

## Dr. Steven Picou Examines the Impact of Hurricanes on Gulf Coast Communities

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ecology and the livelihood lingers indefinitely. Hurricane Katrina combined all the wind and water damage of a natural disaster with all the aspects of a technological disaster:

- 9 million gallons of spilled oil
- 160,000 homes impacted by oil spills
- 100,000 cars flooded released oil and gasoline
- 160,000 garages flooded (probably full of paint and pesticide and WD-40 just like anybody else's garage)

And that creates Picou's Na-Tech event, more similar to a terrorist attack than to either natural or technological disasters. "Like a dirty bomb, it killed people, it destroyed the built, it destroyed the modified, it contaminated the ecology and it forced people to flee."

In fact, Katrina forced the greatest dispersal of people since the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, he said.

Such a dispersal creates problems of its own. "There's not just loss of life and home. These people are refugees and their social network is gone." Typically, if you lose someone close to you, you have your friends, your church, your colleagues, and your neighbors to lean on. "But here, the social fabric was completely destroyed."

And with the dispersal, there are a half million people all over the country who need mental health help and either don't know it or don't know how to get it.

Post-traumatic stress disorders have yet to peak, he said, noting that the first suicide after the Exxon-Valdez spill occurred four years after the event. He anticipates that those displaced will experience a lengthy period of divorce, alcohol and drug abuse, and stress-related physical problems.

After a Na-Tech disaster, a community "will never go back to where it was before," Picou said. So this is the time for the community to transform itself.

Instead, victims commonly become a "corrosive community" — a never-ending cycle of worry, threat, impact, and blame. Loss of trust, of social capital and culture, add to the burden.

Adding to all the problems, Katrina can be categorized as an "engineered" disaster — if there had been no levees, there would have been far fewer homes and businesses, so in a way, the levees help create the problem and their failure made the disaster.

After six months, only two facets of the community response have worked well, Picou said — volunteers and the Coast Guard. "At every other level, there's been a complete response failure. That, by itself, makes for dire consequences."

Picou won't leave the topic in a doom-and-gloom mode, however. "It doesn't have to be the Katrina way," he said.

Eight months after Ivan struck Orange Beach, residents felt that their community was more than halfway to recovery and 90 percent of them were very satisfied with the response of government agencies. Hurricane Wilma blasted Cancun, Mexico, for 48 hours last October and by January, said Picou, "You couldn't tell there'd been a hurricane in that city. The resorts were back and home repairs were almost complete."

After experiencing the 24/7 cleanup in his hometown, he was distressed to see cleanup equipment sitting idle over the weekend in Chalmette, Louisiana, where 1,700 homes were wrecked by toxic floodwater.

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To mitigate any future disasters, it's vital to have a disaster plan that's not a fantasy, Picou said, and to have local involvement in a quick and coordinated response.

"When people see a change every day — the electricity is back or the roads are being cleared or the bridges being rebuilt — it gives a sense of progress and helps them cope with disruption and stress."

All facets of government need to work together. "Politicizing a catastrophe slows the recovery," he said. "It just gives survivors one more thing to be upset about." And finally, people need to plan ahead. "It's unwise to put toxic industries in high-risk areas," he said. "It increases the community's vulnerability."

But planning doesn't necessarily mean nobody can live on the beach. It just means they have to build to strict codes and demand that their government provide secure shelters and adequate evacuation routes. The same percentage of people evacuated Orange Beach for Ivan and New Orleans for Katrina — 81 percent — but that left 900 people in Orange Beach and 100,000 in New Orleans, he said. Having a safe way out is critical, as are adequate shelters for those who can't get away in time.

He recommends that every new public building in coastal communities be built to hurricane standards, so every facility can provide shelter from the storm. The bottom line is simple — "Communities must be proactive when preparing for future Gulf Coast hurricanes."

Arts and Sciences Dean G. David Johnson describes Picou as "an outstanding sociologist who is recognized as one of the world's leading authorities on the effects of disasters on human communities."

While Picou's work is highly regarded by colleagues, "Even more importantly, Steve is viewed by the people who live in the communities he studies as humane, caring, and sympathetic to their plight, even while he maintains his objectivity."

"All social scientists must take special care to treat research participants well, but this is especially true for those researchers who study people that have experienced trauma. This is the quality that I admire most about Steve — he is a role model for how we should relate to others."

## New Chair for the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice Announced

Dr. Nader Entessar has been chosen as Chair for the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice and Professor of Political Science after a national search. He will begin his duties on August 15, 2006. Dr. Entessar is currently Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Law at Spring Hill College in Mobile where he has taught for the past 24 years. From 1985 to 2000, he served as the Chair of the Division of Social Sciences at Spring Hill. Entessar holds a B.A degree in political science from UCLA, and MA in Political Science from the University of Missouri at St. Louis, and a Ph.D. in Political Science and Public Policy from Saint Louis University. His areas of teaching and research interests include international and comparative politics, with a special focus on foreign and defense policy, political economy, international law and organizations, comparative ethnonationalism, and Third World politics (especially the Middle East).

Dr. Entessar's published books include *Reconstruction and Regional Diplomacy in the Persian Gulf* (Routledge), *Iran and the Arab World* (St. Martin's Press), and *Kurdish Ethnonationalism* (Lynne Rienner). He is the author of numerous journal articles. He serves on the editorial boards of several journals and is a regular commentator on the Persian programs of the the BBC, Radio France International, SBS-Radio in

Melbourne Australia, and Voice of America. We are pleased to welcome Dr. Entessar to the University of South Alabama.



Dr. Nader Entessar

## Dean's Leadership Council Begins Its Work

G. David Johnson, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, is pleased to announce the formation of the inaugural Dean's Leadership Council. The Dean's Leadership Council had their first official meeting in January and toured the Alfred and Lucile Delchamps Center for Archaeological Studies after a presentation from Dr. Greg Waselkov, Professor and Director of the Center. The Dean's Leadership Council elected their first Chair, Dr. Linda Busby-Parker, and formed a Nomination Committee to recommend additional members.



### Dr. Linda Busby-Parker

Linda earned her B.A. from the University of South Alabama (English and Creative Writing), her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan (Journalism and Mass Communication), and her M.F.A. from Spalding University (Creative Writing). She is the author of two college level textbooks, numerous research articles, and her first novel, *Seven Laurels*, was published in 2004. *Seven Laurels* won the James Jones Award for a first novel and the Langum Prize for

Historical Fiction. She served on the faculties of Eastern Michigan University, Iowa State University, and the University of South Alabama. She has most recently taught fiction writing as a visiting professor at Spalding University and has taught in a continuing education program at Middle Tennessee State University. In 2004, she was a Tennessee Williams Scholar in Fiction at the Sewanee University summer writing program. As chair of the Arts & Sciences Council, she looks forward to bridging the space between the university community and the civic community and to serving the best interests of the college.



### James Patterson Caldwell

Mr. Caldwell is a marketing consultant and principal consultant for James Caldwell Consulting of St. Louis, MO. Mr. Caldwell previously served as Vice President for the Boeing Company and is a Viet Nam Veteran of the US Marine Corps. Mr. Caldwell serves as Chairman of the Board of Advisors for the James and Ivel Caldwell Scholarship in International Studies at USA. He holds Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from the University of Alabama.



### Dr. Jean P. McIver

Dr. McIver recently retired after serving as Professor of English and Director of African American Studies at USA. Dr. McIver is a member of the Board of Directors of Museum of Mobile, the College Language Association, the Toni Morrison Society, and Delta Sigma Theta, a public service sorority. Dr. McIver is awaiting publication of a book chapter profiling Judge Herman Thomas. She holds the Ph.D. in English from the University of Alabama, an M.A. in English from Atlanta

University, and the A.B. from Miles College. Dr. McIver is Professor Emeritus of English.



G. David Johnson,  
Dean College of Arts and Sciences

## Dean's Letter

This issue of the Arts and Sciences Newsletter reports several outstanding features of the College. I am particularly pleased to announce the formation of the Dean's Leadership Council, a group of leaders who have pledged their support of our College's mission, faculty and students. The responsibilities of the Council are to:

1. Assist with strategic planning, helping identify opportunities and priorities for the College from a community perspective;
2. Investigate and suggest public/private and public/public partnership opportunities for the College;
3. Articulate and promote the accomplishments of the faculty, students, and alumni of the College;
4. In some circumstances, participate in the recruitment of key candidates for positions in the College;
5. Facilitate the success of community outreach efforts of the College;
6. Assist with fundraising.

### 6. Assist with fundraising.

We chose eight outstanding supporters of the College, and one faculty liaison, to serve as the inaugural members of the Council. Each has a strong personal connection to the College and University, and they have pledged to provide good counsel, support, and leadership over the next two years. On behalf of our faculty and students, I thank them for their service.

The lead story in this issue describes the award winning research of an outstanding member of our faculty, Dr. Steve Picou, the Chair of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work. The final story describes our annual Geology Field School, the capstone course for this outstanding undergraduate program. As always, the purpose of our Newsletter is to inform the reader of the wonderful accomplishments of our faculty, students, alumni and supporters. We are happy to share their stories with you.

## Faculty and Student News

**Dr. Larry Dilsaver**, Professor of Earth Sciences, has been awarded the William C. Everhart Award from Eastern National for his article "The Political Geography of National Parks" which appeared in the May 2005 Pacific Historical Review.

**Benjamin J. Shamback**, Assistant Professor of Visual Art, has a show of his paintings at the LeMieux Galleries in New Orleans from March 4-April 29, 2006. For more information, please visit [www.lemiuxgalleries.com](http://www.lemiuxgalleries.com).

The Gold Key Chapter of Mortar Board National College Honor Society at the University recently honored "Top Profs" nominated by student members for support in and out of the classroom in motivating students to excel academically, in community service and in leadership. College of Arts and Sciences faculty so honored for 2005-06 were: **Jennifer Langhinrichsen-Rohling**, Psychology; **Thomas G. Jackson**, Chemistry; **Tim Sherman**, Biology; **Curtis Blakely**, Political Science/Criminal Justice; **Genevieve Dardeau**, Communication; **Joseph Mozur**, Foreign Languages; **David Nelson**, Biology; **Jason Coym**, Chemistry; **Jeanne McPherson**, Communication; **Leonard Macaluso**, History; **Lois Wims**, Political Science/Criminal Justice.

**Dr. Ellen Burton Harrington** (Department of English) has just published an article on nineteenth-century popular short fiction, "Failed Detectives and Dangerous Females: Wilkie Collins, Arthur Conan Doyle, and the Detective Short Story," in the Journal of the Short Story in English.

**Dr. Annmarie Guzy**, English Department, has been selected to serve on the Publications Board of the National Collegiate Honors Council, NCHC. Guzy has also published an entry in the monograph series: "Honors Composition: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices" and has written several articles on honors composition and honors education. She serves on the editorial board of a new composition based journal "First-Year Honors Composition" being launched online this spring. The premiere issue will include Guzy's article "A History and Context for the Scholarly Study of First-Year Honors Composition."

**Dr. T.G. Jackson**, professor of Chemistry, was recently re-elected national president of Alpha Epsilon Delta premedical honor society during the national conference held in St. Louis, MO.

The Dean's Gallery opening was held on March 2. This year's Gallery is a display of student work entitled Typography as Image. Student artists are: **Sharon Samples, Matt Richardson, Charles Bolin, Beth Brothers, Kelsey Breitung, Joan Hearn, Lavon Sellers, Tania**

**Valentin-Nieves, Stephen Larubi, J. Everett Mock, Jason Clark, Mary Bugella, and Carrie Holland**. The show was coordinated and the typography class is taught by **diane gibbs**, Visual Arts Department.

Regions Bank recently extended an agreement to provide Regions Bank/Theresa Duke Scholarship opportunities for College of Arts and Sciences juniors and seniors who are residents of Mobile or Baldwin Counties. We thank Regions Bank for continuing to support our students with significant scholarship awards.

**Dr. Daniel S. Silver**, Department of Mathematics, is the author of "Knot Theory's Odd Origins" recently published by American Scientist. Congratulations to Dr. Silver.

"The Evolution of American Investigative Journalism" a book by **Dr. James Aucoin** of the Department of Communication has recently been published by The Missouri Press. Dr. Aucoin's book examines the historical perspective of investigative journalism from the Revolutionary War through the present.

The 13th Annual Research Forum was held the week of March 27. The College was well represented with student and faculty research collaborations. Participating were: **Ivana Pejatovic, Dr. Juan Luis Mata, Dr. Kelly Major, Dr. Anne Boettcher, Molly Mintz, and Dr. Tim Sherman** (Biology); **Dr. David Forbes, Amanda M. Law, Samit A. Patrawala, Sejal R. Amin, Christie J. Bean, Samantha S. Bokatzian-Johnson, Dr. Eugene A. Cioffi, Adam Mason, Dr. Norris Hoffman, Camden Henderson** (Chemistry); **Petra Webb, Meghan Brenner, Dr. Douglas Haywick** (Earth Sciences/Geology); **Wenjing Li and Dr. Joerg Feldvoss** (Mathematics and Statistics); **J. M. Sanders and J.B. Williams** (Physics); **Josh Foster, Shannon Clark, Jennifer Hughes, Jessica Van Slyke** (Psychology).

The 2006 Visual Arts Faculty Exhibition showcased faculty artwork representing the wide research interest within the Department of Visual Arts. The exhibition features artwork in a wide range of materials and disciplines including painting, printmaking, graphic design, ceramics, sculpture, drawing and photography. Faculty artists include: **Robert Bantens, Claire Evangelista, diane gibbs, Jason Guynes, Tracy Heller, Charles E. Holder, Matthew Johnson, David McCann, Bertice McPherson, Phillipe Oszuscik, Walter Simon, Larry B. Simpson, Benjamin J. Shamback, Kate Seawell, Margarita Skiadas, Wanda Sullivan, Rachel Wright, Tony Wright, Kyeong-Won Youn**.

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## Dean's Leadership Council Announced

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### Ms. Celia Mann Baehr

Ms. Baehr is a certified financial planner with her own business and is Chair of the Board of Directors of the Mobile Symphony, a lifetime member of the USA Alumni Association, and a Member of the Mobile Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce. She is President of the Board of Directors, Gulf States chapter of the Financial Planning Association. Ms. Baehr earned her B.S. degree in geology from the University of Alabama and has the MBA from USA.



### Mr. Michael McGlothren

Mr. Michael McGlothren is a trial lawyer in private practice in Fairhope, Alabama, with the firm of McGlothren & Caldwell, P.C. A magna cum laude graduate of USA with a degree in Philosophy, Mr. McGlothren is a cum laude graduate also of the Cumberland School of Law at Sanford University. Mr. McGlothren has endowed multiple scholarships for philosophy majors and pre-law students at USA in honor of his parents, brother and sister.



### Ms. Judsen Culbreth

Ms. Culbreth has more than thirty years of experience in magazine and television journalism, serving as editor-in-chief of Working Mother, executive editor of Redbook, and the first work/family contributing editor on the Today show. Ms Culbreth currently serves as executive editor of Mobile Bay Monthly. Her first book, "The Boomer's Guide to Online Dating" was recently released by Rodale Publishers. She is a history graduate of the University of South Alabama.



### Dr. Susan Youngblood

Dr. Youngblood serves as Faculty Liaison to the Dean's Leadership Council. She is Assistant Professor of Philosophy and has built the scholarship endowment in philosophy and art and is currently working to enhance premed scholarships for the College of Arts and Sciences. She has presented at national and international conferences in philosophy. Her community service includes a successful fundraising effort

for the Playhouse in the Park. Dr. Youngblood holds the Ph.D. from Tulane, and Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from the University of Alabama.



### Ms. Carlos Fendley Parkman

Carlos Parkman received her B.A. degree from Converse College in 1965. Over the past thirty years, she has been active in organizing and conducting fund raising campaigns for projects and buildings that have benefited social services and the cultural community in Mobile, Alabama. She coordinated and directed the capital campaign for Child Day Care Association, a United Way Agency, which raised 1.5 million dollars to build a center for the children of low income families and

developed annual fund programs for the Mobile Symphony and Mobile Public Library. Carlos is currently serving as president and chief executive officer of the Centre for the Living Arts, a non-profit corporation that operates performing and visual arts centers in downtown Mobile. She is married to Harold D. Parkman, a practicing lawyer.



### Mr. Nick Stratas

Mr. Stratas is a graduate in Journalism from the University of Southern Mississippi. He worked his way through college in the amusement business and upon graduation moved to Mobile and grew the amusement business to the largest in the state. He was a long term President of the Greek Orthodox parish council and received the Archon Order of St. Michael by the Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church. Mr. Stratas and others worked

through AHEPA, a Greek American Civic Organization to build and manage AHEPA retirement units throughout Mobile. He has served as President of the National Housing Board of AHEPA and he and his wife Pipsa chair the Greek Fest in Mobile for the last several years. Through Paideia, the Panhellenic organization, Mr. Stratas has contributed to the Paideia Scholarship for Greek study abroad and Classic Studies at the University of South Alabama.

## Geology Summer Field School

By: dahnldnlf



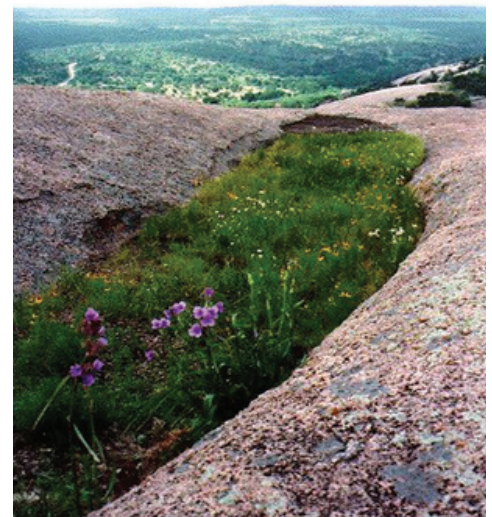
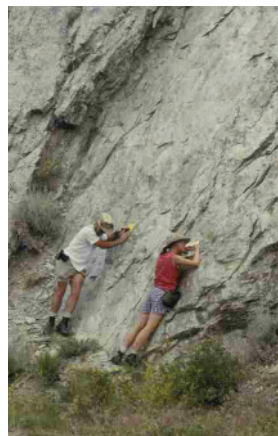
Just before the climb to Wheeler Peak, NM, highest peak (13,161 ft) in New Mexico.

Dr. David Allison, Department of Earth Sciences, will lead students on the six week Geology Summer Field School this May. The trip will encompass Texas, New Mexico, and the Grand Canyon. Students will complete projects in geological surveying, the nature and construction of geologic maps, measurement of stratigraphic sections and the completion of geologic reports. Students will live in base camps and work each day on sites of interest.

The first two weeks of the field course are spent in the Llano Uplift of south-central Texas, just west of Austin. The field course group home base is Inks Lake State Park, located on the banks of the Colorado River.

The middle 2 weeks of the field course are spent in the vicinity of Taos, New Mexico while several mapping projects are completed. These mapping projects expose students to a diverse assemblage of geological formations and structures.

The final portion of the trip will be at the Grand Canyon's North Kaibab Trail in Arizona.



**Left:** Mapping the Pillar metaconglomerates at the Copper Hill project area near Dixon, NM. **Right:** The flora and fauna of the Texas hill country are unique. The region around Inks Lake State Park is similar in climate to the African savannah, and the interaction between climate and geology have produced an environment that is as scenic as it is unique. Below is one of the vernal pools that is an interpretive stop on the trail to the summit of Enchanted Rock.

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# Arts & Sciences

## Dr. Steven Picou Examines the Impact of Hurricanes on Gulf Coast Communities

Hurricane Katrina is "a modern catastrophe that's also a signal event," said Dr. J. Steven Picou, chair of the department of sociology, anthropology, and social work.

It was a natural disaster that impacted technological systems to a point where they broke down and contaminated the biophysical environment, he explained.

Sociologists divide disasters into two types — natural and technological. Hurricane Katrina combined the worst aspects of both into a "Na-Tech" disaster, comparable in its effects to a terrorist attack or a dirty bomb.

The "double trouble" of a Na-Tech disaster causes acute and long-term impacts, said Picou, an environmental sociologist who specializes in the study of disasters. "Disasters force human communities into convulsive change," said Picou.

Since the 1980s, sociologists have recognized a major difference in the way communities react to "acts of humans" versus "acts of God" — both in the scope of the damage and the length of the recovery.

Hurricanes are a typical natural disaster, and you can't even get into Picou's office without realizing the centrality of hurricanes in his life and work. A cartoon at eye-level on his office door shows a man decked in a furry cap, winter jacket, gloves, boots and more, doggedly shoveling thigh-deep snow and muttering his own personal mantra, "At least we don't have hurricanes."

Moreover, Picou lives in the waterfront community of Orange Beach, Alabama — a town ravaged by Hurricane Ivan in 2004 — so he's all too familiar with the effects of wind and water.

But hurricanes are "a traditional and common part of the weather system on the Gulf Coast," he said. "There's no way to wish them away or to play probabilities — that is, if we had a bad one last year, we probably won't this year." In fact, from Ivan in September of 2004 to Wilma in October of 2005, the coast has been hit by storm after storm.

People used to call hurricanes "God's urban renewal," he said, but since the coasts have struggled through so many storms recently, that hardly seems appropriate language. Nonetheless, natural disasters promote an "amplified rebound," in which the built and modified aspects of the community come back better than before. Each storm generally wipes away the most poorly built

structures and those closest to water, leaving the community with a choice about how to rebuild. After Hurricane Frederic in 1979, for example, the "creaky, two-lane wooden bridge" to Dauphin Island was replaced with a safer, sturdier arching concrete structure. After Hurricane Andrew hit Florida in 1993, Miami-Dade County responded by enacting much more stringent building codes. Picou, by

### Disasters force human communities into convulsive change.

the way, followed those codes for his Orange Beach home. A technological disaster, on the other hand, provokes never-ending disruption and trauma. Looking at a series of technological disasters — the Exxon-Valdez oil spill, Three Mile Island, Buffalo Creek, Times Beach, Love Canal and numerous train derailments — Picou said that "it's clear that a community does not recover from a technological disaster as it does from a natural one."

The Exxon-Valdez disaster that spilled oil in Prince William Sound 17 years ago is still causing high stress levels for residents, said Picou, whose National Science Foundation-funded study on that disaster has been published in major journals. While the built and modified facets of the community continue in good shape, the toxic effect on the

