STEVE BELL ’79 INDUCTED INTO THE RIDER UNIVERSITY SCIENCE STAIRWAY OF FAME

Steven R. Bell ’79, a Rider Geosciences graduate, was inducted into the Rider University Science Stairway of Fame (SSOF) on June 12, 2010. The SSOF, located in the research wing of the Science and Technology Center, honors individuals who were exemplary students and who have achieved significant professional success in their chosen careers. The honorees are also loyal and generous supporters of Rider’s science programs.

Steve certainly meets all these criteria. At Rider, Steve worked with, and studied under, Dr. Mervin Kontrovitz, Dr. George Lager, Dr. Joseph Nadeau, Dr. Henry Posamentier, and Dr. Walter Spink, who instilled in Steve his long-term love and passion for geology, fieldwork, exploration, and commitment to developing energy resources. After graduating, Steve received his M.S. degree in geology in 1981 from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette). He also is a 2001 graduate of the Advanced Management Program at the Wharton School of Business – University of Pennsylvania.

Most of Steve’s professional career has been spent with a number of companies within the energy and production sector, including Sun Oil, EnCana, Apache Corporation, BHP Billiton Petroleum, and currently, Remora Energy. At Remora, Steve leads the company’s management team as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman. For over 25 years, Steve has explored for energy resources on six continents, doing fieldwork from jungles to deserts and mountain ranges, conducting surveys and drilling projects, and bringing value to numerous countries and states in the process. His collaborative efforts with his colleagues have led to many newly discovered oilfields throughout the world. Very active in a number of professional and educational organizations, Steve has served as Chairman of the Board for the University of Utah’s Energy and Geoscience Institute, as well as serving on the Board of Trustees for the American Geological Institute, the Corporate Advisory Board of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, the Energy Institute at the University of Louisiana, the Advisory Committee for Continuing Education at the Wharton School of Business – University of Pennsylvania, and the Boards of the American Petroleum Institute, the Domestic Petroleum Council, and the National Ocean Industries Association.

In response to his selection, Steve was extremely gratified, saying, “I have had a fantastic career and a fascinating life, and so much of it was because of the excellent
education provided to me by my professors at Rider. They set me off in a direction that I have never looked back on and I have always been grateful for all the wonderful opportunities that the geosciences and Rider have provided. Please know that I am truly humbled by this honor.”

All of GEMS congratulates Steve for this much-deserved honor and recognition. We couldn’t be prouder!

NEW WEATHER & CLIMATE CHANGE COURSE

While most of us are often curious about the weather, recent public, political, and media attention to anthropogenic climate change suggests that it is more important than ever for college graduates to have a scientific understanding of the processes influencing our planet’s weather and climate. To this end, GEMS is introducing a new course, Weather and Climate Change (ENV-220). This course will examine the causes of weather and climate change and will focus on how atmospheric processes interact with other Earth systems, including biodiversity, land use, and pollution.

ENV-220 will be a requirement for environmental sciences majors and an elective course for our other majors. In addition, ENV-220 will serve as an Earth science pre-requisite course for a variety of students who apply to Rider’s Graduate Level Teaching Program (GLTP) for certification. The first offering of this course will be spring 2011.

AN EDUCATION DOWN UNDER

This past spring semester marine science major, Elissa Connolly-Randazzo ’11, spent a semester studying abroad at James Cook University in Australia. She thoroughly enjoyed her experience, despite the various challenges that go along with living and studying in a foreign country. Here are her thoughts on some of these challenges and experiences:

“The five-month term in Australia introduced me to a fascinating culture while challenging me on an academic level. I knew that the teaching methods at the much larger James Cook University would differ from those at Rider. For example, the grading system was weighted heavily on final exams, with few assignments submitted during the semester. While books were recommended to review facts and research discussed in class, learning was focused on the revision of class notes and conducting field work, taking advantage of the tropical location of James Cook University. My marine chemistry course held a four-day trip to an island reserve where we determined the chemical content of the sediment and observed coral reactions to released chemicals first-hand. Through my Australian vertebrae class, I was involved in a four-day survey held on a conservation cattle farm, where we set traps to capture a diverse range of native species of reptiles, birds, bats, and small mammals.

At first I felt overwhelmed by the new teaching methods, finding the right building, and adjusting to the unusual
grading system. However, my Australian friends as well as other international students sharing my experience were able to help me ease into the different academic and lifestyle of Australia. The university had ideal dormitory arrangements that allowed me to have my own room, while sharing a flat with other JCU students. I was fortunate enough to have upper-classmen as roommates who guided me through the standards of the university and included me in many Australian traditions.

James Cook University hosts a large number of international students studying abroad each semester. Therefore, the university offered plenty of programs and activities through their on-campus travel agency, making students feel welcome and helping them make the most of their experience. Through these scheduled trips, I interacted with students that I could relate to because they too were adjusting to a new country and culture. This exhilarating semester has introduced me to new people and gave me the chance to experience the views of people living half-way around the world. In addition, I also benefited from the new perspectives on learning, which have expanded my knowledge.”

If you are interested in studying abroad, you should contact the Center for International Education, BLC 124 and/or talk to your academic advisor. Also, Elissa is more than willing to share her experience and talk to you about the adventure of studying abroad!

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE MAJOR SOAKS UP THE SUN AND ACCOLADES IN THE ARIZONA DESERT!

For Christine Sookhdeo ‘12, Rider University was a clear choice for its strong offerings in the GEMS department and its proximity to her family in New Jersey. Ironically, her choice has led her to the other side of the country this summer when she received a prestigious Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) award from the National Science Foundation. Christine was accepted to a summer research experience at Biosphere 2, located north of Tucson and managed by the University of Arizona. In her own words, here’s Christine’s description of her research project there:

“I am currently working as an intern in the Biosphere 2 REU program in the Sonoran Desert, Tucson, Arizona. My mentor for the program, Dr. Pavao-Zuckerman, focuses on the connections between environmental variability, the structure of soil food webs, and biogeochemical cycling. My research deals with short-term and long-term effects of environmental conditions on N-mineralization and nitrification rates of soil samples in arid ecosystems. This involves the analysis of the properties of various soil samples collected from the Upper and Lower Savannas of Biosphere 2. I conducted experiments to extract the inorganic nitrogen, as well as other tests to determine the amount of carbon, contained in each subsample.”

Christine also received merit scholarships from the Birdsall Services Group and the NJ Society of Women Environmental Professionals this year as well. Congratulations on all counts!

WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF WASHINGTON

Here in New Jersey, it’s common to think of places like Washington’s Crossing, the Battle of Trenton, and other historic sites when considering the life of George Washington. This summer, however, two environmental science majors had the chance to spend two weeks at Washington’s Mount Vernon home, south of Washington, D.C. Nicole Chakowski ‘12 and Allison Ingram ‘13 assisted in a research project with Dr. Druckenbrod, studying the history of Washington’s forests. The Mount Vernon Ladies’
Association, who have overseen the property since the mid-1800s, have funded this research to determine whether there still are trees dating back to Washington’s era and the changes in the forest since that time. Nicole and Allison spent their days setting out forestry plots, which included measurements of tree diameters, species identification, and of course, tree coring to determine the tree ages. In addition to simply counting rings, Nicole and Allison will be examining the collected tree cores this fall to match the embedded climate signal in each core with the regional climate signal to ensure that accurate ages are attained.

According to them, besides the occasional sheep, the only other thing stirring at that time were the security guards stopping by to say “hi”!

**EMILY DI PAOLO ’10 SELECTED AS A RECIPIENT OF A 2010 NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STUDENT TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

Emily Di Paolo ’10, an Integrated Sciences and Math (ISM)/Elementary Education double major with a concentration in Mathematics and a minor in Middle School Education, was selected as a recipient of a 2010 New Jersey Department of Education Distinguished Student Teacher of the Year Award. This prestigious honor recognizes the 15 most outstanding prospective teachers in the state. The Rider University School of Education nominated Emily for the award based on her overall GPA, involvement in extracurricular activities, and her outstanding performance as a student teacher.

As a second-grade student teacher at Toll Gate Grammar School in Pennington, NJ, where she had the opportunity to teach math, social studies, science, language arts, and reading during the fall of 2009, it became obvious that Emily possessed the very same qualities she admired most in her teachers and professors – dedication, professionalism, passion, curiosity, respect, and, above all, student-centeredness. She also developed a reputation among her Rider professors for being a team player who is eager to learn, while willing to share her own creative ideas and best practice methods. In addition, Emily is known for having a knack for developing cooperative learning activities and creating a positive classroom environment, as well as being exceptional in small, one-on-one settings.

Since she was a sophomore at Rider, Emily worked as a tutor in the Math Skills Lab of Rider’s Student Success Center. As a tutor, she not only boosted the confidence of the students she assisted, but she also grew as an effective educator. Emily credits the experience for helping her understand different types of learners and how to adjust her teaching style accordingly.

All of us in GEMS are extremely proud of Emily and can’t help but think that she is exactly the kind of teacher the ISM program was meant to produce. Congrats!

**NATURE’S BUSINESS – PANAMA: A TALE OF TWO WARM OCEANS AND ONE VERY COOL CANAL**

Where can you sail west to go from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic? Where is North America to the west and South
Map of the Isthmus of Panama

America to the east? And where can you see some of the most diverse and abundant life forms in the world? Well, if you answered “Panama” to all three of those questions, then you’re either very geographically literate or you participated in the CBA/IND-316: Nature’s Business: Panama course and trip. For the 19 Rider students and faculty, as well as 6 family members, who did, it was one of the most enjoyable and educational experiences with which any of us have been involved.

Very modern downtown Panama City

Over ten beautiful days in January 2010, we traveled across Panama (literally) on bus, boat, and train, learning first hand about the country’s history, culture, economy, geography, geology, ecology, environment, biodiversity, business climate, ecotourism industry, and of course, its famous canal. GEMS students who participated in the course and trip were Denise Breen ’11 and Nicole Chakowski ’12. Others came from the business, liberal arts, science, and MBA programs.

In addition to lots of reading and fact finding about Panama and the canal prior to traveling, each student in the course kept a detailed journal during the trip and wrote a research paper on a faculty-approved topic of his/her choice after returning to Rider. Team-taught by Dr. Cynthia Newman, Chair and Associate Professor of Marketing, Dr. Susan Denbo, Professor of Legal Studies and Business Ethics, Dr. Laura Hyatt, Associate Professor of Biology, and Dr. Jonathan Husch, GEMS Chair and Professor of Geological and Environmental Sciences, the trip was the culminating experience of the semester-long course co-sponsored by the Rider University Colleges of Business Administration and Liberal Arts, Education, and Sciences.

The first three days in Panama were spent in the surprisingly modern and cosmopolitan capital, Panama City. Sight visits there included trips to the colonial-era section of the city, the Miraflores locks on the Pacific (southeast) end of the Panama Canal, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the City of Knowledge research campus, the ECOS Fund, the spectacular Biomuseo (designed by Frank Gehry and still under construction), and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (whew!). We also sampled authentic Panamanian and other types of food at a number of excellent restaurants, for which Panama City is justifiably famous. All-in-all, we learned much about Panamanian history, culture, cuisine, tourism, business, economic growth, and environment.

For many of us, however, the highlight of the trip to Panama was our trip (on a boat once owned by Al Capone!) along the Panama Canal through the Miraflores and Pedro Miguel Locks to the small town of Gamboa, approximately halfway across the 50 mile-wide isthmus. There, we stayed at the amazing Gamboa Rainforest Resort, a beautiful and modern facility located at the confluence of the Chagres River and the Panama Canal, and surrounded by lush, green tropical...
rainforest filled with all sorts of wildlife (including crocodiles!).

During our stay at Gamboa, we rode their aerial tram (think ski lift without the snow, equipment, or cold-weather clothing!) through the jungle canopy, toured reptile and butterfly houses, took a canoe trip to a secluded and beautiful waterfall deep in the rainforest, stopped at the famous Monkey Island (filled with Howler and Capuchin monkeys), and visited an Embera native village for an authentic lunch and dancing exhibition. Along with the resort’s pool, great food, and the faculty/family beating the students in a game of pool volleyball, what more could you ask for!

The Gatun Locks at Colon

Our next stop was the port city of Colon on Panama’s northern Caribbean shore. Unlike Panama City, which is the relatively wealthy political, cultural, financial, and educational center of the country, Colon is a poorer, more industrial city and the major port for goods passing through the canal. One highlight of our stay in Colon was a trip to the ruins of Castillo de San Lorenzo, a Spanish fort constructed at the mouth of the Chagres River during the late 16th century to protect the river and overland route to Panama City from pirates and foreign naval attack. The other highlight was our visit to the VIP visitor’s center at the Gatun Locks where we watched ship after ship being raised or lowered between the Caribbean and Lake Gatun, the huge reservoir that provides most of the fresh water for the Panama Canal and the rest of the country.

For our return trip back to Panama City, we took an enjoyable and very relaxing ride on the Panama Canal Railroad. The 90-minute journey gave us great views of the canal out of one side of our railroad coach and beautiful views of the jungle out the other. It really was a great way to travel!

Leaving Colon on the Panama Railroad

Our final full day in Panama was spent at a Pacific Ocean beach club popular with local Panamanians located about two hours west of Panama City. In addition to a beautiful and empty white-sand beach, the club sported a pool and band that got everyone (well almost everyone) up and dancing. In the spirit of international relations and athletic competition, Rider students defeated a local group in pool volleyball, but were decisively beaten in beach soccer. We were a tired, happy, and very sunburned group when we returned to Panama City that evening and prepared for our flight home early the next morning. All in all, it was a very memorable way to end a very memorable trip.

Like previous Nature’s Business trips to Costa Rica, Iceland, and Ecuador and the Galapagos, the Panama trip was a great way to learn, travel, make new friends, see amazing sights, and experience many new things. However, if you’ve missed out on the chance to join us on previous trips or regret not having been part of the Panama
experience, don’t despair, because new courses and trips are being planned for 2011 and beyond, including Peru in January 2011 and the Galapagos again in January 2013. Even if you don’t take the courses for credit, you can still participate in the trips if space is available. Contact Professor Denbo (denbo@rider.edu), Dr. Newman (cnewman@rider.edu), or Dr. Husch (husch@rider.edu) for more details. See you soon at someplace interesting, fun, and, of course, very educational!

“FRIENDS OF GEMS”

Through the initiative of Randy Kertes ‘84, a new alumni group was formed as a way to thank the GEMS department for providing a positive and rewarding undergraduate experience and for the personal interest the faculty take in GEMS students, as they guide them through their Rider years and beyond. This group, appropriately named Friends of GEMS, donated funds to help the department continue this trend with current and future GEMS majors. Currently, Friends of GEMS consist of the following members: Ronald K. Bannister ‘83, Russell Burke ‘02, Rodger E. Fedak ‘81, Kerry A. Kertes, ‘80, Randy Kertes ‘84, Reed A. Schwimmer ‘84, and Diane Pupa ‘84.

If you would like to join this group and help acknowledge GEMS, please contact Randy Kertes. Randy is a Senior Project Manager at Sadat Associates, Inc. (Trenton, NJ) and he can be reached at 609-826-9600, ext 149, or by email at rkertes@sadat.com.

GEMS ASSESSMENT REPORT

In the Fall 2009 Surf and Turf issue, we reported on the results of the recent GEMS alumni survey. This survey focused on the department’s programs, faculty-student interactions, and course offerings. Nearly half (45) of the total survey recipients (102) responded. The survey reflects alumni evaluations from the past ten years. GEMS was pleased to see very positive responses to questions throughout the survey. Complete survey results can now be downloaded from the GEMS web site.

During the 2010-11 academic year, GEMS will invite two external reviewers to the department to provide an “outside” evaluation of the department. Focus will likely be on our course diversity, student preparations, and program goals. Look for a summary of these findings in an upcoming Surf and Turf issue.

GEMS NEWS AND FACULTY/STUDENT RESEARCH AND AWARDS

The relocation and reconstruction of the Richard R. Alexander Marine Aquarium Lab and the GEMS Sample Preparation Room were finally completed this past academic year. Officially dedicated on June 12, 2010, at a ceremony attended by Alex’s family, students, friends, colleagues, and University officials, including President Rozanski, the Alexander Aquarium Lab is a highly visible and state-of-the-art facility located on the first floor of the “new” wing of the Science and Technology Center. The GEMS Sample Preparation Lab now is located in the third-floor space vacated by the aquarium lab. Almost all rock, mineral, soil, sediment, and tree ring preparation equipment, including a new band saw, have been installed in this very spacious lab.

Total GEMS enrollments reached just over 100 students, the highest ever! Even better, the projected number of new students for fall 2010 is approximately 21, again the highest ever, including 11 in environmental sciences and 4 in geosciences. Everyone in GEMS believes this is the direct result of the appropriateness of our current curricular and co-curricular programs, the continuing high level of scholarly and professional activity of all GEMS faculty, and the numerous and meaningful independent study and research
opportunities provided for our students by the department (see below).

In other activities around the department, Dr. Druckenbrod and Dr. Sun assisted Rider’s Office of Information Technology in the acquisition of new, high-end, GIS capable computers for use in many GEMS courses. Dr. Druckenbrod also developed the much-needed and long-desired new course, ENV-220: Weather and Climate Change, which will be offered for the first time this spring. Dr. Husch was a participating faculty member, along with Dr. Cindy Newman and Professor Susan Denbo, both of CBA, and Dr. Laura Hyatt, of Biology, in IND-316: Nature’s Business: Panama (see story), as well as assisting Professor Denbo and Dr. Newman in the planning and development of this year’s Nature’s Business course and trip to Peru. Dr. Schwimmer and Dr. Smalley continued as active members of the Rider SELECT IDEAS committee, where participating faculty develop, share, and try new teaching practices and strategies that focus on student-centered learning.

Under the continuing leadership of Dr. Schwimmer and Dr. Smalley, and as part of the department’s ongoing Teaching and Learning Outcomes Assessment Program, an Internet search was conducted to gather existing data on what national employers consider the most critical and important characteristics for college graduates in the geological, environmental, and marine sciences. GEMS faculty also met with representatives of local environmental and geological consulting firms in order to ascertain what local employers are looking for in today’s college graduates and to discuss and evaluate the appropriateness of the career preparation GEMS programs currently provide.

GEMS faculty also received a fair amount of much-deserved recognition for their professional and scholarly work. Dr. Druckenbrod was awarded a renewal of his research grant, Investigating the forest history of Mount Vernon, by the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association. The renewal includes funding for two undergraduate research assistants, Nicole Chakowski ’12 and Allison Ingram ’13, who helped Dr. Druckenbrod collect forest survey and tree-ring data at Mount Vernon this past summer. Dr. Gallagher was featured in a story in New Jersey Monthly about dinosaurs and on the television program, Super City, about the geology of New York City broadcast on the History Channel, both of which prominently and repeatedly mentioned Rider University and GEMS. Dr. Gallagher also was awarded a grant from the Marie Richards Fund of the Wagner Free Institute of Science for travel to Germany and England for field trips and to collect fossil specimens. Dr. Husch was 1 of only 16 scientists from across New Jersey appointed to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Science Advisory Board. Dr. Schwimmer was appointed to the Praxis Earth and Space Science National Advisory Committee for the Educational Testing Service. Finally, Dr. Druckenbrod, Dr. Smalley, and Dr. Sun all were awarded Rider University Summer Research Fellowships to help fund their ongoing research projects.

As usual, many GEMS students and faculty have been very active over the past year in presenting the results of their collaborative research. Matthew Nelson ’09 co-authored a manuscript with Dr. Sun, Dr. Chen (Chemistry), and Dr. Husch on Soil mineral structural water loss during LOI analyses: Impact on soil organic matter content determinations, which was published in the Canadian Journal of Soil Science. Anne (Amrita) Paul ’10 co-authored a paper with Dr. Smalley on Comparing predatory fish populations between two islands: densely populated Roatan, Honduras, and sparsely populated San Salvador, Bahamas, which was presented at the Benthic Ecology Annual Meeting in Wilmington, NC; Christien Laber ’11 and Jessica Langlois ’10 also attended the meeting. Anne also published her research
results in Horizons: The Scholarly Journal of Rider University. **Kelly Lucarino ’07** and **Maria Huffine ’10** co-authored a manuscript with **Dr. Sun** and **Dr. Husch** on *Retention of sodium in a watershed due to the application of winter deicing salt*, which was presented at the 10th International Symposium on Stochastic Hydraulics and 5th International Conference on Water Resources and Environment Research Quebec, Canada. The paper also was published in the conference’s proceedings volume. Finally, **Charles Zielinski ’10** published a manuscript on *Trichloroethylene (TCE) transport into soil and groundwater* in Horizons: The Scholarly Journal of Rider University.

In addition to the published research already described, at least eight other research projects were undertaken and completed by GEMS students, including those by **Stacy Belgiovene ’10**, **Elissa Connolly-Randazzo ’11**, **Elizabeth Evans ’12**, **Christien Laber ’11**, **Jessica Langlois ’10**, **Leeann Sinpatanasakul ’11**, and **Robert Weber ’11**. The results from many of these additional student research projects were presented at campus-wide undergraduate research symposia.

A large number of GEMS students also received awards for their many academic accomplishments. First and foremost, **Emily Di Paolo ’10**, an Integrated Sciences and Math (ISM)/Elementary Education double major with concentrations/minors in Mathematics and Middle School Education (whew!), was named a recipient of a 2010 New Jersey Distinguished Student Teacher of the Year Award (see story)! **Nina Joffe ’12**, **Christien Laber ’11**, and **Leeann Sinpatanasakul ’11** were inducted into the Tri-Beta Honor Society and **Emily Di Paolo ’10** and **Caitlin Ryan ’10** were inducted into the CLAES Honor Society. Finally, 36 GEMS students earned Dean’s List recognition for the fall 2009 semester and 41 earned that recognition for the spring 2010 semester.

Congratulations to all our students for all their hard work and their accomplishments.

**ALUMNI UPDATE**

Once again, many GEMS alumni either stopped by the department for a visit or contacted us with their latest news. If you haven’t done so recently, please feel free to bring us up to date with what is going on in your life. You can find additional alumni news, including specific contact information, on the GEMS alumni web page, located at www.rider.edu/172_1911.htm. As always, we look forward to hearing from you.

**Steve Bell ’79** was inducted into the Rider University Stairway of Fame on June 12, 2010 (see story above). Our congratulations to Steve for this greatly deserved honor and recognition.

**Wayne Froehlich ’84** is now working for EMSL Analytical, Inc., one of the nation’s leading environmental testing firms. Wayne was recently transferred from EMSL’s Wallingford, CT lab to their new corporate headquarters in Cinnaminson, NJ, where he is anticipating a new assignment in their materials science division.

**Cheryl Coffee-Gomez ’93** and her husband, Jorge Gomez, are the parents of two girls, Laura and Sarah, and live in Yardley, PA. Cheryl is now working as the Approvals Manager for the Environmental, Health, and Safety Department of Clean Earth Inc. and is responsible for waste approval and environmental compliance for seven facilities. She completed her Master’s degree with the University of Denver in Environmental Policy and Management in 2004. Congratulations on all accounts!

**Russell Burke ’02** completed his doctorate in Marine Science in the Fisheries Science Department at the College of William and Mary’s School of Marine Science, Virginia
Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in May 2010. Congratulations Dr. Burke!

Russ is continuing his work at VIMS as a staff Marine Scientist. His doctoral research focused on the use of alternative substrates to restore native oyster populations in Chesapeake Bay. In 2009, Russ was a co-author on a research paper published in Science Magazine dealing with improved methods for restoring the native oysters in the Great Wicomico River, Chesapeake Bay. Because of its potential economic and ecological ramifications, the article was the subject of numerous news stories around the country, including one in the New York Times. Additionally, the Governor of Maryland cited the Science Magazine article in his decision to dramatically change Maryland’s oyster restoration program from fishery-focused to sanctuary-focused. Russ also was part of team that won the 2009 Coastal America Award, the only award for ecology presented by the White House. Finally, Russ presented a very interesting talk on his VIMS research results at the 2010 Rider University Science Reunion on June 12, 2010.

Rob Croskey '03 and his wife, Kathryn (Knauss, Rider '07), are now living in the Mount Holly, NJ area and Rob is back working with Aqua Survey, Inc. in Flemington, NJ as a Field Operations Specialist. He also is working on attaining his U.S. Coast Guard Six-Pack License (that just sounds so wrong!) to become a certified boat captain. At Aqua Survey, Rob is the company’s Marine Ecologist, specializing in fisheries sampling and marine vertebrate and invertebrate taxonomy. Rob says he is greatly enjoying being back in the Mid-Atlantic region, and is spending all of his spare time down in Wildwood, both at the beach and fishing.

Steven Snopkowski '03 is working for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Water Supply, helping to monitor the city’s drinking water supply. As he points out, supplying the huge volumes of water the city requires involves a vast and complex water distribution system, one few people are really aware of or appreciate.

Nicholas Masi '04 recently started working for Sunburst Consulting on a natural gas prospect in western Pennsylvania. He will be monitoring drilling progress, advising on where the most profitable directions and locations for gas extraction are to be found, and writing many, many reports documenting his work (and you thought all those lab reports we assigned were a waste of time!). Nick also mentioned that Sunburst Consulting is looking to hire additional recent graduates (or soon to graduate) for this type of work.

Tim Swavely '07 is an Environmental Scientist/Geologist with Stell Environmental where he headed down to Texas to work for four months with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on a coring project. Tim also had the good sense to get engaged to Brandi Novak '07 and Brandi had the questionable sense to accept! Congratulations to both.

Mike Ciaramella '09 started a Masters of Veterinary Science: Pathology and Microbiology at the University of Prince Edward Island in Canada. He also will be working for the University at their Atlantic Veterinary College Lobster Science Center on a project dealing with lobster nutrition (talk about eating your data!).

Ashleigh Layton '09 worked as an environmental contractor at Fort Monmouth, NJ. Her job responsibilities mostly involved quality checking analytical data reports resulting from the long-term soil and groundwater monitoring of potentially contaminated sites at the fort. Ashleigh also recently graduated from the fire academy and is now a volunteer firefighter for the town of
Long Branch, NJ; she's also finished the EMT academy in December. Can't wait to see her on a 9-1-1 call!

**Matthew Nelson '09** is an Injection Specialist with Geo-Cleanse International, an environmental remediation company specializing in the in-situ chemical oxidation/reduction of pollution spills. Matt oversees the underground injection of hydrogen peroxide, which oxidizes organic contaminants into non-hazardous compounds. In addition, he's the on-site Health and Safety Officer and also does some sample analysis when the injection wells are being drilled. Matt says it's all very cool and because of work he's been traveling around the country and to Belgium. The best news, at least as far as we're concerned, is that Matt also mentioned that he was much better prepared for all aspects of the job than other new hires who came from bigger, more prestigious schools.

**Sara Pethick '09** has been working at Camp Orkila, a YMCA educational facility located on Orcas Island, Washington, 70 miles north of Seattle. Until recently, she had been teaching various classes, including geology, outdoor living skills, and plankton and marine investigations, to fourth through eighth graders. However, starting this past summer, Sara is the camp's Marine Science Director, supervising approximately six instructors while also designing and scheduling courses. Sara says the island and its surroundings are absolutely gorgeous, and on a clear day you can see Vancouver Island, Canada, the Olympic Mountains, Mount Baker, and Mount Rainer all at the same time!