



# Terra Firma

Vassar College | Department of Earth Science and Geography

2019

## Chair's Letter

**Jill Schneiderman** ([Schneiderman@vassar.edu](mailto:Schneiderman@vassar.edu))



Welcome to the 2019 edition of the Earth Science and Geography newsletter! It's been a while since our last newsletter, and much has happened in the interim.

I am pleased to introduce visiting assistant professor **John Fronimos**, who joined the faculty in 2017. John holds a PhD



from the University of Michigan. He is a vertebrate paleontologist interested in the evolution, diversity, and biomechanics of sauropod dinosaurs, a group that includes the largest land animals in Earth's history. In 2018 John led eighteen students as well as two department faculty members on an outstanding field trip to his study area, Big Bend National Park, where our students discovered a vertebra of an *Alamosaurus* estimated to be as much as 30 meters long!



**Ashley Fent** joined us in 2018 as a postdoctoral fellow in Geography. Ashley holds a PhD in Geography from UCLA. She is a human geographer and political ecologist whose research focuses on environmental governance and grassroots activism, particularly around resource

extraction in West Africa.



I am also delighted to welcome our new administrative assistant, **Lenore Hart** who joined us in 2018. Lenore worked for sixteen years in the registrar's office at

Vassar and with her extensive knowledge of all things pertaining to courses and enrollment, we feel very lucky to have enticed her to join our group here in Ely Hall!



During this period of time we were saddened to learn of the passing of **Joan Laflin Rockwell '72**. Joan and her sister, **Ellen Galland '67**, make possible so many extraordinary field experiences for our students

through the Mary Laflin Rockwell Fund named in honor of their sister.

Herein you can catch up on the activities of faculty, staff, students, and alums from near and far. Please keep us posted about your activities so we can feature them in future newsletters. Best wishes for the rest of 2019!

Many thanks,

*Jill*

## FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS



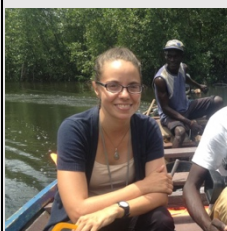
We continue to be quite fortunate to have **Susan Blickstein** as an Adjunct Assistant Professor. Susan teaches regularly our hugely popular course, Environment and Land-Use Planning. She is a licensed professional planner who communicates to our students her passion for rethinking and reconnecting communities based on the synergy between the built environment and transportation modes, of which her favorite is cycling!



Among her many activities on behalf of the department and the college, **Mary Ann Cunningham**, continues to pilot Vassar's Sustainability Committee. We have numerous green initiatives that engage students in sustainability initiatives, reduce the environmental impact of the college's operations, and work toward a carbon-neutral future and Mary Ann is involved critically in all of them. For example, in the summer of 2019, Mary Ann took on two students who worked with her as part of the Undergraduate Research Summer Institute to conduct extensive data collection, analysis, and visualization to manage and communicate data on energy and costs as they related to climate action and sustainability. Among her recent publications is "The distribution of road salt in private drinking water wells in a southeastern New York suburban township" in the *Journal of Environmental Quality*. When not engaged in teaching and research she can sometimes be found playing her trumpet with Tin Horn Uprising, a mid-Hudson Valley based activist brass marching band that supports actions, marches and rallies across the valley!

**Neil Curri** currently works as our GIS lab manager. Initiatives such as Hudson Valley Mappers and the City of Poughkeepsie's Natural Resource

Inventory keep him quite busy with our very capable students. He regularly teaches a geographic information systems course in the department. He and his wife Samantha celebrated their daughter's second birthday with family and friends in May and couldn't be happier in their new roles as parents.



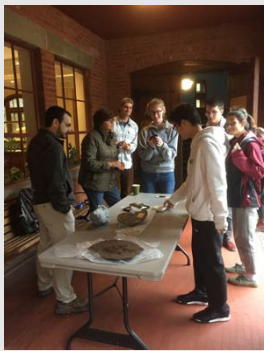
**Ashley Fent** reports that she is currently working on developing a book manuscript based on her dissertation research on a controversial mining project in the

Casamance region of Senegal, as well as writing and co-writing articles about gender and resource extraction, temporal aspects of dispossession, and land politics in Senegal. She returned to Senegal this past summer to conduct new research on solar energy investments. In her free time, she enjoys taking ballet classes and pottery classes in Poughkeepsie, exploring the Hudson Valley, and spending time with her husband, Ryan, and their Garfield-esque cat, Ziggy.



Since having joined the department, **John Fronimos**, has taught paleontology, sedimentology, earth history, and a first-year writing seminar on hot topics in earth science. Vassar

students have been actively involved in his research. After students on his Big Bend trip relocated a historic dinosaur quarry that John had been seeking, he returned in summer 2018 to document the site with the help of “diligent desert diggers” **Keira Congo ’20**, and **Nicholas Franzen ’20** enabled by the support of Vassar’s Environmental Research Institute. In the lab, **Savannah Cutler ’20** took an X-ray look inside some Texas dinosaur bones to see the blood vessels that nourish their prodigious growth. Results from these studies were



presented at the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology annual meeting. Spurred on by John, our students have banded together to share the remarkable fossil resources of the Warthin Museum with

the Vassar community by celebrating National Fossil Day, initiated by earth science major **India Futterman ’19**.

**Brian Godfrey** reports that by the end of the 2019-2020 academic year he will have taught at Vassar for 35 years—more than half his life! In his own words, “At times, as I walk around our beautiful campus, I reflect on how Vassar’s cultural landscape has changed, the many people I have known here, and how my feelings have evolved. I have had the good fortune to meet some wonderful and inspiring people. I got the message right away, from then-President Virginia Smith on down, that Vassar was, and continues to be, an exceptional institution in which social diversity and free thought are encouraged.”



Brian’s current book project has been contracted for publication, tentatively titled *Reinventing Rio: Place, Memory, and Identity*. Also, recently, he co-authored with a recent graduate, **Cullen Riley-Duffy** (whose parents both went to Vassar, his father a geography major!) a review essay on five recent books on gentrification in American cities. He continues to teach courses on urban geography, cities of the Global South, historic preservation and memory.

**Lenore Hart** has stepped right in to be an integral member of our department.

Lenore drives vans on field trips, crafts our teaching schedules, and together with our department interns, **Austin Mello ’20**



and **Penelope Mort Ranta ’20**, dependably makes our department GeoTea gathering flow every Wednesday afternoon. (If you are in the area, please feel free to drop by at 2:30 p.m. and enjoy the company of students, staff, and faculty). She recently accompanied Mary Ann to the Adirondacks for a one-week October break field trip to explore conservation issues in the Adirondacks.

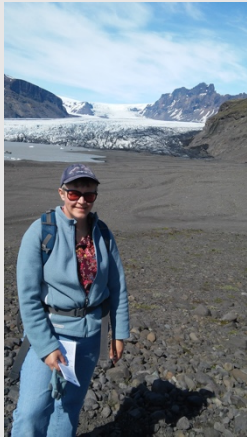
According to **Rick Jones**, life in Ely Hall continues to be interesting and varied, with projects large and small to

keep track of: field trips, lab work, small renovations, museum work and much else to keep things running smoothly. He enjoys working in Earth Science and Geography



because he comes into contact with lots of campus discussion, and action, on important issues of climate change and sustainability with which he gets involved on a daily basis.

An especially exciting development is that Rick has begun to teach independent study classes in science illustration to students wishing to explore creative aspects of their other academic work.



### Kirsten Menking

travelled extensively with students and colleagues since our last issue of *Terra Firma*. In 2017 she co-led a combined geomorphology and volcanology field trip to California with Jeff Walker that visited sites in Death Valley, Owens Valley, and the Mono

Basin. While there, students looked at active fault scarps, moraines from the last glaciation, tufa towers and various lava flows. That same year, she co-led an environmental studies field trip to Iceland with a biology department colleague, in which students investigated topics such as the impact of Arctic seabird colonies on soil geochemistry and the use of boulder size to determine the magnitude of glacial outburst floods. In the summer of 2019 she traveled with eight students and department colleagues, Mary Ann and Jill, on a trip to Shanghai led by geography professor Yu Zhou to study environmental issues in that region. It provided information for a course she is team-teaching with Brian Godfrey on water and cities this year.

On the research front, Kirsten participated in the URSI program in 2018 working with two students on a sediment core from the Albany, NY area. Kirsten's students identified pollen grains and plant macrofossils and presented their work at the American Geophysical Union

annual meeting in Washington D.C. Kirsten also published a paper extending the record of hydrologic variability in New Mexico back to 69,000 years ago.

In addition to teaching his courses, Geographies of Mass Violence; Political Geography of



Human Rights; Lines, Fences and Walls: The Partitioning of the Global Landscape; Population, Resources and Sustainable Development; and Global Geography, **Joe Nevins** continues to direct the college's Independent Program. Recently, Joe completed *A People's Guide to Greater Boston*. The book takes the reader to many of Boston's neighborhoods to unveil the workings of a city over a time and space that has helped to both produce and contest unjust power and inequality. Look for it to be published by the University of California press in early 2020!

Joe also continues to bring his ideas to the public through writings in the popular media. Among the many examples of this kind of work, he co-wrote an op-ed for *The Hill* about the moral responsibility of climate scientists as well as an *AlterNet* column about how U.S. policy in Honduras helped set the stage for today's mass migration.

Among her most stimulating endeavors of the past few years, **Jill Schneiderman** collaborated with Patricia Pagan, The Philip and Lynn Straus Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center on a major exhibition, "Past Time: Geology in European and American Art. The exhibit examined sketches and studies made by artists from the 1770s to the 1890s who



were engaged with the new, scientific emphasis on the Earth.

The exhibit was later mounted at the Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University. Jill's essay, "Visual Science: The Complementarity of Geology and



Art" appeared in the beautifully illustrated catalog. Jill also published a book review in *Science* of *A Most Improbably Journey: A Big History of Our Planet and Ourselves* by Walter Alvarez (of dinosaur extinction fame!).

In student-focused news, Jill joined the Big Bend geology field trip and also conducted research on microplastics in sands with her URSI

students

**Greta Nelson '21,**  
**Hanna Hertzler '21** and  
**Keira Congo '20.**



They presented that research at the Annual Meeting of the Geological Society of America. Jill continues to love teaching our introductory earth science class, first-year writing seminars, and a course in the science, technology and society program, Feminist Approaches to Science and Technology.

**Jeff Walker** has had an exciting couple of years with lots of teaching, traveling, and research. He continues to teach Earth Materials (which was even over-enrolled in Spring 2019 for the first time in 30 years) and is gratified that the enrollments remain strong. He also regularly teaches Field Geology of the Hudson Valley which introduces first-year and sophomore students to some of the classic hikes and vistas

of our region and helps them see how the rocks underlying those vistas fit into the 1.5 billion years of geologic history in the Northeast. He also taught Soils during the first semester that the Bridge for Laboratory Science was open and enjoyed the brand-new lab with plenty of bench space and fume hoods for the students to get dirty!



Traveling for teaching and research has taken him to Iceland, Big Bend National Park, China,

and the Snake River Plain of Idaho. His research has dealt with everything from the very rare kaolinite in the Hudson valley to two big projects on alteration of basalts. The basalt projects are quite interesting because although they are separated geographically (Connecticut and Idaho) and geologically (rift basin and continental flood basalt), the alterations of the two rocks are closely related.

For his sabbatical during the fall 2019, Jeff is finishing a book on John Burroughs in the Catskills, starting another on John Burroughs' thoughts on geologic time and evolution, and planning a trip to Italy for the volcanology seminar in spring 2020.



**Yu Zhou** reports: I finished my three-year term on the Faculty Appointment and Salary Committee in 2017 which caused me to appreciate the college in ways I had not previously done. In that same period, my edited volume *China as an Innovation Nation* was published by Oxford University Press. I

continue to conduct research on China's green building program.

Also, in the last three years, I have been leading the college's institutional grant from the Henry Luce Foundation for the Luce Initiative in Asian Studies and the Environment (LIASE). The \$400,000 grant, through 2022, funds annual summer workshops in China with U.S. and Chinese environmental studies faculty and students. As a result, more than 40 students and 15 faculty members have studied in China. She is particularly delighted that several faculty members in our department have joined the workshops in China. You can find out more about the initiative on Vassar's LIASE website:

[\(http://pages.vassar.edu/vassarliase/\)](http://pages.vassar.edu/vassarliase/).

Finally, in her words, "The last two years have been really hard on me as I am learning how life could take unpredictable and terrible turns. My 23-year old son Kevin, who had been healthy and enjoyed his life in Boston died suddenly of an extremely rare case of cardiac hamartoma. He had no history of heart problems and no prior symptoms, or so it was such a shock to our family. I also lost my younger brother from cancer and my dad from Alzheimer within two months of each other. I miss them every day, especially my Kevin. But I am learning how to move on with life while always honoring and remembering him. My Vassar colleagues have been the most supportive and I am forever grateful. My daughter Kaitlyn is at Cornell and currently studying at Oxford for her junior year abroad. She has always been a headstrong person with an independent spirit. She is an economics major but likes political economy and international relations. I guess I have my influence after all."

All of us in the department will always remember Kevin for his fetching smile and his love of cooking and computers. We miss him.

## ALUMNAE/I NEWS

**Kayla Abe '15** ([mayumi.kayla@gmail.com](mailto:mayumi.kayla@gmail.com)). In addition to her full-time work growing the West Coast market for Oatly oatmilk, Kayla launched her own sustainable foods business, Ugly Pickle Co., with the mission to heal our food system by upcycling cosmetically irregular produce and farm surplus to create fresh pickles and spreads. Only upon writing this blurb has she realized that her superfood supply chain thesis has come full circle..

**Jordan Alexander** ([joalexanderoo@gmail.com](mailto:joalexanderoo@gmail.com)). I still work at MTA New York City Transit, in the Strategic Initiatives group where I work on a range of efforts to improve varying aspects of the city's subway and bus system.. Recent examples include improving how we overhaul train cars using reliability data, devising strategies to provide first/last mile transit service to outer borough communities beyond the reach of the subway, and helping combat a growing fare evasion problem on buses. Always open to speaking with fellow Geos about urban transportation.

**Jeremiah Bernau** ([jeremiahbernau@gmail.com](mailto:jeremiahbernau@gmail.com)). I just completed the second year of my Geology Ph.D. at the University of Utah. I am working on the Bonneville Salt Flats where I contribute to the understanding of the geological history and modern processes of this changing landscape as part of an interdisciplinary team.

**Jeff Brooks '03** ([jeffbrooks@lsu.edu](mailto:jeffbrooks@lsu.edu)). I have no news to report, but if any department students are thinking about law school, please feel free to share my contact info with them. I'd be happy to talk with them about the application process and about the various environmental law and energy law programs that are out there.

**Caroline (Carrie) Bryan '73** ([CarrieEBryan@yahoo.com](mailto:CarrieEBryan@yahoo.com)).

After 25 years in software quality assurance (a Vassar education equips you for ANY career!) and a second career in non-profit database management, I retired in '17 and moved from the Midwest to the Pacific Northwest - I like volcanoes better than tornadoes! To stay busy, I make baby quilts and pot holders, and sell them online and at craft fairs. Geology is never far from me: I enjoy the view of Mt. Rainier in fine weather, and consult a recent edition of Deer, Howie & Zussman when the occasion arises. Also, I've picked up a daily walk and some elementary yoga and am active in my church. The roses (in pots on my condo deck) are blooming and the cat is happy. Life is good.

**Laura Bybell '67** ([lbybell@gmail.com](mailto:lbybell@gmail.com)). After 34 years working for the U.S. Geological Survey, both as a research micropaleontologist specializing in nannofossils and as a coordinator for their geologic mapping program, I retired in 2008 and have continued going in at least one day a week as a Scientist Emeritus. I have also continued as the scientific and technical editor for the biennial abstract volume for the International Nannoplankton Association conferences. This is an enjoyable challenge that involves turning abstracts from around the world into understandable scientific information. My husband, David Govoni, was also a long-time USGS employee. He and I are avid birders so we spend much of our time watching birds both in the U.S. and around the world. I recently purchased a RV so that we can complete our birding of every county in Virginia (95 of them) without using motels and able to bring our two Miniature Australian Shepherds with us! I have recently received USGS funding to create a permanent exhibit on the grounds of the USGS in Reston, Virginia called "Trek

through Time." As you walk the wooded paths behind the building, you start at the beginning of the Cambrian and after a third of a mile trek end up at modern time. I have a marker along the path every 10 million years. Where each period or epoch would begin, there will be a large permanent sign that contains a diorama of life at that time, a paleogeographic map with a dot where Virginia is, and a brief description of what was happening during each time period. I am also publishing the information on a USGS Fact Sheet that will be available online. This is my little effort to show that the world was not created 10,000 years ago and that evolution really happened!

**Sue Harman Cleland '66**

([suecleland44@hotmail.com](mailto:suecleland44@hotmail.com)). Greetings to you all from the Parc National des Cevennes in southern France. I'm currently staying in the most beautiful green valley, enfolded by hills covered in trees - holm oak, chestnut, pine and wild cherry. We climb through tangled vegetation, clinging at a vertiginous angle to the lower slopes of Mont Aigoual which consist mainly of schist and granite. I have never before experienced such changeable weather. Misty mornings become sun-drenched afternoons, fading to dark and chilly evenings. The area is famous for both chestnut and mulberry trees. The Cevennes mills used to supply silk to workshops in Nimes and Lyon. The wonderful Mediterranean fruit and vegetables, together with the occasional wild boar and delicious grape varieties beckon. I recommend a visit!

**Brooke Crowley '02**

([crowlebk@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:crowlebk@ucmail.uc.edu)). Life is treating me well. I was granted tenure at the University of Cincinnati in Fall 2017, and I was able to take a half-year sabbatical in Spring 2018. I used this time to both catch up on things and to travel. My husband and I spent February in

southeastern Australia and Tasmania, and most of May in Namibia. Namibia is a geologist's dream. So much of Earth's history is preserved in this one country (including multiple ancient continental and rifting events!) I very much was in need of this mental and physical break. I returned to teaching and research in Fall 2018 and also took over as Grad Director for the department of geology. This has been both a rewarding and challenging position, and overall, I am quite pleased to have this new role.

This summer I spent time in Germany and suspect it will remind me of the time I spent living with a family in Germany as part of a study abroad program while at Vassar.

On a slightly different note, I regularly attend geoscience conferences. It would be great if there were some sort of online platform where this info on conference attendance could be shared and we could connect (like a Facebook page or a note on the departmental website). I'd love to catch up with folks from the department. (N.B. We have a FB page so check us out!)

**Jad Davenport '90** ([jad@jaddavenport.com](mailto:jad@jaddavenport.com)). Geography remains central to my career and passions. I've been working as a photojournalist with National Geographic for the past few decades and spend several months each year leading storytelling workshops in the Arctic, Central America, Africa and Europe. I live in Denver with my wife and two daughters, all of whom love traveling as much as I do.

**Alison Denn '12** ([Alison.denn@gmail.com](mailto:Alison.denn@gmail.com)). After earning my M.S. in geomorphology from the University of Vermont (2017) where I worked in the Cosmogenic Nuclide Laboratory, I moved down to Austin, Texas. I spent one year in the potash mining industry,



and then transitioned to my current position as an environmental geologist at Weston. There I work with a stellar team of environmental professionals to resolve complex environmental issues. Every day is different, but frequently you'll find me authoring technical reports, leading sampling and drilling events, and collecting groundwater and soil samples to assess and remediate hazardous waste sites. I enjoy working at Weston, and am working towards becoming a registered Professional Geoscientist in Texas (just took the licensure exam, fingers crossed!). When I'm not at work I'm busy hanging out with my sweet husband Mark (married in 2018!), working on my quilting skills, and eating veggies. Life is good. On a side note-- if you ever have an undergrad who wants to get into consulting and who is mobile, have them check the entry level postings at Weston. I can send resumes to HR!

**Russell Dover '99** ([rdoover@collegeboard.org](mailto:rdoover@collegeboard.org)). Over the past year, I had the chance of visiting with Brian Godfrey and one of his classes in Lower Manhattan, where we explored the World Trade Center redevelopment. Personally, it has been a year of lots of international travel, including trips to the UK, Germany, India, UAE, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Finland, Canada, Mexico and Colombia. Would love to connect to other Vassar Geography folks in my travels.

**Margaret (Peggy) Peterson Hotchkiss '69** ([mamahotch@gmail.com](mailto:mamahotch@gmail.com)). Our family's big news is our daughter Eliza's marriage in February. She's VC '01, geology-geography. But, I will let her share that with you. Several of her VC earth science friends attended. 'Twas great fun!

I have been a productivity and academic coach for Bluberly since last August. I work remotely with high school and college

students across the nation, helping them be more productive and study more efficiently

Since August 2016, I have been a student in the Wyoming Iona School, part of a collaborative with the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, TX. I will graduate in June--and miss my 50th Reunion. I was ordained to the transitional diaconate in June 2018 and, by the grace of God, will be ordained an Episcopal priest in July 2019. I will be the priest at St. Barnabas' Episcopal Church in Saratoga, Wyoming after my ordination.

**Laura Joines** ([ljoines@gmail.com](mailto:ljoines@gmail.com))

I retired from being an architecture professor at California Polytechnic to go back to full-time practice. Just love making the world a better place one building at a time! Appreciate the background a geography major gave me in drawing maps, analyzing information and studying the world. Go Geography!

**Ann Moor Jones '70** ([geopair@att.net](mailto:geopair@att.net))

Not much news, but I'd hate to see 1970 underrepresented! A little of my geologic knowledge had a rare chance to shine not long ago. The Tulsa Master Gardeners have a school program through which we come into grades K-5 classrooms and teach various horticulture related topics. Of course, the most popular one is Wiggly Worms, but I helped develop a new one on soils. Not surprisingly, a lot of good info can be crammed into a 50-minute presentation. Best news was that the kids enjoyed it! My love of a classroom is apparently never-ending.

**Sarah H. Ledford**

'10, [sarah.h.ledford@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.h.ledford@gmail.com)

My big update is I am now an assistant professor of Geosciences at Georgia State University! I'm still working on urban water

quality issues, but now shifting to the southeastern US.

**Gary Linkevich** ([garylincevich@gmail.com](mailto:garylincevich@gmail.com)). I live in Houston where I work as a geophysicist for Schlumberger. There I provide tech support with some teaching on the side. Among all the products Schlumberger makes is a program called Petrel, which is the industry standard for seismic interpretation and geocellular modelling. I take questions from geologists at other companies who use our software, and periodically I teach our training courses. I also get to travel a bit since our training center is in Abu Dhabi, so I go there once a year and usually swing by Europe on my way back. The compensation is moderate (in industry terms!), but so is the stress, which is an easy trade-off for me. I recently intersected with Jerry Bernau and we reminisced about our VC days.

**Bridget Martin '04**

([bridget.martin@gmail.com](mailto:bridget.martin@gmail.com)). I am currently finishing my Ph.D. in geography at UC-Berkeley researching military urbanism in South Korea. I'll be on the job market this year!

**Michael Mazik** <[starchild@alum.vassar.edu](mailto:starchild@alum.vassar.edu)

There's little to update you on, aside from my attendance at the 15-year reunion (2004), which was awesome. I had missed going to the others because of, shall we say, "Life events," but I am happy I went. Saw some people I knew or recognized, and made new connections; it was a win-win, all around. I did miss the opportunity to run into Jeff Walker, which I'm bummed about. Ely Hall still looks the same, but it's also very different. I did a self-guided tour of the museum, signed the guest book, and then went upstairs to see the sites. Way different! The room that I had literally every class in—aside from Earth Materials (201) and Oceanography (104, I think)—looks very different, but I like the "Raised roof," and the renovations seemed to

have gone very well.

I am employed through the school district that I live in, which is the Poudre School District, in Fort Collins, CO. I have another job during the summers, "To keep me out of trouble," but my first day there will be toward the end of this week, as I am still in New England at the moment. I hope to climb my first "14er" —mountains which are over 14,000' in elevation—this summer. I have done the same 13er at least three times, but would like to tackle a higher mountain. The trick to them is you usually have to start around 4-5 AM so that you summit the mountain and are below the treeline before thunderstorms race through—as well as the thinner air at the top. That's the update from me; still pluggin' along and enjoying life. Hope all's well with you, and I look forward to the new edition!

**Luke Mitchell '02** <[lukeamitchell@gmail.com](mailto:lukeamitchell@gmail.com)

I am living in Cambridge MA with my wife and 2 kids (Grant and Marlowe), and I'm working as a Senior City Planner / Urban Designer. My Vassar geography studies continue to come in handy all the time. If any alums out there are interested in learning more about my work please feel free to email me directly!

**Sarah Morath '98** ([sarahmorath@gmail.com](mailto:sarahmorath@gmail.com))

I am a Clinical Associate Professor at the University of Houston Law School, where I direct the Lawyering Skills and Strategies program and teach legal research and writing to JD and foreign LLM students. I also teach Animal Law and a course called Food, Agriculture, and the Environment. My research interests are broad, but all of my articles address either sustainability or teaching. I am currently working on a book called *Our Plastic Problem* with Cambridge University Press. I am very grateful for my liberal arts background because solving today's problems, whether they be

environmental or educational, requires an interdisciplinary approach. I'm also grateful for my map reading skills; I reviewed all sorts of maps before purchasing a home in Houston and thankfully the home where I, my husband, two kids, and dog live experienced no flooding. Thank you Vassar geology department!

**Craig Nelson '95** ( [craigwnelson@gmail.com](mailto:craigwnelson@gmail.com)).

My love of urban geography that I learned in Ely Hall still comes in handy every time I walk out my door in Manhattan where I've been living since 2006. Currently, I am working on several projects including a budget travel blog to Europe (EuroCheapo.com) that took me to France, Bulgaria, and Italy in 2018. I also just helped launch a new walking tours business that's based on a popular New York City history podcast called The Bowery Boys.

**Dave Palmieri '95**

([davidpalmieri3@gmail.com](mailto:davidpalmieri3@gmail.com)). I've begun teaching a Human Geography elective to 12th graders at Raleigh Charter High School in NC where we investigate lots of urban geography, development patterns, demographics, and local and national political geography among other topics.

**Rosemary Healey Pusateri '71**

([pusateri14@aol.com](mailto:pusateri14@aol.com))

I am fortunate to continue living my dream on beautiful Lake George, NY. Having been an environmental activist for decades, I continue working hard at protecting this beautiful lake. That our daughter and two grandchildren enjoy visiting Lake George is added incentive to keep doing this volunteer work.

My husband Frank and I travel frequently all over the world, especially in winter. I appreciate tropical volcanic islands even more because of my geology degree, but mostly I enjoy snorkeling to see marine life. I learned to snorkel on our Florida geology field trip my senior year.

**David Rinn '85** ([david@rinn.org](mailto:david@rinn.org)).

I received a Master of Jurisprudence from the University of Washington School of Law with a concentration in constitutional law. I intend to get involved in advocacy work related to gerrymandering and voting rights. My wife Laura and I live in Seattle. Our son just completed his sophomore year at Cal Poly, and our daughter will be a freshman at Skidmore College in September.

**Brooke Robinson**

**'15** ([brookerobinson@alum.vassar.edu](mailto:brookerobinson@alum.vassar.edu))

I recently finished my masters in Food Studies from NYU Steinhardt! I have also been working as an Education Fellow at Brooklyn Botanic Garden, where I teach children's programs related to botany and gardening. I hope all is well in the geo department - I miss it dearly!

**Susan Rogers '68**

([susanrogers98@gmail.com](mailto:susanrogers98@gmail.com))

Susan reports that she and her husband have enjoyed much travel over the years to the Galapagos, the Amazon, Machu Pichu—all have been spectacular. The wildlife is fascinating, and evolution is happening all over. The latest problems are invasive vegetation: guavas and blackberries. We also hiked to the second largest crater in the world (Sierra Negra) . Succession occurs very slowly out in the middle of the ocean and historic changes in sea level are obvious. Otherwise trips to Hawaii and Maine to help maintain our cabin keep her busy. Occasionally she volunteers with the Alaska Botanical Garden for their school programs or summer camp. After 10 years in DC, our son and daughter-in-law are moving to Portland, ME--working remotely more seems to be the plan. They are both very successful.

**Laura Schachter '16** ([lschachter@wisc.edu](mailto:lschachter@wisc.edu))

Laura is about to finish up her MS in Hydrogeology at the University of Wisconsin Madison (defense scheduled for end of July 2019). She has been researching nitrate leaching from agricultural fields in the sandy soils of Wisconsin. After finishing her degree she plans on staying in Madison for a while longer, hopefully landing a job in hydrogeology in the area.

**Dale Simmons '75** ([dsimmons@usgs.gov](mailto:dsimmons@usgs.gov))

Hello! At the end of last year, I reached a milestone--40 years as a hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey. It has been an enjoyable and productive career. For the first 10 years, I focused on surface-water, groundwater, and saltwater-intrusion studies on Long Island, New York; for the last 30 years, I've been based in New Jersey and my work has been mainly in publications and communications. I enjoy mentoring scientists who need to publish the results of the important and consequential work they're doing while at the same time complying with the USGS's strict publication guidelines. On the other hand--I'm also looking forward to retiring in a year or so!

**Jeremy Teperman**

'11 ([jeteperman@gmail.com](mailto:jeteperman@gmail.com)).

Let's see, updates! In 2017 I returned from doing the CASFS apprenticeship in Santa Cruz to apprentice on a vegetable farm close to Vassar, Glynwood (in Cold Spring) and was able to visit campus a couple of times - including seeing the Poughkeepsie Farm Project through new eyes as a young farmer! After my Glynwood apprenticeship I returned home to NYC and accepted a job as the Farm Manager with East New York Farms. I manage their half-acre farm which is the host site for our youth program that employs 36 local young people to grow and sell vegetables, and we run two farmers markets.

**Barbara Ulrich**

(O'Grady)'74 ([bwildbear74@gmail.com](mailto:bwildbear74@gmail.com))

I am on the home stretch to finish a second Master's Degree in Paleoecology from the Earth Sciences Department at Montana State University. My research takes place in Yellowstone National Park, which I am lucky enough to call my back yard! I'm using bison in an attempt to understand *Sporormiella* as a proxy for megaherbivores in the paleo record hoping to shed light on their extinction in relationship to changing climate and vegetation. It keeps me busy and out of trouble - mostly.

I've also had an opportunity to teach Earth 101 to a class of almost 250 (I don't recommend large class sizes!) as well as small, really cool labs. I operate a small guide business in Yellowstone National Park called Wild Bear Adventures. I do geology and wildlife tours of the park. My little guest cottage on the Yellowstone affectionately called "Rive Gauche" is always open to Vassar friends - look me up and we can go explore the Supervolcano!

I visited caves in Spain and France with a couple of rock art experts last summer, headed to Alaska this past summer and Greenland - to study what climate change is doing there (it's not good). Hope to visit the spreading ridge in Iceland as a part of that trip. The Cradle of Mankind in Tanzania and Victoria Falls were on my list the summer before - awesome!

On a sad note, I think you are aware, but in case not, Tom McKinney passed away earlier this year. He wasn't at Vassar very long, but we in the '70s remember him fondly.

**Doris Delaine Thach Wallingford '72**

([dtwallingford@gmail.com](mailto:dtwallingford@gmail.com).)

I am still married to Dick Wallingford whom I met when we were classmates at the Amos Tuck School of Business Administration, Dartmouth College. We received our MBAs



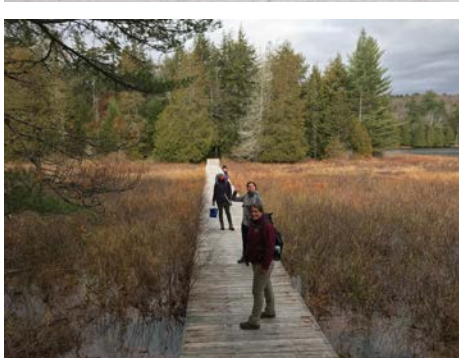
in 1976. We have two adult children; Nick lives and works in Redlands CA and Karla lives and works in Oak Harbor WA. We moved from the Napa Valley CA to The Villages FL earlier this year. We are now fully retired after spending most of our working lives in the wine business. We lived and worked in the Napa Valley many years. We also lived in England for eight years where we had our own California wine importing business. Life in The Villages is great! Dick enjoys golfing and fly fishing. I get to the pool most days and enjoy meeting friends for bridge and book club. We are looking forward to the next chapter in our lives. Trying new things, traveling and visiting family and friends are top on our list.

**Charles Wise '14**

(cc[charles@charlesbwise.com](mailto:charles@charlesbwise.com)).

My wife and I have now been in Wellington, New Zealand for about 4 months, where I will soon be joining a regional IT team that serves district health boards as part of New Zealand's national healthcare system. Although the weather is taking a turn for the dismal as winter approaches down here in the Southern Hemisphere, we have managed to fit in some great day-trips to geological sights such as visiting Putangirua Pinnacles near Lake Ferry, these days famous for being where Peter Jackson shot the Paths of the Dead scenes for the third Lord of the Rings film. As we all know, though, true rock stars never get old (apologies for the dreadful pun). Best wishes to everyone in the department from down south!

## STUDENT HAPPENINGS: A MOSAIC OF MEMORIES!





And, congratulations to Allison Denn: It's not that often that one of our department alums gets her peer-reviewed article on the cover of *GSA Today*, the news magazine for all Geological Society of America members. "Cosmogenic nuclides indicate that boulder fields are dynamic, ancient, multigenerational features." *GSA Today*, volume 28, issue 3 (March/April 2018)

