Notes from the Chair

It's been a time for new opportunities here in Geography this fall. Ruth Baker joined us as an Assistant Professor of Geography as the physical geographer replacing Don Petzold. She brings a specialty in climate and snowfall and has already added excitement and new possibilities in our department. She is originally from Bemidji, Minnesota went to school at Macalester, Yale, and Minnesota. Connie Simpson has joined us as our new Program Assistant replacing Vicki Winch. We began the academic year with six new geography majors either as transfer or freshman students. The Board of Regents in October approved our new Bachelor of Applied Science in GIS. In the Fall of 2013 we will begin this new program. This is a program for students who have graduated from technical schools. Our undergraduate GIScience Certificate program is attracting students as we add new students to the program every semester. We as a department are currently planning a new degree program in a BS in GIScience. GIS is a growing field with a growing demand for people with GIS skills and we hope to meet that challenge.

We had a successful GIS Lab Open House during Geography Awareness Week in November. It is always a treat to welcome guests to the lab and show what our students and faculty are doing. I would like to thank everyone in our department: Charlie, Matt, Matt, Ruth, and Connie for their hard work and dedication. I would also like to thank you for your continued support of Geography at UWRF. Your contributions to the Scholarship Fund, the Scott Nelson Fund, and the Geography Fund make a lot of good things possible.

CONGRATULATIONS FALL GRADUATES!

Abigail Neumann Andrea Strauch
STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS

Thanks to those of you who have updated us through the Alumni link in the past. For those of you who have not, please do so, we’d love to hear from you! http://www.uwrf.edu/geog/

Dan Bochman (’10) is currently working in Business Intelligence/Data Visualization for Avanade Incorporated, a Microsoft affiliate.

Amy (Simon) Ellison (’97) has spent the last 14 years working for the MN DNR, and is now the Senior Cartographer for the Division of Parks and Trails in charge of over 400 public maps. Amy is also the Event Coordinator for Parks and Trails, and this year helped organize several grand openings, ground breakings and 3 events with our partnership with the Minnesota Twins. Amy and Ron, her husband of 14 years, reside in Andover, MN with children Mallory and Levi. They visited several state parks and made a trip to the Wisconsin Dells this past year.

Ryan Stovern (’07) is working as a GIS analyst with Lake County.

DONATIONS

Donations to the department go to support both the Geography Scholarship and the Scott Nelson Fund. These provide us with the means to provide partial financial support for one student each year and a variety of other things such as awards for graduating seniors and the map of the year contest. Please consider donating to one of these funds. Thank you to those who have made donations.

Geography Scholarship:
Dr. Ann Legreid

Geography Fund:
Jack Rasmussen
John Weigel

If you wish to make a gift you may follow this link: http://www.uwrf.edu/RisingToDistinction/WaysToGive/Index.cfm

Your contributions in support of Geography are greatly appreciated.

INTERESTING READS

People of the Book (2007) – by Geraldine Brooks. This novel unlocks the history of the Sarajevo Haggadah, an illuminated 5c Hebrew Manuscript created in Spain. A book conservator starts the travel back through time and the people who came in contact with the book throughout its history.

The Danube: A Cultural History (Landscapes of the Imagination) (2011) – by Andrew Beattie. This readable book traces the history of the Danube through a geographical tour down river from the Black Forest to the Black Sea. There are nine others in this series if it strikes your fancy.

The Art of Travel (2004) – by Alain De Botton. This short book explores the how and why of travel. He has vivid descriptions of the common things he notices while travelling and muses on their philosophical significance. He chooses to travel with historic travelers from the past as tour guides.

INTERESTING WEBSITES

Brain Pickings (http://www.brainpickings.org/) – a visually rich cross disciplinary review of ideas and books dealing with art, design, science, technology and social sciences.

Verge Magazine: Travel with a Purpose (http://www.vergemagazine.com/) – online and print magazine that deals with ethics, socially responsible and sustainable travel.


They Draw and Travel (www.theydrawandtravel.com) a website that collects maps illustrated from artists around the world as they illustrate their travels.
Ruth Baker received a warm welcome joining the University of River Falls this fall. She is busy adapting her courses to fit UWRF and getting to know so many interesting faculty, staff, and students. Ruth is continuing with her research on snowfall patterns in the Upper Midwest and looks forward to presenting some new findings at upcoming conferences, and defending her dissertation. As a physical geographer, she will be teaching courses traditionally offered in this area, and developing a couple new courses as well. Having recently moved back to the Twin Cities and purchasing her first home, she is tackling quite a few new obstacles this year!

Matt Dooley has been busy teaching and working on various research projects this semester. In October, he presented a map at the North American Cartographic Information Society (NACIS) meeting in Portland, Oregon, entitled "Harrowed Landscape." The map was co-authored by former student Micah Bowe, and shows crime patterns in his Minneapolis neighborhood from 2010-2011 (see http://mattdooleycartography.blogspot.com/p/harrowed-landscape.html). He is currently working on a related project focusing on crime mapping (with geography student Lindsay Fox), and another project mapping hydrology in the Yucatan Peninsula (with geography student Jake Boyd).

John Heppen spent Fall Semester teaching Human Geography, Geography of the United States, and Political Geography. It’s always fun to teach political geography during an election year. The best part of the class is when students make maps of the election results and then have to provide their own analysis. He presented a paper at the West Lakes East Lakes Joint Meeting of the AAG in DeKalb, Illinois. His paper, “Political Sectionalism in Illinois” was part of a session on political geography. He is still department chair and active in faculty senate so that keeps him pretty busy.

Charlie Rader - We (Charlie and Nancy) are pleased to announce that Gromit, a Parsons Russell-Beagle mix, has now joined our household. He is very lively and adapting well to his new home. This past summer in addition to the usual canoeing, I advised Gregg Roemhildt on a Summer Scholars Project. Gregg received URSCA funding through the university to investigate historic land use change in the Kinnickinnic Watershed using satellite imagery. The project produced baseline data that the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust will use in their projects. I spent the first month of fall semester teaching in the new Experience China Program in Hangzhou. The program is modeled on the long-running Wisconsin in Scotland Program. While there I had a chance to travel to Shanghai and Beijing with the students. Since returning, I have been trying to catch up.

Matthew Renault spent a good portion of the summer teaching Human Geography online, updating the GIS Lab with new software, and transforming the back room of the Lab (the old darkroom) into a new student seminar room. The room is expected to be “open for business” this spring. It will have a large conference table and chairs, and will be the ideal spot for SGO meetings and cartographic chit-chatter. Cork boards and white boards will also be installed for project planning and map critiquing. Matt returned to the classroom in the fall to teach another episode of Intro to Geographic Information Science, complete with riveting lectures and spell-binding lab exercises. He will teach it again in the spring, along with a learning-community section of Human Geography. November’s GIS Lab Open House, which coincided with Geography Awareness Week, was a success: numerous students and faculty attended, including Chancellor Dean Van Galen. Posters from last spring’s senior colloquium were hung, a large spread of food and cake were provided (thanks to new Program Assistant Connie Simpson), and visitors tested their geographical skills with an online trivia game. The GIS Certificate Program continues to grow. This spring, two students are expected to finish the program, becoming the first to have completed it since its inception last spring. In other news, Matt was elected to Faculty Senate, so you should now address him as “Senator Renault” or, in a pinch, simply “The Senator” would suffice.
GIScience Certificate is Available and Growing at UWRF!

Geographic Information Science (GIS) refers to the many branches of geospatial science and technology (e.g., Cartography, Remote Sensing, Geographic Information Systems). The use of GIS has become increasingly popular in the U.S. To meet these needs, the University of Wisconsin-River Falls has developed an undergraduate certification program in GIS, leveraging more than 30 years of experience the Department of Geography and Mapping Service holds in teaching cartography and geospatial sciences. Students will learn about geospatial theory and literature that drives data collection, storage, analysis, and mapping in GIS. They will also build proficiency in the use of state-of-the-art GIS technologies including GIS and Remote Sensing software applications, GPS and GIS data collection, data analysis, web mapping, and digital image processing, among others. Courses are scheduled to allow students to complete their program within one year.

Search this link for more information on the program: [http://www.uwrf.edu/ContinuingEducation/GeographicalInformationSystemsCertificate.cfm](http://www.uwrf.edu/ContinuingEducation/GeographicalInformationSystemsCertificate.cfm)

SGO NEWS

The Student Geography Organization participated in a mix of social and academic activities during the Fall 2012 semester. Geography club assisted with Geography Awareness Week, hosted a Fall picnic, visited the Science Museum of Minnesota, held two successful on campus bake sales, and arranged a student and faculty pizza party. In the Spring 2013 semester, Student Geography Organization will be traveling to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) for a multi-day adventure, organizing a community Geocaching event, organizing two more bake sales, and will participate in various other social, academic, and volunteer activities!

SGO Event –November 30, 2012
Visiting “Lost in Egypt”
From Left to Right: Jessica McCollum, Corbin Paulson, Brie Simon, John Heppen, Gregg Roemhildt, Rozlyn Tousignant and Charles Rader

THINK GREEN- Newsletter Recipients!
If you would prefer to receive an electronic version of the newsletter rather than the 'hard copy' you receive in the mail, please email geography@uwrf.edu.