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**Winter-Spring 2005**

**Newsletter Deadline: Feb. 1, 2005.** Please send news, items, questions, & answers to Stan at [sdunagan@utm.edu](mailto:sdunagan@utm.edu).

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## The President's thoughts...

The summer of 2004 will likely be remembered as the season of the hurricane. Hurricane Ivan closed down my institution and delayed the writing of this President's report by more than a week. Mobile was largely spared, but we have been in catch-up mode ever since and my writing time has just vanished. Areas to the east of us were much more seriously impacted. Poor Florida. Four powerful storms so far this year and we haven't even come to the end of Hurricane season.

I will remember the Summer of 2004 for another reason besides hurricanes. It was the first time since I have been associated with the SENAGT that Alabama actually selected a state OEST award winner. This year, there were 4 state OEST winners in the southeastern region. The overall regional OEST competition was very competitive this year. Ms. Tina King from Tennessee was judged the winner, but it was neck and neck between TN, GA, AL and SC. I am very pleased to see that we are getting more OEST nominees from the southeastern states, but I will not be satisfied until we have one winner from each of our service area states. I know how difficult it is for the state reps to organize an OEST competition each year. There is only so much time in the day that is available for SENAGT business. To spread the work out a bit, and to also increase SENAGT exposure across the states, I am trying to organize two official reps per state. New reps have been added for Alabama, Mississippi and North Carolina. With these additions, AL, GA, MS, and TN each have two reps. We will work on getting additional reps for FL, SC, NC, LA. New state reps include:

**Alabama:** Doug Wymer (University of West Alabama, Livingston); joins David Kopaska-Merkel (Geological Survey of Alabama, Tuscaloosa)

**Mississippi:** David Dockery (Mississippi Office of Geology, Jackson); joins Gail Russell (University of Southern Mississippi; Hattiesburg)

**North Carolina:** Randy Bechtel (North Carolina Geological Survey, Raleigh); replaces Mary Watson who left the survey a while ago.

I am also pleased to announce that Nancy Huebner (GA) has agreed to serve as our Vice President. We kind of got behind schedule this year and failed to officially send ballots to our members in the spring when elections are normally held. Given how late it is in the year, Nancy will serve as Acting VP for the remainder of the year. In the Spring of 2005, she will officially be a nominee for VP. With Nancy's participation, and the help of the state reps, we are in pretty good shape as far as administration is concerned. Now might be the time to start seeking increases in our overall membership. We are a relatively small group and when one considers the importance of geoscience education to our region, we shouldn't be. One of the best ways to improve membership numbers is to get the word out about the NAGT and in particular, the SENAGT. The OEST awards do this, as does our sponsorship of key events at geological meetings.

The SENAGT will be well represented at the 2005 SEGSA meeting in Biloxi (March 17-18, 2005). Mississippi state rep Gail Russell is one of the primary organizers and through her encouragement (some might say arm-twisting!) the SENAGT has agreed to run an afternoon field trip and a geoscience education oral/poster theme session. The following is from the preliminary announcement and was drawn from the University of Southern Mississippi website (<http://www.usm.edu/geology/SEGSA2005.htm>):

**Field trip.** On the Beach – Geology and Ecology of a Barrier Island System. Sponsored by the SE NAGT.

**Theme Session.** K-16 Earth Science Education: Teaching Geology in a Shifting Socio-environmental Environment. Sponsored by the Southeastern Section, National Association of Geoscience Teachers.

As I scrolled through the rest of the preliminary announcement, I noticed that Michael Gibson (TN state rep) was also co-chairing a symposium:

Exceptional Biotas and Fossil Preservation in the Southeast. Sponsored by the Southeastern Section, Paleontological Society. Michael A. Gibson, UT – Martin, [mgibson@utm.edu](mailto:mgibson@utm.edu); David Schwimmer, Columbus State University, [schwimmer\\_david@colstate.edu](mailto:schwimmer_david@colstate.edu).

And David Dockery (MS state rep) was also running a field trip:

Classic Eocene and Oligocene Marine Localities in Central Mississippi. Sponsored by the Southeastern Section, Paleontological Society. David T. Dockery III, Mississippi Office of Geology, [David\\_Dockery@deq.state.ms.us](mailto:David_Dockery@deq.state.ms.us).

So all in all, there will be a great opportunity to chat up the importance of the SENAGT to our colleagues in Biloxi. Plan now to attend the meeting and don't forget to submit an abstract for the geoscience education theme session.

Submitted Sept 26, 2004

Doug Haywick, Mobile, AL

# Upcoming Events!

Dec. 1-3, 2005	National Science Teachers Association meeting in Nashville, TN ( <a href="http://www.nsta.org/index.html">http://www.nsta.org/index.html</a> )
March 17-18, 2005	Southeastern GSA regional meeting in Biloxi, MS (official GSA website: <a href="http://www.geosociety.org/sectdiv/southe/05semtg.htm">http://www.geosociety.org/sectdiv/southe/05semtg.htm</a> )

## Web Resources

### Virtual Fieldtrips

Members might be interested in some short virtual field trips I've put together, mainly to modern and ancient carbonate environments. These are designed to be used in undergraduate courses, and I'd welcome any feedback. You can give this via the DLESE review system - there's a button on the home page, or by e-mail to me. The URL is: <http://www.virtual-geology.info/FILTER/intro.html>.

### Resources for Earth Science and Geography Instruction

If you are interested in directing your students toward the best earth and environmental science websites, Mark Francek of Central Michigan University has developed, "RESOURCES FOR EARTH SCIENCE AND GEOGRAPHY INSTRUCTION" at <http://webs.cmich.edu/resgi/>. The 800 + sites are reviewed on the basis of organization, authenticity, scope, format, and ease with which lessons can be developed. Be sure to take a look at a growing library of earth science animations (under "Earth Science Animations") and movies that will be useful for enlivening class concepts.

This site also maintains a weekly "Earth Science Site of the Week" listserv in which Francek reviews a variety of the most interesting science related sites on the web. The list is growing and reaches around 2000 professionals from around the U.S. The mailing is also distributed by at least five other earth science lists. If you would like Mark Francek to include you in the mailing, email him ([Mark.Francek@cmich.edu](mailto:Mark.Francek@cmich.edu)). The mailing has no commercial agenda and is active only during the fall and spring semesters (about 30 mailings per year).

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**IF YOU HAVE A POTENTIAL  
CANDIDATE IN MIND FOR YOUR  
STATE OEST AWARD, GO TO:  
[WWW.NAGT.ORG/OEST.HTML](http://WWW.NAGT.ORG/OEST.HTML)**

**Get involved!**

## Outstanding Earth Science Teacher (OEST) Awards

Alabama William Hurd Finnegan (Davidson High School in Mobile)  
Georgia Mrs. Nwakaego (Ego) Okafor (8th grade, Henderson Middle School, Chamblee)  
South Carolina Mr. Tom Littlejohn (Greenville)  
Tennessee Mrs. Tina King (K-6th grade, West Elementary in Mt. Juliet)

### Congratulations to our State OEST Winners!

Discover more about Ego, Tina, and the other OEST winners online at:  
[www.utm.edu/~sdunagan/senagt/sf2004/OEST.htm](http://www.utm.edu/~sdunagan/senagt/sf2004/OEST.htm)

### Ego Okagor - Georgia OEST Winner

Mrs. Okafor teaches 8th grade Earth Science. She has been with the Dekalb County School System for 15 years and at Henderson Middle School for 9 years. Her education includes a B.Sc. (Honors) Zoology and a Master of Science Education. She anticipates the completion of her Ed. S. in Science Education in Dec. 2004. She has been the Chair of the Science Department at Henderson Middle School since 2000.

Ego actively participates in the Science Fair, Partners in Education, and Textbook committees at her school as well as coaching the SECME (Science, Engineering, Communications, Math, and Enrichment) team. Ego is an active member with the National Science Teachers' Association (NSTA), Georgia Science Teachers' Association (GSTA), Pi Lambda Theta (International Honor Society & Prof. Assoc. In Education). She recently conducted a workshop titled, "What's up with weather maps?" at NSTA conference in April, 2004. Mrs. Okafor has also co-authored THE EARTH SCIENCE CURRICULUM FOR JUNIORS and she has been involved with the Dekalb County Schools Earth Science Curriculum Committee and the County Realignment of the Science Curriculum. Her awards include: Who's Who Amongst America's Teachers 2004, Georgia Earth Science Teacher of the Year 2003, and Who's Who Amongst America's Teachers 2002.

### Tina King - SENAGT Regional OEST Winner and the Tennessee State OEST Winner

In 1997, my life as I knew it changed forever. A 55-day trip out west to hunt for fossils and minerals, as well as to excavate dinosaur bones, left a lasting mark on my life and teaching. This trip, along with being an active member of the Tennessee Earth Science Teachers Association, the Tennessee Educators of Aquatic Marine Sciences, as well as my involvement in two Middle Tennessee rock clubs, has given me a passion for science and learning. Earth Science suddenly connected me to learning, and still today, it seems that I can't learn science fast enough. Who would have thought that in four short years, I would find myself as a member of a science research team on a continent devoted to science. In Nov-Dec, 2001, I left my classroom for two months to live in a field camp on the continental coastline of Antarctica near the Ross Ice Shelf. My participation on this science expedition has also left a lasting mark that will always stay with me and be a part of my teaching and learning. This experience was made possible by the National Science Foundation's "Teachers Experiencing Antarctica and the Arctic" program. Dr. Sam Bowser, a research scientist at the Wadsworth Center, New York State Department of Health, led the science expedition. The divers/scientists on this team dove below 12-feet of ice to collect one-celled organisms called foraminifera. While in Antarctica, I kept a daily journal with images, which may be accessed from the calendar on the TEA web page: [http://tea.rice.edu/tea\\_kingfrontpage.html](http://tea.rice.edu/tea_kingfrontpage.html). When I reflect back to 1997, I realize that a rock, a fossil, and a mineral pulled me into science. Science has become so ingrained in me that it has now become a part of my daily life. My goal is to have science touch lives, in much the same way that Earth Science and Antarctica changed me. For me, Earth Science started the snowball rolling down the hill. My learning has grown by leaps and bounds and my hope is to move people along with me. Learning is about sharing, growing, and moving forward to the next level of learning. My goal is to pull others into learning and science.

I graduated with a BS degree in education (K-9) from Belmont University in 1977. I received a Masters in Educational Leadership in 1999 from Trevecca Nazarene University. I have taught grades K-6, all subjects, including Title 1 Math for the past 24 years. I am currently teaching at West Elementary in Mt. Juliet, TN, for the Wilson County School District, with a goal to pull students of all ages into learning. I have made many presentations at NSTA and TSTA over the past four years to share curriculum and newly developed activities. When I received the Presidential Award of Excellence for Mathematics and Science Teaching in 1999, it gave me the opportunity to buy my first microscope, as well as enabled me to develop curriculum to bring hands-on Earth science activities into the classroom. I was recently invited to NSF to speak on behalf of the Antarctic TEA teachers to tell how the Antarctic experience has been transferred to classrooms. While in Washington, a project manager for the Office of Polar Programs said that the one thing that he noticed that kept coming out in my presentation was my apparent love for learning. I feel that Earth Science changed my learning, and by helping me see the connections to learning, instilled this value inside of me. This "need" to learn has been the catalyst for many adventures into learning, whether snorkeling in a volcano, rafting the Grand Canyon, scuba diving with sea turtles on the Great Barrier Reef, walking on glaciers in Alaska, or walking on the frozen Arctic Ocean. My goals for the next few years are to connect science by incorporating current science research in the Polar Regions to life in other regions. I will continue to work with Dr. Bowser to transfer his research to students and teachers by working to develop a micro study on fossil foraminifera. Foraminifera make a wonderful connection between the paleo and modern environments (lens on the past and present), as well as the Earth as a system.

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## REGIONAL NEWS

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### **Alabama** (submitted by David C. Kopaska-Merkel)

In May, Andrew K. Rindsberg handed the leadership of the Geological Survey of Alabama Education Committee back to David C. Kopaska-Merkel, who was made quadriplegic in a car accident the previous year. David is using voice-recognition software and sheer determination to return to useful work. One of the Committee's main activities was to continue donating copies of 'Lost Worlds in Alabama Rocks' to school libraries by arrangement with the publisher, Jim Lacefield. The committee also accepted donations of fossils from amateurs (chiefly Don Williams) to redistribute to schoolteachers. Fossils were distributed both to individual teachers and to people organizing workshops for teachers. The Geological Survey of Alabama also donated brochures, posters, and other publications to a variety of workshops for teachers held around the state. The Education Committee also raised \$3000+ in its annual golf tournament. The committee ran a Fossil Dig at Tuscaloosa's CityFest, as it has done for many years.

An annual hands-on field workshop on paleontology for teachers was held last October in Livingston, hosted by Doug Wymer and Richard Thurn at the University of West Alabama. The Geological Survey of Alabama co-leads the workshop with the University of West Alabama. Each year, two or three dozen teachers, mostly from Alabama, participate. Nancy Huebner (Fernbank Museum of Natural History) attended and was so enthusiastic about it that she invited organizers to give a talk about it at a session on geologic education that she ran along with Chris Bean at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Section of the Geological Society of America. The workshop will be held once again in October of 2004.

Alabama is in the process of selecting science textbooks for use in the public schools. The state is also revising its science course of study. A volunteer group founded by Bob Collins, Alabama Citizens for Science Education ([www.alscience.org](http://www.alscience.org), [alscience@mindspring.com](mailto:alscience@mindspring.com)), is monitoring both processes and participating where possible. This group consists of scientists, parents, and other interested parties. The group is affiliated with the National Center for Science Education, and is particularly interested in preserving accurate and comprehensive education about evolution in the public schools. We still have a disclaimer in our textbooks, alleging that there is something peculiarly unviable about the theory of evolution, and during the last legislative session there was a pretty strong attempt to allow the teaching of creationism in public schools.

On a positive note, inquiry based science initiatives are warming their way into some AL public schools. In addition, there seem to be more professional development workshops for science teachers and those that do exist seem to be getting bigger or at least getting more attention. This may be a reaction to declining funding for public education in the state, but it is still a very good thing. Alabama NAGT sponsored two workshops at the Alabama Science Teachers Association meeting in October, 2004. For the first time in a very long time AL had a state OEST winner, Hurd Finnegan, who teaches at Davidson high school in South Alabama. Hurd will receive his plaque, a cash award, and a book prize at the 2004 ASTA meeting in October. We reviewed and commented on the latest version of the strategic plan. Our plans for the future include trying to get more nominees for the OEST award, and expanding our presence at the ASTA meeting. Dr. Andrew K. Rindsberg and members of Alabama Citizens for Science Education helped prepare this report.

### **Tennessee** (submitted by Michael A. Gibson)

At the K-12 level in Tennessee, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) continues to drive outreach programs and funding, even at the university level. This year the Tennessee Science Teachers Association (TSTA) met in Nashville Nov. 13-15 and the format for the meeting was modified to include day-long intensive programs deeper in content, covering a narrower range of topics, and for a longer period. State-wide teachers polled last year to determine the subject areas they had greatest need in having workshops developed for and Earth Science ranked high. Consequently, the Tennessee Earth Science Teachers (TEST) developed its yearly activities with this in mind. This year TEST chose the topic of Tennessee's Mineral, Industrial, and Fossil Fuel Resources as the vehicle. After identifying nearly 25 minerals, rocks, and other resources to include in the workshop, along with inquiry-based activities developed by the teachers, the organization assembled over 180 specimen kits that will be given to participants in several workshops. Drs. Don Byerly (UTK) and Michael Gibson (UTM) will lead the day-long workshops providing the content, while TEST educators will assist and help train teachers. A web-page is being developed to serve as a resource for the workshop participants, as well as other teachers ([www.nashvillefossils.com/resources/tnresources.html](http://www.nashvillefossils.com/resources/tnresources.html)).

UT Martin was funded through the Math and Science Partnership Program ([www.state.tn.us/education/nr041028.htm](http://www.state.tn.us/education/nr041028.htm)) to provide middle school educators with in-depth content instruction over a 3-yr period. Institutes for Middle Grade Science Education in West Tennessee (IMEGS) is a 3-year series of 2-week summer institutes, with supporting follow-up throughout the following year, offered through UT Martin through partnership with 11 middle school systems in Tennessee. A potential total of 108 teachers will receive instruction from 8 science faculty and 2 education faculty spanning Life Sciences (Biology), Earth and Planetary Science (Geology and Astronomy), and Physical Science (Physics/Chemistry) designed to help teachers reach content proficiency in all of these areas. Participants can accrue up to 9 hours of graduate science credit and 6 hours of corresponding education graduate credit. Teachers will also participate in at least one follow-up content workshop at the annual TSTA meeting as part of the program and will receive Teaching Kits for their classrooms. Field and laboratory learning is stressed using facilities associated with the UT Martin campus, the Reelfoot Biological Station, and Coon Creek Science Center. Post institute instruction will include asynchronous on-line content delivery and intensive day-long sessions run in conjunction with the annual Tennessee Science Teachers Association annual meeting. Emphasis of IMEGS is increased content knowledge of teacher participants as demonstrated through teacher performance in the program and increased student achievement as measured by TCAP, among other indicators.

The 2004 OEST winner for Tennessee was Ms. Tina King (see OEST Winner), who was also the regional award recipient. Ms. King receives both of her awards at the annual meeting of the TSTA in Nashville, Nov. 14, 2004. TEST has revamped its website and plans on additional expansions soon – go to [www.tnearthscience.org/test9-04.htm](http://www.tnearthscience.org/test9-04.htm).

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