On the 3rd Jan, the Geoscience booth at the Information Day was well attended by a crowd of enthusiastic first year students, who took a day off from their well-deserved holiday to have a chat with Geoscience academics, some having barely recovered from their new year’s party. Classes are still a long way away so everything should fall into place in due time.

Every two years, the Tom Vallance Medal for the History of Australian Geology (Geological Society of Australia) is awarded by the Earth Sciences History Group to a person who contributed to documenting historical aspects of geological sciences. The inaugural Tom Vallance Medal was awarded to Prof. David Branagan, former academics and now Honorary Associate of the School of Geosciences, for his outstanding contribution to the history of Geoscience in Australia.

The award was presented by Tom Vallance’s widow, Hilary, during the recent IGC meeting in Brisbane. Prof. David Branagan has produced 190 publications, of which some 100 are concerned with history of geology, including his major biography on Professor Tannatt William Edgeworth David, one of the Founding Fathers of our School.

Conratulation David!

Since 1948, the Royal Society of NSW has made an annual award of the Edgeworth David Medal for distinguished work done by a scientist under 35 years of age in Australia and its territories. The 2013 Edgeworth David Medal has been awarded to Dr Joanne Whittaker for her distinguished work in geophysics. The medal will be presented at the Royal Society’s annual dinner next April. We are all invited.

Dr Joanne Whittaker has made many contributions to field of Geophysics and Plate Tectonics (http://usyd.academia.edu/JoanneWhittaker), and remarkably started her career following the foot steps of Sir Edgeworth David in Antarctica.

Congratulations Joanne!
We all have suspicious neighbors curious to know what academics are doing over those long summer months. Behind this polite concern, there is often the worry that tax payer money could be wasted on holidaying academics. All these neighbors should fear not. When not advising future students, academics put in good use these summer months by catching up on the work of post-graduate students, on long overdue reviews and other editorial responsibilities, on writing long overdue papers and putting together research proposals, on hosting overseas colleagues, on preparing lectures and practical classes for the coming teaching semester, on writing their Performance Management Plan (or its alternative the Failure Mitigation & Exit Strategy Plan), and on their spare time doing research.

Annoying neighbors

Visitors

Gone Abroad

Seriously Newsworthy-
A new year, a new baby. On the 1st January, baby Emily Yuxin Qin, daughter of proud dad Michael Chin (Earthbyte), arrived on time for the new year’s party. For big sister Emily, it was love at first sight. Welcome to the world little one.

Prof. Allen McGrew Chair of the Department of Geology at Dayton University (Ohio) visited A/Prof Patrice Rey to work on high-temperature crustal flow in the Basin and Range Province. High-temperature indeed as Al’s visit timely coincided with the record breaking temperature of 46°C (113°F) we had in Sydney.

PhD candidate Leonardo Valenzuela attended the International Sociological Association - European Sociological Association joint conference on Risk and Uncertainty at the University of Amsterdam. Leo’s paper examines how media may contribute to an exercise of ontological politics by explicitly staging and following controversies, instead of trying to unify different ontologies in one single narrative. Ouach!


Postdoctoral fellow Dr Nicolas Flament travelled to South Africa. Nicolas was invited speaker at TopoAfrica 2013 Workshop, held at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, George Campus.

N. Flament, M. Gurnis and R. D. Müller: Evolution of the subduction-driven, long-wavelength topography of Southern Africa since the Jurassic.
We all know how popular fridge magnets are. Well, in the last edition of *Geophysical Journal International*, one of the School Honorary Associates, Prof Gubbins, and his colleagues published a paper on the magnetic properties of mid-oceanic fridges. Great stuff!


Dr Joanne Whittaker, postdoctoral fellow at Earthbyte since 2009, is about to sail to Hobart, to continue her very impressive career.

Jo’s has an outstanding track record in the field of plate tectonics and geophysics. Jo received her PhD from our University in 2008. In 2010, she was awarded the NSW Tall Poppy from the Australian Institute of Policy and Science. In 2013, she was awarded the Prof. Edgeworth David Medal from the Royal Society of NSW for her distinguished contributions as a young scientist under the age of 35 years.

She has published her work in many world-class journals including *Nature* and *Science*.

Jo, we wish you the very best in Hobart, and we thank you for the many contributions you made to our School over many years... and we will be missing your smile!

Well that’s all from the GEO.news desk.

Next month in GEO.news: How to lodge a Spendvision Travel Requisition is 28 easy steps.