Notes from the Chair

Just when I think things cannot get any crazier they do. This semester in October the University was hit by a budget relapse which meant that the University had to give back money to the state to cover a budget deficit. As you may know the UW System bore 38 percent of the lapse while comprising only 7 percent of the state’s expenditures. We had to cut back on some classes for the spring. But there is good news. We hope to hire a tenure-track replacement for Don Petzold. During the summer we received permission to begin a search for a physical geographer. We’ve had an impressive group of applicants and we hope to announce the new hire soon.

Matt Renault has started as our GIS Lab Manager and Instructor. He’s been a great addition to the department and has brought new ideas with him which is always a plus. His experience of being a student in our program has given us some new insights. Six of our students attended the NACIS conference in October in Madison. Zach Bodenner won first place in the Dynamic Map Competition. I wish to thank Matt Dooley and Charlie in leading the group down to Madison and their mentoring.

Once again this semester we hosted a GIS Lab Open House during Geography Awareness Week. It was another success as we had some people from the community walk right in and ask about our program and the certificate which was nice. All the good work we do here is due to the hard work and dedication of Vicki, Charlie, Matt D., Matt R., and Chaina. I consider myself privileged to be able to work with such good people.

In closing I wish to ask that you consider making a contribution to the Scholarship Fund, the Scott Nelson Fund, or the Geography Fund. I do not wish to sound like a broken record, but your contribution of any amount does make a real difference and reflects positively upon Geography at UWRF. Programs that show support from alumni and friends get noticed on campus. Though we are a relatively small department, the accomplishments of our students and alumni and the support from you, either financially or through good word of mouth, helps us greatly. I am convinced that support from you and our fine reputation played a role in being able to search for a physical geographer.
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/

RYAN BABLER ('07) is a GIS coordinator for CorPartners in Chanhassen, MN.

LEWANN (IHRKE) BABLER ('08) is the owner of newly opened Necessary Therapeutics, specializing in massage and bodywork, in River Falls.

MARK HUONDER ('10) is working as a Planning Technician for the City of Woodbury, MN.

DEIRDRE JOYCE ('02) married fellow State Farm worker, Kevin Cocker, in the Fall 2010. They reside near Houston, TX, but Dee is hoping to convince Kevin that life in Minnesota is superior to that in Texas!

BOB LEONETTI ('08) graduated from the Humphrey School of Public Policy at the University of Minnesota, with a Masters Degree in Urban and Regional Planning.

SEAN RALEIGH ('08) is serving a tour of duty with the MN National Guard in Kuwait where he and his unit provide support for troops exiting Iraq. He hopes to return to wife, Amy, and one-year old daughter, Keelin, in May, 2012.

Here's a short Voice of America news item about the support troops in Kuwait - it features SEAN RALEIGH ('08) near the end.


MARK SCHOENFELDER ('02) continues working as Transportation Planning Director for MnDOT in Rochester, MN.

RYAN STOVERN ('07) left the City of Superior June 2011 to continue his career and accepted a new position with Lake County in Minnesota as their GIS Analyst/GIS Coordinator. He will be submitting his application to become a Geographic Information Systems Professional otherwise know as GISP.

AMY SWEENEY ('00) celebrated her third anniversary at Capella University. She currently splits her time between Human Resources and The Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence. Her focus is on recruiting and training new faculty for the University.

MARK TINKLER (SGO President ’88-’90, KSU ’92) is in his second year working for the U.S. Department of Defense in Doha, Qatar. He and his three children enjoy playing ice hockey in the desert!

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:
Mike Albert

Geography Fund:
Jack Rasmussen Richard Sprung
John Weigel Christopher Atkinson

Scott Nelson Fund:
Brad Bittorf Micky Sigrist

Interesting Reads

Curse of the Narrows: The Halifax Disaster of 1917 (2006) – Laura M. Mac Donald documents the events of a collision of two ships the Imo and Mont Banc and the ensuing explosion that destroyed much of the harbor of Halifax during World War I. This book documents the major relief effort that began in Boston.

Map Addict: A Tale of Obsession, Fudge & Ordnance Survey (2010) – Mike Parker, a Rough Guide travel writer, collects a series of his essays on maps in this volume. Topics covered included a quirky overview of British Cartography, gender differences in map reading, weird borders, and anachronisms of the Ordnance Survey. It is to say the least a humorous look at one of our favorite things in life.

The Complete: Persepolis (2007) – Marjane Satrapi’s memoir of growing up during the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Written and illustrated in the form of a graphic novel, this work traces her family’s life in Iran and her
eventual exile to the West, and impressions of return. This edition combines both volumes in the original series.

The Enigma of Capital And The Crisis of Capitalism. 2011 (Paperback) Oxford University Press. Geographer, David Harvey does a pretty good job of explaining how we got to where we are in the global economy.

Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin. 2010. Basic Books. Well-written account by Timothy Snyder, of an underreported part of Europe during the 1930s and 1940s.

INTERESTING WEBSITES

Dart Map St. Louis – In April of this past year a number of participants from the City of St. Louis gathered to throw darts at a map of the city. They then had one month to go make a photograph of the site. Check it out at: http://2011.dartstlouis.com/

The Map Room – this is Jonathan Crowe former blog about maps, still on line, it has some really interesting observations about maps; he continues to post update notes from time to time. http://www.maproomblog.com/

XKCD – Webcomic of Romance, Sarcasm, Math and Language – This entry is on- What your Favorite Map Projection Says About You. There is some reason that we all like the Van der Grinten…. http://xkcd.com/977/

FACULTY & STAFF NOTES

Matt Dooley has had a busy fall semester teaching Introduction to GIS, Animated and Interactive Cartography, and Field Methods and GPS. At the North American Cartographic Information Society (NACIS) meetings in Madison, Matt co-authored a poster with Kaylee Spencer (UWRF-Dept. of Art) entitled “Mapping Captivity: Ancient Maya Portraits of Prisoners of War.” He also co-chaired a paper session with Ezra Zeitler (UWRF alumnus), and presented a paper entitled “To Tween or not to Tween: Exploring Smooth Transitions for Proportional Symbol Maps.” Matt, along with Charlie Rader, helped six of our students attend the conference. Two of these students, Tyler Perrenoud and Zach Bodenner, presented in the poster session.

John Heppen is still allowed to be chair and enjoyed a visit to DePaul University for the Annual Meeting of the West Lakes division of the AAG in November. He presented a paper “Geography of Party Replacement from 2004 to 2008 in Presidential Elections in the North”. He spent time with former GIS Lab Manager Ian Muehlenhaus who has started a new job at UW-LaCrosse. He rode the Empire Builder Amtrak train and it was actually on-time into Chicago. He taught Human Geography, Geography of the United States, and Historical Geography of the United States this fall. He was completely flabbergasted that the volume he co-edited “Geography, History, and the American Political Economy” was issued in paperback in October. He wonders who is actually buying it.

Charlie Rader - This semester, I’ve been working with the International Travelling Classroom again helping to coordinate the 2013 group and preparing to teach with the program at the end of the spring semester. I attended the NACIS conference in Madison, presenting work that Jared Haas, Rick Schmolke, Erica Rader, Eric Forward and I had worked on last spring for the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust on a public recreation maps for the watershed. In addition, I attended the MN GIS/LIS conference in St. Cloud and attended a python scripting workshop. I ran into over a dozen of our graduates at that conference! I’ve been chairing the search and screen committee for the physical geography position, serving on a committee for a new international studies position, chairing the Faculty Senate – Instructional Learning committee, and sitting on two other committees. I also teach a few classes in between these commitments. Nancy is well and continues to work at MnGEO. We had another great paddling trip in Wabakimi Provincial Park this past summer. Our sad news is that we had to have Velcro put down after 17-1/2 years; we were very lucky to have him for so many years.

Matthew Renault (formerly Matt Millett ('08) for anyone keeping score) had a great fall semester, re-acclimating himself to the Geography and Mapping Sciences Department, the UW-River Falls campus, and the Midwest in general after living in Oregon for the past three years. He enjoyed teaching one section of Introduction to Cartography and GIS, managing the improved GIS Lab (four new workstations and
software updates galore!), and helping students with their various map projects. Some of the student projects he was involved with included Zach Bodenner’s Great Rivers Confluence Area interactive map, which can be found on the department website’s “Interactive Maps” page and a series of interactive regional maps still in production by Micah Bowe. In addition, he just completed a set of 60 black-and-white maps for a forthcoming book by Dr. Gary Fuller of the University of Hawaii-Manoa. He’s looking forward to teaching Human Geography online during J-Term and another section of Introduction to Cartography and GIS in the spring, and delving into some research ideas (map use, map navigation, and, of course, flags!) in the spring and summer.

**EMERITUS FACULTY**

**Mike Albert** reports that he is alive and well.

**Ruth Hale** is currently living in Fairview Seminary Home. A snippet from her Christmas letter reads, “In looking back over my many (84) years, I see I have led a very full and abundant life, rich in happiness and love, filled with rewarding experiences, fascinating conversations, and most of all the good company of friends whose memories I hold dear.” Correspondence can be sent to Ruth at:

Ruth Feser Hale
906 College Avenue, Rm 115
Redwing, MN  55066

**Don Petzold** has been enjoying retirement immensely. He continues volunteering at the local elementary school with several offerings of “Weather Wonders” throughout the school year. He and Liny have been travelling more frequently, even though Liny continues working as a school psychologist in St. Paul. Notable trips include: Finland in Fall 2010 to watch the Wild play their opening games; several trips to Chicago, Montreal and New England; and Ireland last month. Don has made a couple trips to visit former student, Mark Tinkler, while he is stationed in Fallon, NV where they have had some interesting off-road driving experiences, and he has just returned from Winnipeg where he watched the first game between the Wild and newly reformed Winnipeg Jets.

**SGO NEWS**

SGO had a successful bake sale during Geography Awareness Week and hosted a GIS Lab Open House where a globe was raffled off. Plans for the future include a day trip and a Spring Trip camping somewhere. The Spring Trip to Tettegouche State Park last May was successful.

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**GIScience Certificate is Now Available 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:

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**ATTENTION 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.