Faculty Feature:
Nelson Rushton

Jack and Judy Rushton met at Auburn University around 1966 and eloped shortly thereafter. Nelson Rushton was soon born, unbeknownst to his grandparents, in the small town of Opelika, Alabama. Eventually his grandparents found out, but they weren't too mad.

By and by, Nelson developed an interest in mathematics, and received his doctorate from the University of Georgia. His dissertation work, under Dan Kannan, was on the subject of stochastic filtering — that is, figuring out where things are, or where they're going to be, even though you can't see them clearly. This work was funded by the U.S. Navy, who hoped to apply it to tracking enemy planes, missiles, and submarines. If the techniques had been around at the time, maybe his grandparents could have used it to keep better tabs on their kids!

In his spare time while studying for his math doctorate, Nelson played in the band Medicine Wheel. Highlights of their short career included performing with Otis Day (of Animal House fame), and being house band at the Blue Monkey nightclub and at Bell Acres Resort.

Nelson finished his doctorate in 1998, but his sweetheart, Miss Vivian Duong, had several years left in pharmacy school at UGA. Primarily for that reason — though in retrospect it was a good move all around — Nelson entered a masters program at UGA in the field of artificial intelligence. While there, he taught himself (and a few others) mathematical logic out of Paul Cohen's book Set Theory and the Continuum Hypothesis, and developed interests in neural networks, natural language processing, and information retrieval. His thesis project, directed by linguist Michael (Continued on page 2)

Faculty Bytes

Marcello Balduccini, RA, presented the paper "Logic Programs with Consistency-Restoring Rules" at the AAAI 2003 Spring Symposium on Logical Formalization of Commonsense Reasoning at Stanford University. He works in the Knowledge Representation Lab with Drs. Gelfond & Watson.

Daniel Cooke, Chair, has once again had a busy spring. He's on the NASA-CMU High Dependability Computing Consortium Review Panel, as well as a member of NASA's Earth Science Enterprise Advisory Subcommittee on Advanced Technology. In addition, he's working as an advisor to NASA's Intelligent Systems Program and NASA's Computing, Information, and Communications Technology Program. To top it all off, he's also the Area Editor for Software Engineering, IEEE Computer.

Larry Pyeatt, Assistant Professor, presented two papers at the IASTED International Conference on Ap-
Nelson Rushton

(Continued from page 1)

Covington, was a search engine for the The Encyclopedia of Southern Appalachian Forest Ecosystems, funded by the U.S. Forest services. While working on this project, Dr. Rushton came to the opinion that information retrieval research is at severe impasse, and began investigating Semantic Web technology as a way to breach this impasse.

Nelson began in Fall 2002 as an assistant professor in the CS department at Texas Tech. His primary research interests these days are, in no particular order, (1) ontologies for the domain of advanced life support systems, (2) extraction of causal links from time series data (3) integrating probabilistic reasoning with the aprobog logic programming language, and (4) developing formal semantics for the SequenceL programming language. He is now happily married to Vivian Duong -- I guess staying in Georgia for a while turned out to be a good idea.

More Faculty Bytes

(Continued from page 1)

plied Informatics in Innsbruck, Austria. The papers were: “Reinforcement learning with decision trees,” and “Curvature-velocity method for differentially steered robots,” with Todd M. Quasny, and Jackie Moore.

B.J. Barton, EECS, worked with Susan Mengel, Associate Professor, on an Honors College Fellowship this academic year. He researched the use of data mining techniques to predict liver disease in patients. For his effort, the Honors College put his poster in third place and he received a $200 scholarship. There were around 80 posters where the other Honors College Fellowship students did an incredible job on their research in their various disciplines. B.J. plans on getting a PhD in EE and an MD. He wants to build machines that are useful in medicine and become a surgeon. Dr. Mengel is working on him to be in CS. :-)

Noe Lopez-Benitez, Associate Professor, has stepped down as Graduate Advisor for Computer Science. Hector Hernandez, Associate Professor, took over as Graduate Advisor on May 15th.

Keri Gleason, Secretary II, has left the Computer Science department to work on finishing her degree in MIS. Keri was formerly our Academic Program Assistant. She also married Jason Ostermann on May 25.

Chris McClimans is our new Director of Undergraduate Labs. Chris replaced Rachel Lampp, who left us in December. Chris is a former EECS student from Tech.

17th Annual ACM Banquet

The 17th Annual ACM Banquet was held on April 22, 2003. Our speaker this year was Jonathan Armstrong, a recent EECS grad from TTU. Jonathan offered a unique perspective on life after graduation, as he has been working at IBM. John Barrs from IBM also attended the banquet.

Scholarships announced at the banquet included the ACM Scholarship (Christina Anaya), the Terry G Myers Endowed Scholarship (Jeremy Hedges), the Exxon Scholarships (Prakash Kapil & Leyikun Taye), the SPACE Scholarship (Bradley Baron), the CS Alumni Scholarship (Christopher Wren) and the CS Outreach Scholarship (Chunyan Fu). This year also marked the first year we awarded 2 Phillips Scholarships in Computer Science (Ayotunde Phillips and Lindsey Cook) as well as the new Raytheon Scholarship in Computer Science (Logan Brown). We’re very excited to see our scholarship program grow this year! ACM officers for 2001-2002 are Julian Russbach (Chair), Pratik Rajani (Vice-Chair), Kapil Prakesh (Secretary), Jason Bagley (Treasurer), and Rattasak Srisinroomgruang (Social Chair).

The ACM also honored CS students who made the Dean’s & President’s list this year. We had 70 students on the Dean’s list this year, and 28 on the President’s list (10 of those seniors!). Congrats to all of our high achieving students!

From the Chair...

The Texas Tech Computer Science Department has changed a lot in the past 4.5 years. Including me, 16 new faculty members have joined the department, increasing the faculty size from 10 when I arrived in the spring of 1999 to 21 at the present time. Our graduate programs, particularly the PhD program, have grown dramatically as has the research productivity of the department. Very importantly, our senior faculty members maintain their presence in the undergraduate classroom. This presence remains a priority in the department. A very small fraction of our classes are taught by teaching assistants or by part-time instructors. We are completing a partial renovation of our building and have opened a campus in Abilene.

We sincerely appreciate the generous support of our alumni and the support and investment that the college and the university have been making in the department. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of an outstanding faculty, staff, and student body, we are doing our best to increase the value of your degrees, as well as your pride in your alma mater. Please visit the department whenever you are in town so that you can see the progress and changes first hand. Homecoming is just around the corner, and we hope to have our renovations completed by then.
Thank You!!

We’d like to extend our thanks to all the alumni, corporations, and friends that have contributed to the Computer Science Department in the last few months. All of you make a huge difference in what we’re able to accomplish!

$1000 & Up
HBK Investments, L.P.

$100 – 999
Zahir Haque
Christopher Smith
David Seese
Kevin Gibson

$20 & Up
Dale Sanders
Edmond Tam

We would like to issue a special thanks to HBK Investments, L.P. In memory of alumni Tim Osmulski, who passed away last fall, they have established a scholarship. With a $10,000 start, it is one of the larger donations given to Computer Science. The Tim Osmulski Scholarship in Computer Science will be the largest scholarship award in the department at $2000/yr. Please contact the department if you wish to contribute to this scholarship in memory of Tim.

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Keep in touch!

We always look forward to hearing from our alumni—so drop by the CS website and let us know what you’ve been up to! You can email Mysti or visit the Alumni Website at

http://www.cs.ttu.edu/aluims/

and fill out the Alumni Update form, or check out the CS Alumni Directory to locate former classmates.

Alumni Updates

Kyle Alexander (BSCS02) is the webmaster for the new College of Visual and Performing Arts here at Texas Tech. He has also recently been admitted as a graduate student in CS as well. Charles Bohn (BSCS02) is working as a software engineer at IBM in Austin, TX. Greg & Tammy Dore (BSCS90) write to tell us that they have moved back from Germany. Previously, they were on a 2-year assignment for Nortel Networks. Now, they live in the Dallas area and still work for Nortel Networks. Brandon Gamblin (BSCS97) is a game programmer working for Acclaim Studios in Austin, TX. His credits at Microprose Hunt Valley and Acclaim Austin include European Air War, Tank, Gunship, Turok Evolution, and Vexx. He and his wife Gwen love Austin, except for the traffic. Rena Li (MSCS97) is currently working in Palo Alto, CA. Matt Merritt (BSCS95) and his wife Carol have recently moved to McKinney, TX. He works for DB Microwave, Inc., in the Dallas area. Robert Palacios (BSCS93) is also living and working in Dallas. Andy Peng (BSCS99) was working as a System Design Engineer for Dell Computer in Austin the last we heard. He has been there since he graduated from Tech in 1999. Paul Rindahl (MSCS02) is working as a Software Engineer II for Raytheon. He and his family live in Rockwall, TX. Greg Storm (BSCS88, MS95) writes us that he is now living in Colorado working for Focus on the Family. He & his wife Joli are expecting their 3rd child any day now.

Breaking New Ground

In the past year the computer science department has established a new graduate program in Abilene, focused on Software Engineering. This innovative program serves students in both Abilene and Lubbock using interactive video conferencing and online distribution of course materials. The exchange of courses goes both ways, with courses originating at either campus being offered to students at the other. This allows the Abilene program to offer the departments full range of graduate degrees; Masters in Computer Science, Masters in Software Engineering, and Doctorate of Computer Science. Currently there are two faculty members in Abilene, Dr. Jack Barnes and Dr. Jason Denton, supported by Tom Dolan as systems manager and Muriel Bockenstedt as business manager. Enrollment for the 2002-03 school years was 17 students, with 20 students already enrolled for fall of 2003. The program expects to produce its first graduates in December. Research in Abilene is focused on software engineering, with a focus in technology transition and high dependability systems. If you’d like to know more about the Abilene program, contact Dr. Jason Denton at 806 742 6446.
Missing Persons

We’ve found a few, but these are still missing! If you know where to find anyone on this list, please let us know! We’d hate for anyone to miss getting his or her newsletter!

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<th>Name</th>
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