come to SUNY Potsdam to major in Geology. This scholarship allows the department to recruit and retain some of the best female geology majors in NYS.

Brandon Keough ('18) was able to do fieldwork in northern New Brunswick thanks to the Neal R. O'Brien Undergraduate Research Fund. He will be able to present his research at the NEGSA conference in Burlington, Vermont thanks to a series of targeted gifts, the Badger/VanDiver Field Trip Fund, and the Otto & Grace Lilley Student Travel Fund.