Geology students rock Grand Canyon

By CAROLINE BRYAN
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Courtesy Photo

Regional Field Geology students stand on an 80 foot petrified tree in the petrified forest in Arizona. The group traveled the southwestern United States this summer as part of the G420 course curriculum.

Students of the G420, Regional Field Geology class spent seven days and six nights touring the southwestern United States this summer.

The students visited Hoover Dam, Meteor Crater, Petrified Forest National Park and Lowell Observatory. They toured Jerome, Ariz., once the world's largest copper mine, Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument, Zion National Park and did a geologic tour of the Grand Canyon.

"We've been to ten or twelve different national parks and monuments over the last couple of years," Glen Mason, professor of geoscience , said.

Mason is already planning next summer's trip to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. He said it may be possible to take a class to Alaska and has a dream to plan a trip to the British Isles.

"I would like to go the British Isles because that is where the foundations of modern geology and the concepts of geologic time were first formulated," he said. "The rocks that were used to define most of the geologic time periods can be found there."

The class is open to anyone, but Mason prefers that students have previously taken a geology course. There is a limit of 18 people and geology students will be given first priority.

"I've had art majors, I've had business majors and I've even had people from other universities go," Mason said.

Curt Peterson, accounting assistant for the school of education, attended the field trip and plans to go to Yellowstone next summer with the class as well.

"I went along because I love the southwest," he said. "I go twice a year."

The first summer session of the class is spent reviewing the geology of the area to be visited. The second session is spent doing field study.

"For geology students the best thing you can do is go see geology," Mason said. "It's really learning by immersion."

Students were graded on class participation, field participation and a field notebook kept on the trip.

Students who took Regional Field Geology had to pay to take the class as well as pay $1200 that covered air fare, room and board, transportation and food. There have been several students who have taken the class more than once.

"These students are highly motivated students," Mason said. "We go from 8 in the morning to 8 at night."

Mason had a student in the past that refused to leave the rock she was working on.

"I literally picked her up under my arm and carried her down," he said. "She wouldn't leave. It must have done something. She's in graduate school now studying vertebrate paleontology."

Peterson said the trip was a very broadening experience for him. He has seen the Grand Canyon many times and his favorite part of the trip was seeing the expressions of those who had never seen it.

"Every year I'm there with people who haven't seen it before," Peterson said. "I love the reaction. It's terrifically moving."

Peterson compared the trip to summer camp.

"They were all sharing rooms, life and experiences," he said. "I was kind of the odd man out because I'm way older."

Peterson was surprised to see an interesting side of geology during the class and views the field differently now.

"Before, I thought if you've seen one rock you've seen them all," he said. "Why they got there and how they got there is very interesting."

Peterson felt the trip was a tremendous experience and recommends it to anyone.

Weeks of Welcome entertain, educate

By JOSH BARBER
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IU Southeast students had a unique opportunity to travel the world from McCullough Plaza Sept. 5 during the "Around the World in 90 Minutes" event, sponsored by the Student Program Council and the Adult Student Center as part of the Weeks of Welcome series.

The event began later in the day at 4:30 so students who work during the day could participate, and was intended to get students involved in campus life, Kimberly Pelle, Adult Student Center coordinator, said.

The afternoon centered on the music and belly dancing of the Middle Eastern dance troupe Gypsies of the Nile, a local Southern Indiana Middle Eastern dance troupe.

The group featured many different forms of belly dancing and music, including techno, cabaret, Turkish and other Middle Eastern dance styles, giving students a visual and musical learning aid of cultures from the Middle East.

They played several instruments including a lute, a small hand drum and a guitar.

The lute and hand drum are of Middle Eastern ancestry and gave an interesting and unique sound to the music.

There also was an opportunity for students to try a sample of cuisine from around the world.

The menu included eggrolls, tacos, gyros and cold drinks provided by Conference and Catering.

The Student Program Council was present to give students the opportunity to pick up the new IUS planner.

There was also information available for students from the Adult Student Center and Student Program Council.

The name of the event came from the 1873 book by Jules Verne "Around the World in 80 Days," changing "80 days" into the length of the trip taken by IUS students in "90 minutes."

The event was well attended. Attendance was approximately 70 to 80 students sporadically, coming and going through out the event.

As a result the line for the food never backed up further than five or six people at a time.

The event was also a chance for students to mingle with other IUS students on campus.

Photo by Josh Barber

A dancer from the Middle Eastern dance troupe Gypsies of the Nile performs at the "Around the World in 90 Minutes" event.

New greenhouse under way

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The Life Sciences department at IU Southeast will be getting a new greenhouse. Planning for the greenhouse began in 2005, but construction began two months ago with the final approval from IU Bloomington.

The foundation is poured and construction is expected to be completed within the next few weeks.

Funding for the new greenhouse was made feasible by academic excellence programming. The original assembly for the new greenhouse was budgeted at $75 thousand but will come in under budget at $60 thousand.

David Taylor, professor of biology, said even though the new greenhouse is smaller than the existing one, it will provide some much needed space.

"If it were possible to sit the new greenhouse inside the old one it would fit because the new greenhouse is going to be only half the size of the new one," Taylor said.

He credits Bahman Nassim, Dean of Natural Sciences, for the planning process.

"Nassim began putting a plan together for the new greenhouse two years ago when a lack of space for research became a concern and an additional greenhouse became a must," he said.

The new greenhouse will be fully automated like the existing one in order to maintain a climate controlled environment for encouraging plant development.

It will mainly be used for student research but will include additional space for classes. The old greenhouse will continue to be used for class material and student projects.

Taylor said 38 percent of IUS biology graduates go on to obtain professional positions in the biology field and 29 percent take their skills nationally.

"Two fifths of our graduates are from graduate research," Taylor said.

"There were 83 students who graduated in 2003 whose degrees were in research and these statistics show that IUS sends knowledgeable students out into the field of biology," he said.

Many of the most interesting plants that are grown in the greenhouse are carnivorous plants.

Douglas Darnowski, professor of biology, grows and does research with carnivorous and pitcher plants.

'Women might be able to fake orgasms. But men can fake a whole relationship.'

– Sharon Stone