2-2011

Geography Newsletter

Department of Geography

South Dakota State University

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February 2011
Volume 10

Geography Newsletter

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South Dakota State University – Geography Department

Head’s Column: George White

I now am well into my second year as Head of the Department of Geography. It has been an exciting time for both our department and discipline as they evolve. It is my desire to maintain the department’s traditions and address new challenges. With the help of my colleagues, which includes the master’s students, the department has been able to build on existing strengths and launch new initiatives. I would like to highlight some of our activities.

First, we have a new website thanks to Bruce Millett, who put many hours into designing it and finding new graphics for it. If you have not seen it yet, please log on and take a look (http://www.sdstate.edu/geo/). The graphics are outstanding. Thanks Bruce!

This year we increased the enrollments in our introductory physical geography courses, which we have renamed Physical Geography: Weather and Climate and Physical Geography: Natural Landscapes. More importantly, we have revised the labs to make them more interactive. Just about everyone has pitched in to help, but special thanks go to our veteran teaching assistants Nicole Siebrasse, Chris Mitchell, Eric Forrette and to Professor Donald Berg for taking the lead on this. Nicole and Chris also travelled to Savannah, Georgia to attend the annual meeting of the National Council of Geographic Education (NCGE) to present a paper on their efforts.

The increased enrollments in theintroductory physical geography courses also meant that we expanded the number of graduate teaching assistants this year. Jordan Long returned for his second year along with the three other veterans mentioned above. In addition, Tejaswi Giri, Joseph Murray, Mathew Peters, James Sampson, Ashley Swartos, Saroj Thapa, Aline Uwonkunda, and Frank Whitebird became our new teaching assistants. It has been a little crowded in the teaching assistant offices this year, but everyone has worked well together. Some new furniture and equipment has made it more comfortable and easier to work.

We also had an impressive contingent from the department drive to the University of Kansas in Lawrence to attend the annual meeting of the Great Plains-Rocky Mountain Division of the AAG. The size of our group definitely made an impression on our geography colleagues at other universities. Bob Watrel is the secretary-treasurer for the division and Don Berg recently helped to update the organization’s constitution. Many of us are preparing to attend the national AAG meeting in Seattle in April.

In Fall 2010, we also conducted a search for a new faculty member. We were successful in recruiting Trisha Jackson from the University of Kansas. Trisha’s interests “encompass physical, social, and policy aspects of global change, especially how indigenous and modern technologies together can increase the overall health and resiliency of our soils and food system.” Trisha will join us in Fall 2011.

March 24th-25th, 2011 will be the 42nd Annual South Dakota State Geography Convention. In addition to having the AAG President, our other speakers this year were chosen to commemorate the careers of Fritz Gritzner (who retired in May 2010) and Don Berg (who plans to retire in May 2011). I only have attended one Convention, but it’s an outstanding event. I look forward to the upcoming one and hope to meet a number of alumni there.
Romanian Delegation Visit

In September 2010, a delegation of Romanian Geographers visited the Department of Geography and SDSU. They came from Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University, located in Sibiu, Transylvania. The delegation was comprised of Dean Ion Velcea, Traian Cracea, and Alina Negoescu. For each of them, it was their first trip to the United States. On the first day of their visit, they toured our campus and met with members of the Department of Geography, the GISc Center of Excellence, Dean Jorgensen, Provost Nichols, Karl Schmidt and Brooke Sydow from International Affairs, Nels Granholm from Global Studies, and other SDSU faculty. They gave a Powerpoint presentation on their department, Sibiu, and Romania. Members of the Geography Department and the GISc Center also gave short presentations on their research.

Other highlights of their trip included an excursion to the Black Hills and the Badlands with Professors George White and Darrell Napton. Karl Schmidt and Brooke Sydow took them to Pipestone and other surrounding attractions. The Romanians’ visit to South Dakota followed on the heels of a trip that George White took to Romania as part of a delegation of the Association of American Geographers (AAG). The delegation, which was invited by Romanian geographers, visited four institutions in Romania, which included Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University in Sibiu where Professor White first met Dean Velcea and Alina Negoescu.

Following the Romanian visit to SDSU, a Protocol of Collaboration was negotiated between Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University and SDSU and signed by President Chicoine. Members of the Geography Department plan to visit Romania during the summer to investigate possibilities for further cooperative ventures, which may include student and faculty exchanges. 

Author: George White

AAG Great Plains/Rocky Mountain Regional Meeting

This year’s AAG GPRM regional meeting was held at the University of Kansas, in Lawrence, Kansas. The SDSU geography department was well represented by both students and faculty. Master’s students and faculty members presented their research through paper and poster presentations (right). Additionally, many of the attendees enjoyed field trips to Kansas City and the Flint Hills. Ross Bell, a new graduate student in the Department, said he enjoyed “seeing the intact tall-grass prairie of Flint Hills.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donald J. Berg</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>The Real Dust Bowl Disaster: The Northern Great Plains during the Dirty ’30s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Millett</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>Simulation Assessment of Climate and Prairie Wetland Complex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aashis Lamsal</td>
<td>Poster</td>
<td>Automated Tools for Integrating Remote Sensing Data into Spatial Epidemiology Research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Sampson</td>
<td>Poster</td>
<td>Remote Sensing of Water Quality on the Sisseton-Wahpeton Reservation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Author: Jordan Long
Professor Donald J. Berg

Dr. Donald J. Berg is retiring after 24 years of shaping the mind’s of SDSU’s students; spatially. Dr. Berg received a B.A. degree in 1964 and M.A. degree in 1966 from North Dakota State University (NDSU). Following graduation, Professor Berg enlisted in the United States Army; consequently, he served in the Republic of Vietnam where he received various citations and medals. After returning from his tour, Professor Berg continued his education and acquired a second M.A. degree in Geography in 1971 and a PhD degree in 1976 from the University of California (Berkeley). Following graduation, Dr. Berg started his career as an educator at San Diego State University and came to SDSU in 1983. He jokingly declared that he “is the only geographer that has worked at both SDSUs.” During his 35 years of being a professional geographer his research included: Recreational Geography, Tribal Casino Gambling, Geography of the Illegal Drug Trade, Railroad Geography, Landscape Change, Population and Resources, and American Indian Land Use Issues. Professor Berg has publications including book chapters, book reviews in major journals, and other formats. More recently Dr. Berg considers himself an “Encyclopedist” having contributed to several encyclopedias and atlases. Dr. Berg received two Governor’s grants and was a recipient of the Bush Faculty Development Grant. He was a presenter for the 1997 Sewrey Faculty Colloquium. As a member of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) since 1970, Professor Berg served as secretary and treasurer for the Great Plains Rocky Mountains from 1994-2008. He has also served on the Academic Senate for two terms. In addition, he was a Co-Advisor for both the Geography Club and the South Dakota State Geography Convention. Additionally, Dr. Berg has been the faculty sponsor for the Delta Zeta Chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon for 16 years.

In addition, to his research he has taught several courses which include Physical Geography, World Regional, Hazards & Disasters, Political Geography, Economic Geography, History of the American Indians, and History of the American West in addition to initiating the Environmental History of the U.S. course. He is also notorious for his puns and expressions such as “Scobey Ranch House”, “Print it”, “Sam hill”, “Sheba”, and “reasonable” as well as his “Virtual field trips.”

Additional, Dr. Berg has had a significant influence on numerous students at SDSU during his 24 years of teaching. From his leadership, we are all better geographers.

Author: Pat Danielson

Enhancing the Physical Geography Laboratory Curriculum

Over the course of the summer, curriculum authors, Nicole Siebrasse, Chris Mitchell, and Eric Forrette, designed, researched, and wrote lab activities/lessons that feature many virtual animations, online demonstrations, and experiments. It is through these interactive learning modules that students both experience and apply geographical concepts needed in everyday life. This interaction and application of knowledge is advantageous as the students utilize technology (GPS units, Google Earth, sling psychrometer) to interact with and apply geographical concepts in order to deduce answers and draw conclusions that relate to everyday life. Integrating technology is highly effective as it not only engages students in geography and learning, but also offers opportunities for students to learn through various mediums that are tailored specifically to the technological interests of current-day students. Furthermore, the curriculum caters to multiple learning styles while also involving critical thinking and application to many geographic topics that directly affect Brookings. In addition to the local scale, Nicole, Chris, and Eric have emphasized a global scale within the curriculum by incorporating exercises that pertain to current geographical issues - global warming, Gulf oil spill, destruction of the ozone layer, and deforestation, to name a few. Acquainting students with geographic concerns has been beneficial in helping the students draw connections from the geography classroom to the real world.

Author: Nicole Siebrasse
Georgia’s Been On Our Mind

Summer 2010 was exciting for many in the Geography Department, for these were the busy months that Chris Mitchell and Nicole Siebrasse re-wrote the laboratory curriculum for Physical Geography (GEOG 131). And, while working and writing labs, both had “Georgia On Their Minds.”

Attending the annual meeting of the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) to present the curriculum in Savannah, Georgia, was an important goal for both Chris and Nicole. Fortunately, our objective came to fruition on September 30th, 2010, the day when we presented our final product at the national convention. The presentation was a success as our curriculum revision attracted the attention of many geographic educators across the country. Undoubtedly, this experience was an incredible professional opportunity that not only allowed us to present but also acquire geographic knowledge and establish networks with other educators.

During our time in Georgia, we participated in several convention seminars and field trips. First, a field trip had us navigating Charleston Bay en route to Fort Sumter in the morning, while in the afternoon we visited Magnolia Plantations during a field trip to Charleston, SC. Later in the conference, we adventured to the Wormsloe Plantation and Bonaventure Cemetery, both located within Savannah. All field trips were intriguing as was the National Geographic Society’s Seminar that offered many educational ideas and resources for K-12 geographic education. Now, after our return, we fondly reminisce upon our Georgia visit and continue to implement and improve the lab curriculum. Although the semester just concluded, several of our intended outcomes were realized. Most of all, the new curricular system is an accurate reflection of learning as it engages students through technology to critically think and analyze current-day geographical issues that apply to the regional and global scales. This integration of technology and involvement of higher-order thinking skills has been rewarding for the TAs too, as instructors have witnessed empowered students effectively master the vital concepts of physical geography. We hope this continues well into the future as the department will remain committed to continually improving the curriculum and geographic learning experiences of students at SDSU.

Author: Nicole Siebrasse

Graduate Student Travels to the Philippines

For three weeks in January of 2011, graduate student Jordan Long traveled to the Philippines to meet with members of the Department of Natural Resources (DENR) and conduct field research for his master’s thesis. Jordan is utilizing Remote Sensing and GIS applications to quantify and map land use and land cover change in the Philippines’ mangrove forests from 1990 to 2009.

According to Jordan, “Mangrove forests are vital ecosystems that provide numerous goods and services. Despite their importance, the Philippines’ mangrove forests have declined at a rapid rate over the past century. The primary drivers of mangrove deforestation are anthropogenic, which include aquaculture development, urbanization, pollution, and extraction for charcoal production.”

During his time in the Philippines, Jordan collaborated with the DENR and acquired geospatial data that will benefit his thesis research. Additionally, Jordan collected GPS points in the field that will be utilized to validate mapping accuracy.

In addition to his research, Jordan managed to enjoy a few day tours on the islands of Luzon and Palawan. While in Luzon, he toured the capital city of Manila and boated through the rapids of Pagsanjan Falls. During his time in Palawan, Jordan canoed through the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River and snorkeled in Honda Bay.
The 42nd South Dakota State Geography Convention will be held on March 24th and 25th, 2011. This year we are honoring Professors Berg and Gritzner and have asked them to invite the majority of guest speakers. We are pleased to once again have the President of the Association of American Geographers attending our convention as a guest speaker. To the right is the list of guest speakers and titles of their presentations.

### 42nd Annual South Dakota State Geography Convention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Presentation Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Fraser Hart</td>
<td>University of Minnesota-Twin Cities</td>
<td>Tobacco: a Dirty Weed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth C. Dagel</td>
<td>Missouri Western State University</td>
<td>Crossthreading: The Role of Geography in Landscape Appreciation and Energy Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin Datel</td>
<td>California State University, Sacramento</td>
<td>Around the World in Thirty Blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harley Jesse Walker</td>
<td>Louisiana State University</td>
<td>Coastal Disasters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth E. Foote</td>
<td>University of Colorado at Boulder (AAG President)</td>
<td>Memorialization of U.S. College and University Tragedies: New Spaces of Mourning and Remembrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Furuseth</td>
<td>University of North Carolina at Chariolette</td>
<td>21st Century Urbanism, the Latinization of American Cities: Lessons Learned from Charlotte, North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle Ezell</td>
<td>Ohio State University</td>
<td>Why I’m Thrilled that I Majored in Geography (And Why You Should be Too)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2010 Awards

SDSU Geography Department undergraduate and graduate students received numerous awards and scholarships for the 2010/2011 school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awardee</th>
<th>Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert Hill</td>
<td>Friend of Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesse Lapsley</td>
<td>Outstanding Service to the Department and GTU-Geography Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren Miley</td>
<td>GTU Undergraduate Award for Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindsay Bressler</td>
<td>GTU Graduate Award for Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Pope</td>
<td>NCGE Outstanding Graduating Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Mitchell</td>
<td>Outstanding Geography Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole Siebrasse</td>
<td>Outstanding Geography Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devendra Dahal</td>
<td>Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduate student Devandra Dehal receives an edition of *Earth: The World Atlas* during the awards ceremony during the 41st South Dakota State annual geography convention.
Shannon O’Lear looks on as John Fraser Hart cuts his birthday cake.

Club officers left to right: Nick Luetzow, Lauren Miley, Jesse Lapsley, and Chris Pope.

Students participate in the Geo Bowl.

Professor David Lanegran presenting his research.

Student poster presenters left to right: Garrett Battleson, Cody Nelson, Cristina Madrigal-Zamora, and Kendall Johnson.

Geography Club President Jesse Lapsley presents plaque to guest speaker Stanley Brunn.
### 2010 Scholarships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awardee</th>
<th>Scholarship/Stipend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Bents</td>
<td>Marla S. Tunnell Scholarship in Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cody Burggraff</td>
<td>William and Jean Macksam Scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Forrette</td>
<td>Lee Opheim Scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Forsyth</td>
<td>Marla S. Tunnell Scholarship in Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Gering</td>
<td>Geography Department Scholarship and Barce Scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kendal Johnson</td>
<td>Patrick and Bridget Hoye Scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James McLain</td>
<td>Edward Patrick and Joan M. Hogan Scholarship in Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristina Madrigal-Zamora</td>
<td>Geography Alumni Scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Long</td>
<td>EROS Scholarship and NASA SD Space Grant Consortium Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Reynhout</td>
<td>Marla S. Tunnell Scholarship in Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah E Smith</td>
<td>Moriarty Family Scholarship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Student Graduations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student (Bachelors)</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Major 1</th>
<th>Major 2</th>
<th>Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark Hagen</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Kolba</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reid Matthies</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren Miley</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>GISc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Murray</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Ramsay</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyler Ulrich</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>GISc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aline Uwonkunda</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>GISc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Pope</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>GISc</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonathan Keill</td>
<td>Summer 2010</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Mettee</td>
<td>Summer 2010</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley Naylor</td>
<td>Summer 2010</td>
<td>GISc</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie L. Anderson</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Geography</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student (Masters)</th>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
<th>Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jason Bieber</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D. Berg</td>
<td>Comprehensive Plan for Groton, South Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Rago</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D. Berg</td>
<td>The Historical Geography of the Village of Gurnee, Illinois.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kari Pabst</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M. Cochrane</td>
<td>Quantifying Burn Severity in a Heterogeneous Landscape: A Comparison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara St. Clair</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C. Gritzner</td>
<td>Community Welcoming Signs as Indicators of Place Identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devendra Dahal</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>J. Gritzner</td>
<td>An Assessment of Horizontal Displacement of Topographic Features in Generalized Digital Elevation Models</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research in the Department

Charles F. “Fritz” Gritzner retired in May with emeritus status after 50 years of college teaching, 30½ at SDSU. He continues to direct the South Dakota Geographic Alliance and Geographic Bee and remains actively involved in writing and editing for Chelsea House and Millennium House publishers. During 2010, Chelsea House published five books authored by Fritz: *Feeding a Hungry World, Environment and Natural Resources, Changing Climates, Nicaragua*, and *Haiti*. A co-authored sixth book, *The Dominican Republic*, also appeared. He continues to teach, offering a variety of short courses for retirees through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute program.

Janet H. Gritzner was invited to speak at the Council of Geographic Names Authorities (COGNA) conference in Springfield, MO in October about her research on stream metrics and generic place names. COGNA is a organization of state and federal government officials representing the geographic names authorities in the United States that promotes national standardization of place names. She presented at the AAG in Washington D.C. on a similar topic and at the ESRI International Users Conference in San Diego, CA on her work on modeling surface flow in glaciated landscapes. She was awarded a grant from the SDSU Research Support Fund (2010-2011) to further her research into the protocols of stream naming in the United States particularly as they are applied to nationally published datasets. She and graduate student, James Sampson continued to provide geocoding services to the South Dakota Department of Health. In addition to geocoding, the new contract included extensive mapping and data analysis requirements. She initiated new research in changing form and function of railroad towns in South Dakota.


Matt Hansen’s research group includes Drs. Peter Potapov, Svetlana Turubanova and Mark Broich. Mark is a new Geospatial Science and Engineering doctoral program graduate. In addition, Alexey Egorov and Bernard Adusei serve as geospatial analysts. Graduate students Bwangoy Bankanza, Yolande Munzimi, Belinda Arunarwati and Namita Giree round out the group. Recent science results include a quantification of global forest cover loss, published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* and first of their kind maps of forest extent and loss in European Russia, Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as a new global cropland extent map. Partnering with Google, the group’s algorithm was implemented for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties 16 in Cancun, Mexico in order to create the finest-scale depiction of the forest cover of Mexico to date. Examples of popular press coverage of this research can be found at [http://voices.washingtonpost.com/post-carbon/2010/12/google_earth_engine_debuts.html](http://voices.washingtonpost.com/post-carbon/2010/12/google_earth_engine_debuts.html), [http://news.mongabay.com/2010/0929-hansen_interview.html](http://news.mongabay.com/2010/0929-hansen_interview.html), and [http://www.rainforestsos.org/book/](http://www.rainforestsos.org/book/).
Research in the Department (Continued)

Geoffrey M. Henebry continued to be active in advancing phenological research, particularly in the US, by serving on the Board of Directors of the USA-National Phenology Network. Along with his former student Prof. Kirsten de Beurs (Geography, Oklahoma), he published “Spatio-temporal statistical methods for modeling land surface phenology” in Phenological Research: Methods for Environmental and Climate Change Analysis, edited by Irene Hudson and Marie Keatley and “A land surface phenology assessment of the northern polar regions using MODIS reflectance time series” in the International Polar Year special issue of the Canadian Journal of Remote Sensing. For the 8th consecutive year, he convened a special session on phenology at the Fall Meeting of the American Geophysical Union. He presented an invited paper on remote sensing of fall phenophases in a phenology symposium at the annual meeting of the U.S. Chapter of the International Association for Landscape Ecology. He also participated in the Global Land Project Open Science Meeting in Tempe, AZ, and the Third International Conference on Drylands, Deserts & Desertification in Sde Boqer, Israel.

Bruce Millett continued his research on prairie wetlands as part of an interdisciplinary and intercollegiate research team. The Non-Linear Response of Prairie Pothole Landscapes to Climate Change and Land Management was funded by the EPA’s Science to Achieve Results (STAR) program for $856,574. In February 2010 the team published an article in BioScience entitled Prairie Wetland Complexes as Landscape Functional Units in Changing Climate. The article was featured on the cover of the journal with an aerial photograph of one of the study sites. The American Museum of Natural History in New York City also featured the article in a short educational video that was displayed on a large screen in the Hall of Biodiversity for two weeks. The piece was also distributed to 14 other institutions around the world with an approximate audience of more than nine million people. More information can be found on the AMNH Science Bulletins website at http://www.amnh.org/sciencebulletins/index.php?sid=b.s.duck_land.20100222. Bruce attended and presented his research on prairie wetlands and climate change at the AAG meeting in Washington DC and the Rocky Mountain-Great Plains meeting in Lawrence, KS.

Darrell E. Napton returned to full-time teaching at SDSU after a multi-year leave to work with geographers at USGS-EROS on the Land Cover Trends Project. He continues his research on land changes in the United States. His article with SDSU geography graduates Roger Auch and Rachel Headley, “Land Changes and Their Driving Forces in the Southeastern United States” was published in Regional Environmental Change, and he helped write “Exploring Subtle Land Use and Land Cover Changes: A Framework for Future Landscape Studies” (Thomas Houet, Landscape Ecology) with other co-authors that included SDSU geography graduates Thomas Loveland, Christopher Barnes, and Kristi Sayler. Darrell presented “Developed Land Conversion in the Eastern United States: 1980-2000” at the Washington, D.C. AAG meeting, and he presented a revision of that paper at the joint meeting of the Global Land Project and Urbanization and Global Environmental Change in Tempe, AZ. Additionally, he attended the Great Plains-Rocky Mountain Division meeting of the AAG in Lawrence, Kansas. Darrell’s book review of Harm DeBlij’s The Power of Place: Geography, Destiny, and Globalization’s Rough Landscape appeared in the Journal of Geography, and he also reviewed several manuscripts and grant proposals. Darrell’s proposal “Large Area Assessment of Land Changes and Their Driving Forces in the United States: 1973 to 2000” was funded for $88,500.

David Roy led NASA funded research projects on Web-enabled Landsat and global MODIS burned area products and with his postdoctoral researchers, Ph.D. students and international collaborators published eight papers in the International Journal of Wildland Fire, Journal of Geophysical Research, Remote Sensing Letters, Remote Sensing of Environment and published three book chapters concerned with satellite product generation and remote sensing of fire. One of his Ph.D. students, Dr. Chris Barnes, graduated in the Fall semester and another, Mr. Sanath Kumar Sathyachandran, was a recipient of a NASA Earth System Science Graduate Student Fellowship. David continues to be a member of the NASA MODIS science team and a member of the Global Observations of Forest Cover – Global Observations of Land Cover Dynamics (GOFC-GOLD) Fire Implementation Team, attending and presenting at science team meetings in the USA and Europe.
Mary E. O’Neill continued her work with geospatial technologies in K-16 education during the past year. In early summer she team-taught a four-day Geospatial Technology for Educators workshop at the USGS EROS Center near Sioux Falls. The workshop provided information on how remote sensing, GIS, and GPS can be used to enhance K-12 curriculum in areas such as earth science, geography and physics. She spent a day at the SDSU Opportunities Farm near Lennox, demonstrating to high school agriculture students and teachers from Lennox and Beresford how geospatial technologies are critical components of precision agriculture. Mary was part of a team that received funding from NASA via the SD Space Grant Consortium for a Remote Sensing for Water Quality Monitoring and Watershed Assessment on the Lake Traverse Reservation project that trained three students from Sisseton Wahpeton College in geospatial technologies and water quality measurements. She co-authored a chapter entitled Obtaining Spatial Data in a pending publication edited by Dr. Sharon Clay (GIS Applications in Agriculture, Volume 2, Invasive Species, CRC Press). Mary also continues to serve as the Principal Investigator for SouthDakotaView, the South Dakota component of AmericaView, a program to promote the application of remote sensing in the classroom and everyday workplace.

Bob Watrel continued his research interests in electoral geography of the United States and presented two professional papers on the subject this year. The first paper, “Metropolitan, Micropolitan, and Rural Voting Differences in the 2008 Presidential Election,” was presented in April at the annual conference of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) in Washington DC. The second paper, “The Urban/Rural Divide: Metropolitan, Micropolitan, and Rural voting in the 2008 Presidential Election,” was presented in October at the Regional Great Plains/Rocky Mountain meeting of Association of American Geographers in Lawrence, Kansas. He was an invited speaker for the SDSU Common Read & Griffith Honors Lecture Series and gave a talk on the “Geopolitics of Central Asia.” He also became an Associate Fellow of the Center of Great Plains Studies in the fall of 2010.

George W. White continued to pursue his research interests in culture, ethnicity, and nationalism. His entries “World Court,” “Nation,” and “State” were published in the Encyclopedia of Geography, edited by Barney Warf. He also had a chapter entitled “Ethnic and national identity in SubSaharan Africa” appear in a NCGE publication called Sub-Saharan Africa in the Classroom, edited by Barry D. Mowell. The second edition of one of the textbooks that George co-authors, Essentials of World Regional Geography, also was published. George was part of an AAG delegation that went to Romania in May. He also attended the AAG Meeting in Washington D.C., the NCGE Meeting in Savannah, and the Great Plains-Rocky Mountain Division Meeting in Lawrence, Kansas.

Mike Wimberly led research projects on risk mapping and forecasting of mosquito-borne diseases, the geography of obesity in rural communities, and the application of geospatial technologies for sustainable biofuels production. Along with his students and postdocs, he published papers on these topics in the journals Landscape Ecology, the International Journal of Health Geographics, and the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. He organized a workshop on Satellite Remote Sensing for Monitoring Malaria Risk in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, attended the third international EcoHealth conference in London, and was an invited participant at the International Form for Adaptability Science in Sendai, Japan. He continues to serve on the editorial board of Ecology/Ecological Monographs and on the executive board of the US Chapter of the International Association for Landscape Ecology.
Alumni News


Thomas Knutson, B.S. in 1973, General Manager for 26 years at Loup Basin Reclamation District, Farwell, Nebraska, Chairman of the Nebraska Water Leadership Academy, Chairman of the Irrigation Caucus for the National Water Resources Association, an elected Board Member to a local Natural Resources District and an appointed member by the Governor to the State Natural Resources Commission.

Bob Springer, B.S. in 1973, M.S. in Geography from Oklahoma State, worked for the state of Oklahoma for many years and served as Oklahoma’s State Geographer for 16 years. Currently owner of Benchmark GPS, LLC and have sold Trimble GPS equipment in Oklahoma since 2008, also train and consult; I have and served as adjunct professor of geography at several Oklahoma colleges.


Robert J. Bork, B.S. in 1975, currently working in Sioux Falls as a Certified Public Accountant, also have a major in Accounting and a minor in Economics.

Robert McKay, B.S. in 1975, M.S. in 1977, helped teach cartography as a graduate student before we had computers and CAD systems! Currently, Director of Planning and Development for the City of Lee’s Summit, Missouri, married to Eunice for 35 years, two children: Kristin and Ryan, both married, waiting for grandchildren.

Craig Pugsley, B.S. in 1975, Visitor Services Coordinator for Custer State Park.


Janice Olson, B.S. in 1976, retired from American Express.

Terrance Wixon, B.S. in 1976, retired, work on two small businesses, keeping busy with mowing and haying business and helping my children with their children (grand kids).

Mark Barnett, B.S. in 1977, retired from Air Force after 28 yrs., Civil Service at USSTRATCOM for last 6 yrs. in Plans and Policy Directorate, working as a Plans and Strategy Analyst, USSTRATCOM at Offutt AFB, NE.

Terry Clark, M.S. in 1977, Dept. of Defense/U.S. Air Force, Entered USAF with Geog degree and used that educ. to qualify for Meteorology/Atmospheric Science Masters Degree, retired from Air Force after 27 yrs., entered government civilian service at Norman, OK, currently Deputy Director of the NEXRAD Weather Radar Operations Center, a DOC-DOD-DOT agency managing network of 168 NEXRAD systems.


Dennis Goreham, B.S. in 1978, Manager, Utah Automated Geographic Reference Center, retired, current member National Geospatial Advisory Committee, past Presidential National States Geographic Information Council, past Chair Western Governors’ Geographic Information Council, past Chair Utah Geographic Information Committee.

Anselem H. Rumpca, M.S. in 1978, worked for the SDDOT in Pierre for 30 years as a metropolitan planner and a research engineer before retiring, married to Marie, two sons: Jason and Aaron, both are graduates of SDSU; Jason is an attorney in Beresford, SD, Aaron is a second-year dental student at Lincoln Nebraska.

Jim Sturdevant, B.A. in 1978, director of POET’s cellulosic ethanol project, wife Diane is a pharmacy graduate from SDSU, two children: Anna and David.

Kathleen (Kathy) Fimple, M.S. in 1979, completed PhD at U. of Nebraska-Lincoln, currently Academic Programs Officer at Nebraska’s Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education – state agency that coordinates higher education activities.

Orville Gab, M.S. in 1979, retired in 2000 but continued teaching part-time at University Center in Sioux Falls; this year began teaching physical geography on campus in Brookings; involved in tractor pulling with association in Brown County during summers.

Kathleen Strebeck, B.A. in 1979, M.S. in Mapping Sciences from the Ohio State University in 1984. Presently works in Data Center Operations for the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), St. Louis. ASPRS St. Louis Region Board of Directors. Married, 2 kids.

Jim Thares, B.S. in 1979, resides in St. Cloud, MN metro area and is the Community Development Director for City of Big Lake, active in church and community, husband, father, etc., good luck to you all.

Brent Uilenberg, B.S. in 1979, B.S. in civil engineering in 1981, civil engineer, Bureau of Reclamation, greetings from Colorado!

Ralph Borkowski, B.S. in 1980, M.S. in 1987, City Planner for 16 years for the city of Huron, SD.

Denise Ottenbacher, B.S. in 1980, M.S. in 1998, 7th and 8th Geography and History teacher, active member of the SD Geographic Alliance, regular presenter at middle level conferences and in-service trainings.
Alumni News (continued)


Kevin Ageton, B.S. in 1982, Brock White Co. LLC.


John Faundeen, M.S. in 1983, U.S. Geological Survey, Archivist at EROS Center, visited over 20 countries mainly for work purposes, married to Cheryl, son Christopher, lived in Sioux Falls since 1985 besides a 3-yr. term in Virginia.

David Kaminski, B.S. in 1984, employed by 3M since 1985, married to Paula Becker.

Jim Lowe, B.S. in 1984, MapQuest.com, Hope to attend a Geography Club conference again soon!

Jan M. Griesenbrock, B.S. in 1990, Farm and ranch with in-laws on the Thurston LAZY TV Gelbvieh and Angus ranch (balancerbulls.com), married to DeDee, have four boys and lot of work.

Jeff A. Nelson, B.S. 1986, M.S. in 2002, US DHS/Customs and Border Protection, check into jobs with Border Patrol, need GIS specialists at every station and sector, many interesting locations and good pay and benefits, see: www.USAGOBS.gov

Brock White Co. LLC.

Joe Christensen, B.S. in 1988, Midcontinent Communications, worked for 19 ½ yrs. at Hutchinson Technology as computer tech., now does tech support.


Brian J. Smith, M.S. in 1988, Transportation Planner for AECOM.

Brian J. Smith, M.S. in 2008 in Sociology, Dr. Charles Gritzner was advisor for both degrees, currently working at USSTRATCOM Offutt AFB, Omaha.

Robert Anderson, B.S. in 1989, Community Development Director City of Mountain Lake, Minnesota.

Cheryl (Nordling) Kappenman, B.S. in 1988, Wells Fargo- Human Resources.


Bill Christensen, B.S. in 1988, Dakota Beverage Co. Inc., married, three children.


Joe Christensen, B.S. in 1988, M.A. in 1992 from U. of Kansas, Technology Service Corporation, working as a GIS/Remote Sensing Analyst since 1993 as a DOD contractor, have lived in Colorado Springs since 1992, have two daughters and a son-in-law.

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Greg Latza, B.S. in 1993, freelance photographer, shooting assignments for regional and national companies, magazines, etc., published eight books of photography on SD, inducted into SD Hall of Fame in 2010, wife Jodi, children Anne, Luke, and Jack.

Tom DeSutter, B.S. in 1994, Assistant Professor with the Department of Soil Science at North Dakota State University (NDSU).


Kevin Kleijnan, B.S. in 1997 in Landscape Design and Geography (with a GIS minor), Hey and Associates, Inc., working for an environmental consulting & water resource engineering firm.

Joseph Hicks, M.S. in 1998, Ph.D. in 2008 in Sociology, Dr. Charles Gritzner was advisor for both degrees, currently working at UMASS Amherst for the Office of Information Technologies.


Brian J. Smith, M.S. in 1998, Transportation Planner for AECOM.


Ronald A. Smith, M.S. in 1998, geographer at USGS-EROS.

Kristi Desaulniers, M.S. in 2000, elementary school teacher, currently residing in Sioux Falls, SD, with husband and two children after teaching internationally in England, Switzerland, and Canada.


Allison (Granum) Weideman, B.S. in 2001, 8th grade language arts teacher, taught at Watertown HS (geography, sociology, business) 2002-2003, worked in sales/customer service at Prest Rack in Brookings from 2003 to 2007, have taught at Harrisburg Middle School since 2007.

C. Jody Moritz, M.S. in 2002, B.A. in 1974 in French and Spanish, currently teach 7th grade social studies and language arts, 10th grade world geography and world history, and Spanish 1 and 2 for Faulkton Area Junior and High Schools.
Alumni News (continued)

Brian Dewald, B.S. in 2002, works with Shur-co, based in Yankton, SD for 3+ yrs. Agricultural OEM National Accounts Manager - manage sales of agricultural products directly to Original Equipment Manufacturers. Also, involved with helping manage family farm near Canova, South Dakota.

Lauri B. Sohl, M.S. in 2002, employed by the City of Sioux Falls as a GIS Analyst since 1998 and received GISP in 2005; primary areas of expertise include spatial distribution and analysis, network transportation systems, interactive GIS mapping, and management of the orthophotography and Lidar acquisitions; especially enjoy geography outreach; annually promote GIS Day activities with local middle schools and participate in Women in Science, which introduces numerous science fields and careers to area 8th grade girls; happily married to Terry Sohl since 1993, and have a wonderful son, Alexander, who was born in 2003.

Ken Hubbart, B.S. in 2003, City Planner for Aberdeen, South Dakota.


Steven J. VanAartens, M.S. in 2003, manager of GIS Department, City of Sioux Falls.

Nick Waite, B.S. in 2003, been with MZB Technologies for 4 years, married, three children: Isabel, Roslyn, and Josephine.

Garrett W. Wilson, B.S. in 2003, been with Cold Spring Granite for over 4 years in the Granit-Bronz and Quarry System, Regional Sales Manager (WI/IL) for Cold Spring Granite Memorial Division, married to Elly, son Grant.

Christopher Barnes, M.S. in 2004, just received PhD from the GISc Center of Excellence at SDSU in Fall 2010, currently at USGS EROS.

Mike Watson, B.S. in 2004, Union Pacific Rail Roadmaster, likes horses, poor grammar, my handwriting, God, physical and cultural geography, Mac & Cheese, Don Berg, SDSU, I’d like to travel and take pictures for a living, but I don’t. Live your dreams!


Luke Muller, M.S. in 2005, work as planner for First District Association of Local Governments, assist in writing and administration of zoning ordinances and comprehensive land use plans for 11 counties and 73 municipalities in northeast South Dakota.

Jordan Graesser, B.S. in 2006, M.S. in 2008, Geographer at Oak Ridge National Lab, conducts research at ORNL on remote sensing of human settlements, population distribution, and dasymetric mapping, for past year has been exploring methods of estimating population using only remotely sensed imagery, Wife Cassandra received M.L.S. at U. of Maryland in Spring 2010.


Tim Stoebner, B.S. in 2006, cartographer for two years at Garmin International, M.A. in Geography in 2010 at U. of Nebraska, Omaha, currently working on PhD at Southern Illinois Carbondale through the Environmental Resource and Policy Department.

Lindsay Bressler, B.S. in 2007, M.S. in 2009, GIS Coordinator for City of Sturgis.

John Conley, M.S. in 2007, have taught at five community colleges in southern California, taught Physical Geography and lab, Cultural Geography and Earth Science, love teaching geography and was inspired by Dr. Charles Gritzner.

Adam G.J. Case, M.S. in 2007, Geomatics (Technical) Specialist-USGS EROS Data Center, work with the National Landcover Program on the NLCD Derivatives for The National Map Project at EROS.

Amy Edleman, B.S. in 2007, First District Association of local governments, Watertown, South Dakota.

Matt Frankenstein, B.S. in 2007, farmer.

Jesse Lapsley, B.S. in 2007, currently in the M.S. program in geography, work in computer support for SDSU’s College of Engineering, originally from Ideal, South Dakota, married to Kristina.

Paul Peterson, M.S. in 2007, Project Leader at Navteq in Fargo, ND. Navteq is the leading map and data provider for GPS manufacturers.

Joanita Kant, M.S. in 2008, in PhD program at SDSU (Biological Sciences with Plant Science specialization), Graduate Research Assistant for Dr. Bruce Berdanier, under a NSF grant for three years.


Jason Bieber, M.S. in 2010, Zoning Enforcement Officer for the city of Sioux Falls.

Supporting Geography

The Department of Geography engages in a number of activities to fulfill its mission “to enhance academic excellence and strengthen scholarship in the discipline of geography at the baccalaureate and graduate levels." The annual Convention is the most notable of these activities. However, we also provide financial support to help students go to conferences and bring nationally prominent scholars to campus to share their knowledge with geography students. In addition, we provide scholarships to students to reduce the cost of their education. We are able to do these things thanks to the generous support of our alumni and friends. So if you would like to make a financial contribution to programs, please do not hesitate to do so. You can direct the funds to whichever activity that you would like to support most. Donations can be sent to the Department of Geography (see next page for address).
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Fritz’s Retirement Gathering

Monday, May 3, 2010