

From the Phoenix:

Every afternoon for a month, a core of seven students – Dan Doell, '59 and Paul Weis, '59 with John Gillen, '60 Paul McAviney, '60, Joe Everett, '59, George Grant, '59 and Dennis Costich, '59 – hacked relentlessly into the heavy red clay beneath the level of the basement floor...The McQuaid Seismograph was – ~~and is~~ – a marvel, one of only three high school **seismographs** in the world. And it is proof that a big idea – and scrupulous planning – with a large **dollop** of chutzpah can effect what might seem, to the fainter-hearted, impossible.

The Odenbach Observatory (named for a Rochester-born Jesuit meteorologist) began to be called upon regularly by the local press for information. On July 13 (1959), it recorded tremors which baffled even professional seismologists; in early August, it monitored a quake from Formosa and, on August 19 (1959), a blast of 7.8 on the Richter scale from Yellowstone National Park. Each received several columns with pictures in the papers.

In 1975, unfortunately, the old seismograph sputtered a few times, came back to life for a bit, and finally died. The parts had been old even when they were installed and, although they served well for over 15 years, they could not serve forever...according to some, it would take a very large amount of money to make the seismograph operational again.

Good fortunes struck again. This time in the form of two dedicated faculty members, Martin Countryman, '65 and Stephen Fahy '66. Under their direction, the observatory was back in business as part of the [EarthScope](#) network. Cobbling together grants, donations and used equipment, they kept alive the proud heritage of our seismic station. A vintage printer lived long past its planned obsolescence under the resourceful care of our talented faculty who fabricated their own ink when the manufacturer's supply was discontinued. The work of the seismic station continued enriching the few students who participated in the club, but sadly it ceased operation shortly after the retirement of the two gentlemen masterminds.

For many alumni, the *Frederick Odenbach, SJ Seismic Observatory* offered a unique opportunity to do something **not available to any** other high school student in Rochester ~~could~~. The station was where you could be an earth scientist and care about something larger in the world. It was a place to be cool with science, create something great, work with faculty, and promote public knowledge about earthquakes. Even a student who never stepped into the station was undeniably proud of the entire operation. It was a matter of school pride. So after being offline for about a decade, I am pleased to report—**We're BACK!**

It might be argued that we're back and better than ever as a result of our joining Columbia University's prestigious Lamont Doherty Seismic Network. The network provides technical expertise and support to its constituents throughout the Northeastern United States McQuaid's seismic data is available on their [website](#) and is regularly forwarded to the national repository of seismic data for advanced study. Someday, our data could be used to help solve some of the great mysteries within the seismology community.

The restoration project was supported by many people and organizations. A state-of-the-art broadband seismometer was funded through a donation by former McQuaid and RIT faculty member, Lt. Col. Jon E. Freckleton, USAF, Ret. in honor of his parents Kathryn and Howard Freckleton, and his maternal aunt and uncle, Marguerite and Karl Staud. Jim Zollweg '69, a noted geologist/seismologist, donated a short

period seismometer. Technical expertise flew in from all angles, but that provided by Paul Dangler, '72 and Mark Weiskopf was especially relevant.

Moving forward, the station will be led by McQuaid science teacher, Colin Orr, '01. A band of students stand ready to become the newest members of the student seismology club. Together, they plan to operate the station, create a school based website to post lesson plans, student work and interesting seismograms. Most importantly, and in keeping of the character of the school, they want to be the school's first responders to the human tragedies of earthquakes---by raising awareness and support of others in their time of need.

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