Water flow patterns near Bergen, N.Y., may yield clues about the spread of a trichloroethylene spill there 20 years ago. Rochester undergraduates in Associate Professor Robert Poreda’s earth and environmental sciences class are studying the "plume" (pattern of travel) of the spill in the process helping staff from the Department of Environmental Conservation learn more about the area.

Twenty years ago a main tunneling near Bergen ran off its rails. One of its tank cars ruptured, spilling tons of trichloroethylene over the surrounding field. (Trichloroethylene, a degreasing agent, is not harmful. Organisms in the ground can break it down into other compounds, however, including vinyl chloride, a carcinogen.)

This semester, Poreda’s students explore neighboring areas around the site of that massive spill to investigate the water flow patterns in the Western Monroe county area. The patterns may yield clues about the spread pattern of the trichloroethylene plume.

About once a week, students go to various sites in Western Monroe county to take samples of ground water from wells and springs, and surface water from creeks. After collecting the water in vials, they record certain characteristics on the spot, such as temperature, pH and conductivity.

When the students return to the laboratory, they examine the chemical composition of the water to determine where it has traveled. The presence of certain minerals and sediment in the water indicates that the water has flowed across rocks or soil containing those same minerals, and thus give clues to the paths the water continued on page three

Retirement Program adds to options

Effective January 1, the University’s Retirement Program will offer the Faculty family of mutual funds as investment options in addition to the existing TIAA-CREF T. Rowe Price, and Vanguard funds. This change expands investment flexibility—one of the key objectives of the Retirement Program.

In view of the availability of new funds, it may be appropriate to review personal investment elections under the Retirement Program. Material is being mailed to regular full-time and part-time faculty and staff that explains the investment options offered under the Retirement Program, and provides information on how to change personal elections now or in the future.

The following material will be enclosed:

• Understanding the Investment Choices Available Under the Retirement Program The brochure summarizes the Retirement Program, describes key investment principles that may be helpful in developing an investment strategy and defines certain commonly used investment terms.

• An Investment Fund Comparison Brochure This brochure compares the investment options offered by the Retirement Program. It also contains phone numbers of the investment companies for additional information regarding particular funds.

• An enrollment form To make a continued on page two

Currents holiday hiatus

The next scheduled publication date for Currents is Monday, January 13, with a copy deadline of January 6.

Happy holidays to all faculty, staff, and students from the staff of the Currents office.

As part of the University’s $74.5 million capital budget, the River Campus—like other parts of the institution—is undergoing an aggressive program of facilities improvement.

Unlike the Medical Center, which this year saw the completion of an entirely new building (the Ambulatory Center), no new buildings are going up. Instead, there has been a vast array of improvements—both large and small, readily apparent and invisible—to existing facilities.

“When President Jackson arrived, he made it a high priority to have the facilities assessed—to make sure that we didn’t have a significant hidden financial problem in terms of deferred maintenance,” said Ronald J. Poprock, vice president for budget and institutional planning. “The conclusion was that we did not have a ‘mega-problem’ as some other institutions do, although we had a building of issues that needed to be addressed.”

In addition to continuing renovation of the River Campus residential halls and classrooms, the University has begun putting an additional $1 million annually into River Campus capital improvements and maintenance, and has established a long-term program of “preventive maintenance” as well, he said.

Capital improvements recently completed or now underway include:

• Continuing renovation of the residential halls. Gilbert Hall, following in the footsteps of Hoing, Tierman, and Lovrijojy, is now being renovated. Improvements include a “front-door concept” that improves pedestrian traffic, offers better seating, and provides an interior space.

• Landscaping of the Residential Quadrangle.

• Installation of a new high-speed Internet connection.

• Installation of TracNet, which provides web access from students’ own rooms. All of the Residential Quadrangle halls and Susan B. Anthony Halls are now connected; Anderson and Wilder Towns, Hill Court, and the Fraternal Quadrangle (as well as the Eastman School Student Living Center) are scheduled to be connected next year.

• Rebuilding the Hill Court road system and tunnels.

• Continuing improvements to College classrooms—77 of which have been touched in one way or another by the renovation over the past several years, according to the College dean’s office.

• Roof repairs to the Dewey Hall addition, Carol Simon Hall, Bausch & Lomb Hall addi-
tion, Lattimore Hall addition, Frederick Douglass Building, and Zornow Center/ Alumni Gym.

• Replacement and repair of light fixtures across all residential halls.

• Rebuilding of the “Manhasset area” of the Ambulatory Center.

• Reconstruction or replacement of the bridge connecting Hill Court to the rest of the River Campus.

• Much-needed refurbishment, this summer, of the seats in Strong Auditorium.

“The ‘preventive maintenance’ program is less apparent to the average observer but those efforts are no less important than the more dramatic improvements,” Poprock said. For instan-
tance, an ongoing program to replace window casings or replace a roof on an academic build-
ing will prevent much more costly repairs to the structure in years ahead.

Other River Campus changes are and will be seen as a result of Re-engineering Rochester proposals. For example, several student services offices are expected to change locations in or-
er to merge functions or provide better service to students.

Moreover, the recommendations of the Resi-
dential College Commission (RCC)—to be de-
creed in February—are expected to result in even more facilities changes and improvements.

A facilities planning process has been initi-
ted to develop an overall plan for the cam-
pus, Poprock said. The process will take into account the RCC recommendations, and also will help to determine the future of each building as Todd Union and Stambaugh Gymnasium.

Making classrooms work

An effort started several years ago to im-
prove College classrooms is paying off for students and faculty.

“As we were planning, we knew that the func-
tional complexity of the classrooms was not where it needed to be—from the viewpoint of either faculty or students,” said Associate Dean Dorothy Hopkins, chair of the College’s Class-
room Improvement Committee. “For ex-
ample, we learned early on from students that they couldn’t hear well in many of the classrooms, and they felt crowded. There wasn’t enough space to write on those little tablet desks.

“We also knew from faculty that they didn’t have enough board space, reliable chalk supplies, and that classrooms were not cleaned or prepared in advance of the class.” Hopkins said. “And sometimes they couldn’t hear the students.”

Renovations to College classrooms have included many improvements that aren’t readily apparent—in air circulation and acoustical tiling, for example. But a number of “less visible” changes—carpeting, lighting and technological changes—are easier to see. Over the past three years, all of the chairs in Moynihan Hall, and most of the libraries have been replaced. Classroom lighting—including the installation of light-
proof shades—has been improved in many rooms.

Video projection has been added to five lecture halls, and overhead projectors are now available in every regular-use classroom. Dual-slide projection is available in four classrooms.
Improvements in the residential halls include lounges on each floor, more electric power in each room, and landscaping of the Residential Quadrangle. With major improvements to Gilbert Hall expected to be finished in 1997, sights such as the truck and piles of pavers above, will be a quadrangle memory.

Classroom

continued from page one

rooms, more chalkboard space was added in 10 rooms, sound capability was put in three rooms, and there are permanent video installations in 10 classrooms. At least one third of the classrooms have network connections, for faculty who want to make web presentations. One of two true "multimedia rooms" is Room 210, Latomme Hall, which boasts two slide projectors, a laser CD player, VCR, and video and data projectors.

As important, Hopkins said, the process of scheduling classrooms—and identifying audiovisual needs of each professor for that particular class—is no longer done in August, just before classes begin. Instead, classroom needs are solicited from departments and faculty eight months in advance, allowing the purchase of equipment and assignment of rooms tailored to individual needs.

In addition, all classrooms are now cleaned on a daily basis.

Retirement Program

continued from page one

change in investment elections, the appropriateness of form(s) need to be completed and sent to the Benefits Office. To make a change in time for the first payrolls in 1997, forms need to be received by December 20 for the biweekly payrolls and January 4 for the monthly payrolls.) Current elections will remain in effect but can be changed at any point in the future.

Inforamtional meetings on investment funds will be held in December and January. During the meetings, presentations will be made by representatives from each of the investment companies. A question-and-answer period will follow the presentations. Meetings are scheduled for:

Medical Center, Thursday, December 12, Room 1-7619, Lower Wing, noon-1 p.m.; Friday, December 13, Room 2-6424, Whipple Auditorium, 10-11 a.m.; Friday, December 13, Room 2-6424, Whipple Auditorium, 3:30-4 p.m.; Tuesday, January 7, Room 2-6424, Whipple Auditorium, 3:30-4 p.m.; Wednesday, January 8, Room 2-6424, Whipple Auditorium, noon-1 p.m.; Thursday, January 9, Room 2-6424, Whipple Auditorium, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

The "classroom is supposed to be the setting for intellectual excitement and engagement," Hopkins said. "When a faculty member walks into a clean, well-appointed classroom, the environment makes it that much easier.

In all of ongoing cycle of improvements, the tourist was to solicit more faculty and student feedback and to foster more communication and teamwork among the several offices responsible for classrooms," Hopkins said.

The Classroom Improvements Committee has representatives from the registrar’s office, College dean’s office, planning and project management, facilities, Academic Media and E-mail Support (AMES), and the University Computing Center. Faculty and students have joined the committee as projects are reviewed and have participated in periodic focus groups designed to identify both problems and solutions.

In Brief

Holiday closings

The University will not be designating any additional holidays this year. Departments or units may, however, decide to close on a specific day during the holiday season. This day may be designated to allow employees to have time off without pay to cover the absence. If a department decides to designate the holiday, the staff should be informed accordingly. Staff who work on a designated holiday will be paid at the normal premium pay, which is equal to time worked (double time), or will get an equivalent day off, to be taken later.

The Office of Human Resources will not be publishing office or department closings for the upcoming winter holidays. Please note, however that Payroll and Employee Records (PERC) requires holiday closing information in order to schedule pay checks deliveries during this period. PERC should be contacted directly by phone, x5-6711 or e-mail, pmtc@hr.rochester.edu.

Advantage miracles

University employees who are members of the Advantage Federal Credit Union may buy a Miracle Balloon for $1 through the end of the year to benefit the Children’s Hospital at Strong.

Eastman building facade

Protective scaffolding has recently been erected around the tower portion of the Eastman School of Student Living on Eastman School Street. The scaffolding will remain in place through the winter as experts evaluate why cracks and chips have appeared in the concrete and brick on the building’s facade. The problem is related strictly to the building’s facade, and not to structural or atmospheric issues, but is a structural problem of the building itself.

Wilson Commons

Wilson Commons will be closed from December 25 through January 1, and each Saturday and Sunday from December 21 through January 19. The facility will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, from January 2 through January 17. Normal hours, 7:30 a.m. to 1 a.m., resume on January 20.

Creative Excellence Award

The multidisciplinary Human Values Cluster is sponsoring a Creative Excellence Award competition. The award will go to a University student who submits the best work in any medium—poetry, fiction, fine art, etc.—that deals with insemination or fertility drugs have on certain kinds of infertility. Researchers in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Strong are looking to participate in a free study to examine the effectiveness of superovulation and insemination techniques.
From Administrative Computing Services

Administrative Computing Services (ACS) is expanding and improving services for access from sites across campus. Through the ACS/ MVS applications via the network. This includes access to systems such as SIS, PFS, and ERZ. ACS provides an upload and download gateway for hardware and software. ACS has selected Microsoft’s SNA/Serve to be implemented.

The most common desktop software used to access the central administrative application systems is being used to implement TAS.CTCP3270 using MVS from an IBM-compatible microcomputer using a local area network. TC3270 software is an application that provides a terminal function, providing the greatest functionality and compatibility. The product is TCP3270 from McColl Systems is recommended and supported by ACS.

To take advantage of this gateway enhancement, LAN administration need to confirm that they are using at least version 6 of TCP3270. ACS is recommending that release 3 add ACIF support to existing host window macros and includes new features such as support for other terminal types. LAN administrators are encouraged to test the software with SNA/Serve now. Users within the College and University Computing Center can call 787-1158.

From the River Campus Libraries

Voyager preview workshops

Preview workshops for Voyager, the new online system for the University Libraries, will be available in campus computing centers from Tuesday, December 16 through January 17. Explore this state-of-the-art system at any of the preview sites listed below and sample some of the new features, including access to other libraries’ catalogs, and databases such as the American Chemical Society (ACS) website.

Richard Ferno, professor of political sci- ence and government, received the volcano and fire award of the American Society for Public Administration.

Ferno received the award at the association’s annual conference in October. The award honors the lifetime achievements of a scholar in the field of budgeting and financial management, with an emphasis on public budgeting.

Michael Ann Holly, professor and chair of the Department of Art and Art History, has been named an Aklo Meleen Bruce Senior Fellow at the New York University Institute for Policy Research.

In the upcoming year, Ferno will work on a major revision of his popular "Voyager" book, "Voyager: The Personal Computer." He will also publish "Voyager: The Personal Computer," a new book about the latest personal computer technology.

For current and upcoming events, please visit the Voyager website at http://www.unc.edu/arts/library/voyager.html.

Calendar

DANCE

December 12, The Nutcracker by the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, teens Tuition $25 to $40 for pub- lic, $15 to $30 for families. Eastman School of Music, Anthony M. Babich Auditorium. 2 p.m. Call 784-8000 for information.

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EXHIBITS

November 29 through February 9, Waving a Legible Royal Tapestry from the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. This exhibition showcases the craftsmanship of the art form and the beauty of the materials used.

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