

Hello to All from East Lansing!

It's been a busy year so far for the Department. Enrollments and courses are in good shape and research productivity continues to rise.



We added two adjunct faculty members to the Department from the Urban Planning Program, Eva Kassens and Peilei Fan (see page 5). They can now serve as advisors to our graduate students and more easily interact on research proposals. A number of our faculty are gone for the year pursuing temporary opportunities elsewhere: Antoinette WinklerPrins continues to serve as a project officer with the National Science Foundation in Washington; Kirk Goldsberry is on a 2-year appointment at Harvard University as a GIS consulting faculty member; his wife, Adrienne Goldsberry has followed Kirk to Boston but will continue to work on the online program via the internet; Cynthia Simmons and husband Bob Walker are off to Brazil, Bob teaching at the University of Parà and Cynthia working on various MSU Brazil initiatives; and, finally, Ashton Shortridge and family are in China where he is teaching at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou and visiting Sichuan University in Chengdu. These departures have created some teaching challenges for the Department but other faculty and some talented graduate students have managed to fill the gaps.

A major task for the faculty this semester is a review and revision of the Geography major requirements. While discussions are just now underway, we anticipate that a series of "tracks" within Geography (i.e., environmental, health, applied, climate,

etc.) will be developed with an eye to allowing undergraduates to become more specialized. These changes are in response to changes in requirements at the College and University levels. We look at this as an opportunity to make Geography more attractive to potential majors.

This edition of the Newsletter has several special features: the centerfold pages have photos highlighting some faculty "in the field"; there is a piece from the online staff on social media; and we have found some old departmental photos—if you can help us identify the people in the photos, please let us know.

Finally, for those of you who will be in New York for the AAG convention in February, there will be an MSU Geography reception on Sunday, February 26 from 8:00 to 11:00 pm at the McCormick & Schmick's Seafood Restaurant, corner of 6th Avenue and 52nd St. We hope to see many of you there. ☺

Richard Groop, Chair



Alan Arbogast writes: So 2011 is in the ledger of life and career. That makes 16 years since I began working at MSU—hard to believe. It was a satisfying year on several fronts. I began serving as the Graduate Advisor for the program

and really enjoy that role. We recruited a great group of students this year and celebrated with an awesome GeoCamp on Beaver Island in August. An important professional accomplishment was to publish the 2nd edition of my textbook, Discovering Physical Geography. This text is now used at over 60 colleges and universities around the country so I'm proud of that. I taught several classes, including one of my favorites, Regional Geomorphology of North America, in spring, 2011. This class ends with a field trip to the Great Plains (mostly Kansas) in the second week of May. I always look forward to this trip because it's a chance to see the wide open spaces again and to share them with the kind of good students I had this year. Dave Lusch also participated in the trip and was a great addition. On the personal front, my kids are a year older, as am I. My wife, Jennifer, happily teaches 2 classes at LCC. Life is good.



Alan with students on his Plains field trip in Kansas at an exposure of Pearlette volcanic ash, which accumulated during the most recent (~600,000 years ago) large eruption of the Yellowstone caldera in Wyoming.



Kenneth E. Corey engaged in or completed a number of research projects during 2011. The first was led by co-author and co-investigator, MSU Professor Mark Wilson. It resulted in

the publication of a journal article, "Approaching Ubiquity: Global Trends and Issues in ICT Access and Use," Journal of Urban Technology, January 2011, Vol. 18, No. 1, pages 7–20. The article is part of a long series of empirical-research assessments of the state of information and communications technologies (ICTs) usage that began two-decades ago with the "Naga" chapters on Southeast Asian ICT policies planning and has evolved into a book project entitled The Global Information Society. Professor Aharon Kellerman is a co-author of the book project, along with professors Wilson and Corey. The just-submitted book manuscript currently is under review.

The second project is a book chapter focusing on Korea and in the location and policies planning of capitals: "Planning and Implementing Capital Cities: Lessons from the Past and Prospects for Intelligent Development in Future — The Case of Korea," in Engineering Earth: The Impacts of Megaengineering Projects. Editor Stanley Brunn. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer Science+Business Media, 2011: 985-999.

During 2011, Corey was a co-investigator and member of two Michigan-based research project teams in MSU's Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED). The first of these is entitled, "Creating an Innovative Regional Infrastructure to Support Market Entry and Expansion for Small and Medium Businesses," focusing on the Eastern Upper Peninsula and

Eastern Michigan, i.e., the counties around the Saginaw Bay, and their ability to export local goods and services to markets beyond the borders of the United States. The second CCED project, “University Economic Development Program,” is funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The goal of this project is to leverage the assets of Michigan’s universities to generate high-growth entrepreneurship across the state’s regional ecosystems and knowledge-economy clusters. Both of these projects ultimately are under the leadership of Dr. Rex LaMore, Director of the Center.

As the first recipient, in 2009, of the Dr. Gill-Chin Lim Global Award, Corey agreed to take the chairmanship of the 2011-2012 Global Award Selection Committee. It involves working with an advisory committee of distinguished development scholars and practitioners from around the world. The Dr. Gill-Chin Lim Global Award is made every two years by the Consortium on Development (CODS), headquartered in Seoul, South Korea. For more information, refer to: www.cods-global.org

Joe Darden: On November 5th, I presented a brief paper at a Plenary Session entitled “The House We Live In: The History of Race & Place in Metro Detroit.” The conference was part of Metro Detroit’s establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Racial Inequality. The first-ever conference examined past injustices that led to the current state of racial residential segregation, why it is so much higher in metro Detroit compared to other metro areas, and what actions should be taken to reduce it. The conference was sponsored by Michigan’s Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion.



Harm deBlij writes: I don’t know what it was, but there was a veritable herd of Spartan alumni on the Crystal Serenity cruise ship crossing from Lisbon to Miami last December (2010) and we hoisted a few appropriate libations in anticipation of a great football season and mounted a large “S” on the pool deck.

I was honored to be asked to speak at the “Transition” ceremony for Dr. E. James Potchen as he retired from his long-time position in April, 2011 (but without leaving his office: he continues to teach). Some 500 colleagues and friends were there, including Sparty and a delegation from the superb MSU Marching Band. The roster of Geography alumni who have received the Potchen Awards in Geography is growing and can be seen on a plaque in our building.



An unexpected pleasure when getting a bit on in years is that one starts to hear from former students who feel impelled to write about the good old days in Geography and their good fortune in having chosen Geography as their career path; some great and long-forgotten stories came my way this year and I’m very grateful to all.

The American Geographical Society of New York elected me to its Council in June 2011 and it has been fun to spend more time in the greatest city in the world. Other travels in New Zealand and Australia were informative in context of China’s huge impact on economies and landscapes; I also spent four weeks in Europe where the polarization of wealth, urban tensions, and doubts about the EU project are creating a different cultural geography.

On the public-lecture circuit promoting our favorite discipline, I was in about a dozen cities including Cincinnati, Baltimore, Denver, Los Angeles, Oklahoma City and Fort Worth, and in literally every place there were Geography and MSU alumni to meet.

The fifteenth edition of *Regions* appeared in 2011 (the first edition was written at MSU in the 1960s) and I welcomed a new co-author, Jan Nijman of the University of Miami, to the team. I’m getting nowhere with my halfwritten book titled *The Endarkenment* but did finish a recast of now-dated *Why Geography Matters*. Wouldn’t you like to give those Presidential candidates a Geography test?

Over the past year, **Kyle Evered** has been engaged in collaborative work with Emine Evered (Asst. Prof. of History, MSU) on historical geographies of public health and disease in late Ottoman and early republican Turkey. Thus far, they have focused their work on geographies of both malaria and syphilis and associated state responses. Of the over half dozen article manuscripts that they’ve submitted thus far, two are already in print; “Governing population, public health, & malaria in the early Turkish republic” (*Journal of Historical Geography* 37:4:470–482), and “Sex & the capital city: the political framing of syphilis & prostitution in early republican Ankara” (*Journal of the History of Medicine & Allied Sciences*, doi: 10.1093/jhmas/jrr054). They’ve also organized numerous public health-related panels for the upcoming annual meetings of the Middle East Studies Association (in Washington, DC in December 2011) and the Association of American Geographers (in New York in February 2012).



Peilei Fan is Assistant Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at MSU. She joined the Geography Department as an adjunct faculty member in fall 2011. With Drs. Messina and Moore and graduate students Michelle (Xue) Li and Huiqing Huang from Geography, she continued her research of a NASA-funded project “China’s Urbanization and its Sustainability under Future Climate Change” (2009-2012). She led the team and conducted fieldwork in Urumqi and Shanghai in summer 2010 and fall 2011.

Peilei also co-organized an NSF-funded workshop “Chinese Ways of Innovation: Strategic Directions of Research on Chinese Innovation.” The workshop brought together about 25 established scholars from the U.S., Asia, and Europe to Los Angeles in October 2011 to discuss the strategic directions of research on China’s innovation and science and technology (S&T). Her publications in 2010 & 2011 include catching up of Chinese telecom and mobile firms (*EPA, IJTM, IJBSR, JSTPC*), innovation capability of China and India (*Economic Change and Restructuring*), and China’s urban development (*EPB, EPA, Sustainability Science*), etc.



Eva Kassens is Assistant Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at MSU. She joined the Geograph Department as an adjunct faculty member in fall, 2011. She specializes in planning for extreme events such as the Olympics or natural disaster evacuations. She holds a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Arika Ligmann-Zielinska writes: In 2011, I was awarded a grant from the Center for Water Sciences and the Environmental Science and Policy Program at MSU to study farmers' decisions related to participation in land conservation programs and the impact of such decisions on lake water quality in the State of Michigan and Poland. Through the use of agent-based modeling, in which individuals, like farmers, make decisions that impact land use change, we want to explore which agricultural choice criteria play a major role in reducing lake phosphorus concentration.

I also continued my work on designing an empirically rich model of climate change induced migration using the Dust Bowl event as a case study. A large portion of the conceptual model development was performed by Nicholas Molen, our graduate student of geography, who employed a novel approach to behavioral data processing using codes (keywords and phrases) extracted from interviews with the Dirty Thirties migrants. By coding the archived documents, we were able to build mental maps that depict the individual factors that influenced the decision to migrate.

In summer, I was invited to organize a twoday workshop on spatial sensitivity analysis held by The Redlands Institute, University of Redlands, CA. During this workshop I presented my research on spatial decision making and, in particular, the importance of sensitivity analysis in reducing the uncertainty associated with geographic choices like dam location or landfill siting.

Tamsyn Mihalus, Sponsored Projects Administrator, has earned the MSU "Essentials of Research Administration" certificate. It is a year-long program that includes two and one-half days of core coursework that includes basic principles of research administration and pre- and postaward processing and administration. In addition, up to 16 half-day

electives are offered that cover specialized topics including proposal preparation, compliance and monitoring, international and agency-specific issues, and reporting.



Jianguo Qi: Pressures from regional climate change, economic development, resources exploitation, and intensified grazing, have resulted in significant impacts on the dryland ecosystems around the globe and particularly so in Asia

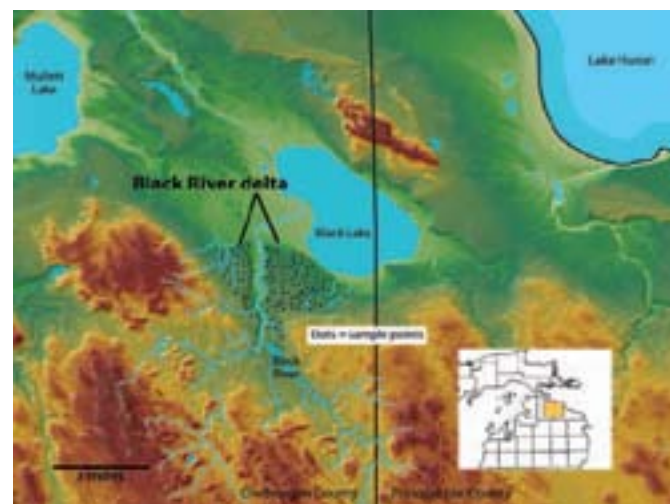
and Africa. Dryland ecosystem services, such as its provisional services for forage production as well as its functional services to regulate water and carbon fluxes have been significantly impacted over the past three decades. Conversely, changes in landscapes, particularly land uses and cover types, have also been blamed for intensified climatic events such as dust storms and severe and frequent droughts in dryland regions.

I travel to different parts of the world and conduct surveys, sometimes on horseback, with a research goal of better understanding of some key socio-environmental questions of dryland ecosystems, including 1) what do we know about the dryland ecosystems? 2) what are the emerging socio-environmental issues? and 3) what are the practical solutions to these issues? My projects are aimed at developing and promoting effective adaptation and mitigation strategies in dryland ecosystems to improve the quality of human lives.



Last fall, **Randy Schaetzl** led six students in the Geography Department's first Freshman Honors Seminar — an option available to all new students in the Honors College. The class is part of Geography's ever-increasing role in the Honors

program. Funded by a grant from the Honors College, the students spent seven days in the field, taking samples from a large (11.5 mi²) 10,000-year old delta that formed in Glacial Lake Algonquin, in Presque Isle County, northern Lower Michigan. The Black River formed this delta in a short 1700 years, and then, after Lake Algonquin's demise, incised a deep valley into the flat, sandy delta. Like other Pleistocene deltas in Michigan, the Black River delta formed amazingly rapidly; the river delivered an average of 350,000 m³ of sediment to the delta during each year of its existence! The students followed up their fieldwork with lab analysis of the samples, and then mapped the data in a GIS. Presettlement and contemporary vegetation were also analyzed and mapped, and in a GIS, the watershed of the Black River was delineated and characterized. Work continues into the spring, during which the students will write a research paper for publication, and present the work at the Michigan Academy of Science meetings, in Alma, MI.



Leo Zulu was awarded funding to support his research in Malawi from the Study Abroad Office of MSU International Studies and Programs. 🌍



Jessica Moy, Director of Remote Sensing and GIS Research and Outreach Services (RSGIS), accepted a new position with the State of Michigan last August. She will be working at the interface

of spatial technology in the State of Michigan and counterparts in regional and local government agencies. We wish her the best in her new endeavors.

Justin Booth, a longtime staff member of RSGIS, was named Director. He will oversee a staff of nine and about 10 student employees.



This year marks the 40th Anniversary of RSGIS. Called the Center for Remote Sensing for most of its life, it was established as a NASA outreach facility for promoting and disseminating NASA products. Over the years the unit's mission, personnel, and administrative reporting have changed but RSGIS continues to thrive serving both internal MSU clients and many external agencies. 🌍

Art Getis (MSU Faculty 1961–1963) writes: **Judith M. Getis** passed away on July 14, 2010. She was 72. She received a Master’s degree from Michigan State in Geography. Her adviser was Harm de Blij. I was her instructor in statistics. She was an outstanding student and a wonderful companion for me for 49 years. She had principal responsibility for writing our text, “Introduction to Geography,” which was the leading college geography introductory text in the U.S. Throughout her career she raised three wonderful daughters and participated in a number of geography and regional science meetings. Her book, “You Can Make a Difference,” was one of the first “how to be a conservationist” monographs.

She was educated at University High in Ann Arbor, Harvard (Radcliffe College), University of Michigan (BA), University of Washington, and Michigan State University (MA). She won a National Defense Education Act Fellowship. She was active in civic affairs in Princeton, Urbana, and San Diego. She was elected to two terms to the Princeton School Board and helped to write Geography tests while employed at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton. She taught cartography at Rutgers and UCLA. In addition, she was a recipient of an AAG/NSF grant to help develop the High School Geography Project.

Jay Harman (MSU Faculty 1996–2009) reports another eventful year. Surely the professional high point was being conferred the Climate Specialty Group’s “Lifetime Achievement Award” at the AAG national meeting in Seattle. Unfortunately, his plans to be there in person to accept the award were thwarted by atmospheric processes: his Amtrak trip to Seattle on the Empire Builder was cancelled at the very last minute by flooding of the Red River in North Dakota. As a diehard train fan, he then tried to take his family on vacation to Glacier National Park on the same train in July,

but further flooding (this time at Minot by the Souris River) scuttled that trip at the last minute, too. Otherwise, he continues his involvement with his Environmental Ethics course, teaching it during fall, 2011, once again, as well as with the virtual version of Geography 330 (The U.S. and Canada). Presently he is committed to offer the former course again during the fall of 2012, but plans beyond that point are very much in doubt. Personally, he reports keeping busy during the growing season with gardening and beekeeping and is already looking forward to the summer of 2012. Above all else, he hopes to stay healthy and spend as much time as possible with his family.



Jay Harman receives his Lifetime Achievement Award from former student Mark Schwartz.



John Hunter (MSU Faculty 1967–1995): In the Centennial Volume of the *Geographical Review*, I have published a retrospective with an extended analysis of the river blindness problem of the West African Savanna.

In the context of my original hypothesis of 1966, the role of air mass climatology is now more fully demonstrated. Added information has been provided on the World Health Organization’s

disease interventions from 1974 to the present day, when new methodologies are being tested. See “River Blindness Revisited,” *Geographical Review*, Vol. 100, Part 4, pp 559–582, Oct. 2010, AGS of New York.

Jack Williams (MSU Faculty 1972–2006) reports: We are now living in Vancouver, Washington. Retirement is very enjoyable; I recommend it for everyone. I’m lucky to keep busy with one foot in academia, teaching, conferences, and a little writing/editing, just enough to be enjoyable without being a burden.



Jack Williams greets colleagues at the International Conference on China Urban Development at the University of Hong Kong in December, 2010.

From the Past...

DO YOU RECOGNIZE ANYONE?

We recently discovered a number of photos of former Geography faculty members, some of whom we know and some who are unknown. If you recognize any of the unnamed people or can help with any of the question marks below, please send an e-mail or a letter to help put names to faces and confirm dates. In addition a colleague is seeking information on Stannard Bergquist, the first chair of Geology and Geography at MSU in the 1930s and 1940s. Any information would be appreciated. Thanks.



Departmental cartographer Ronald Beveridge and unknown students (c. 1955?)



Charles Boaz with unknown student using a stereoscope (c. 1955?)



Larry Sommers presents an Atlas of Michigan to unknown guests. Dean Gwen Andrew is second from right (c. 1977?)



Edward Prophet with students Charles Rhee and Sarajul Islam (c. 1950?)



L to R—Unknown, Unknown, Larry Sommers, Yasuo Masai(?), the Department's first PhD (?), & Dieter Brunnschweiler (c. 1960?)



Larry Sommers and Atlas manager Scotty McKay (c. 1977?)

An unknown geographer in his office (c. 1950?)



Clarence Vinge with unknown students (c. 1950?)



Clarence Vinge talks with unknown colleague (c. 1952?)



Mark DeVisser was awarded a NASA Fellowship from the Earth and Space Science Program. The fellowship provides three years of graduate school support toward Mark's dissertation dealing with land cover change and disease ecology in Kenya under the supervision of **Joe Messina**.



Jordan Howell was selected for a prestigious MSU Excellence in Teaching Citation Award which included a substantial stipend. This award goes to only about six graduate student assistants throughout the University each year.



Keumseok Peter Koh attended the Applied Geography Conference at the University of Redlands, Redlands, California in October to present his work on obesity in Michigan.



Shaun Langley co-authored (with **Joe Messina**) "Embracing the Open-Source Movement for Managing Spatial Data: A Case Study of African Trypanosomiasis in Kenya" in the *Journal of Map and Geography Libraries*. The article was considered of such importance that Taylor and Francis/Routledge publishers selected it for free public access.

Todd Lassen participated in an internship dealing with the Enbridge Oil Spill in Calhoun County where he put his environmental interest and training to use with the Calhoun Health Department.



Ritaumaria De Jesus Pereira was awarded a Graduate School Dissertation Fellowship for spring semester 2012.



Peter Richards was selected to receive the Twelfth Annual Benjamin H. Stevens Graduate Fellowship in Regional Science, a very prestigious award.



Gary Schnakenberg received the Latin America Specialty Group Field Study Award to support his dissertation research in Jamaica.

Paul Stano was selected to receive the Charles Hayden Kelley Fellowship in the College of Social Science. Established by John and Charles Kelley for their father Charles Hayden Kelley, a 1935 graduate of MSU. The fellowship is designed to reward students who have demonstrated capacity to achieve educational and professional goals.



Jay Strahan was awarded the 2011 Buzzard Undergraduate Award for a college senior to apply toward future graduate school expenses.

Halloween Bake Off, October 31, 2011

- **Best Overall exhibit** – RIP graveyard (Alison Keener)
- **Most Halloweenie** – Skull cupcakes (Claudia Brown) & RIP graveyard (Alison Keener)
- **Best Tasting** – Pumpkin Cake (Steve Schultze)



Honorable Mention

- **Sugar cookies** – men with missing parts (Minting Ye)
- **Chocolate cupcakes** – (Rita Pereira)



The annual Student Awards Reception and Gamma Theta Upsilon Honor Society Induction was held in April last year. Organized by Professor Emeritus **Judy Olson**, the event featured comments by **Harm deBlij** and honored host and Geography benefactor **James Potchen**, retiring Chair of MSU's Radiology Department.



GTU Initiates: Caitlin McKee, Paul Wilcox, Paul McCord, Chenxiao Ling, Jia Feng, Chuan Qin, Brad Miller, Patrick McLamara, Paul Stano, Daniel Ddumba, Jay Strahan, Ben Arnosti, Jason Piwarski, David Young. Not pictured: Christina Richardson & Andrew Keller



Grad Research Paper Competition Winners – Bradley Miller, Alan Arbogast (grad advisor), Mark DeVisser, Glenn O'Neil

STUDENT AWARD WINNERS

Potchen Award: Graduate Student of the Year – Jordan Howell

Potchen Award: Undergraduate Student of the Year – Jay Strahan

Jacobson Scholarship in Cultural Geography – Benjamin Arnosti

Marjorie and Lawrence Sommers Fellowship for International Research and Travel – Courtney Gallaher



GEOCAMP, the annual field experience for incoming graduate students was held on Beaver Island (in the middle of Lake Michigan) last August. The camp was led by Alan Arbogast and hosted by Cynthia Simmons. As usual, students reported a great experience.

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES 2011

Adam Carter	Joseph Svoboda	Ashli Brandt	Robert Davison
Daniel Kowalski	Lars Zwaanenburg	Claire Martin	Grant Hubert
Eric Starn	Patrick McLamara	Larry Pytleski	Laura Kueny
Jaimie Joseph	Paul Wilcox	Drake Schmidt	Caitlin McKee
Jason Piwarski	Shelley Hoover	James Spiher	Edward Potter
Jay Strahan	Thomas Cast	William Avery	Zachary Spotts

GRADUATE STUDENT DEGREES COMPLETED IN 2011

Campbell, Lindsay, MS (Jiaguo Qi), "Quantifying Spatial Relationships between Landscape Patterns linked to Anthropogenic Ecosystem Disturbances and Environmental Bacterial Infections: Buruli Ulcer Disease, Benin, West Africa."

Carothers, Tim, MS-GIS (Ashton Shortridge)

Govindasamy Thulasi, Mahalakshmi, MS (Nathan Moore), "ENSO, IOD, SST: Impact Study on NEMR in Tamil Nadu, South India."

Hession, Sarah, PhD (Robert Walker), "Improvements in Fine-scale estimation and evaluation of Geographic variables using climate data in East Africa."

Ling, Chenxiao, MS (Sue Grady), "Constructing Optimal Medical Management Areas for Health Services Research."

Luehmann, Michael, MS (Randall Schaetzl), "Characterizing, Mapping, and Interpreting Thin Loess Deposits in the Western Upper Peninsula of Michigan."

McCord, Paul, MS (Joseph Messina), "Tsetse Control in Kenya's Spatially and Temporally Dynamic Control Reservoirs: A Cost Analysis."

Qin, Chuan, MS (Jiaguo Qi), "Assessing Phonological Changes in East Africa using Remote Sensing Data."

Raetz, Sterling, MS (Ashton Shortridge), "Accounting for uncertainty in viewshed analysis of IED ambush sites in Afghanistan."

Reed, Meghan, MS (Kirk Goldsberry), "Examining the Behavioral Interactions between Urban Residents and their Food Environments: A Case Study of Lansing, Michigan."

Socia, Kristie, MS (Kirk Goldsberry), "Small-multiples and Animation: Measuring User Performance with Wildfire Visualization."

Stevens, Joshua, MS (Kirk Goldsberry), "Alternative Segmentation Schemes for the Design of Traffic Maps."

Tang, Ying, MS (Jiaguo Qi), "Urbanization and its Carbon Consequences in the Yangtze River Delta, Southeast China."

Xu, Hui, MS (Jiaguo Qi), "Paddy Rice Farming Systems and its Environmental Consequences: A Case Study in Anji County in Zhejiang, China."

Geography Department Faculty Research



Dr. **Joe Darden** conducting research to understand the heart of the City of Toronto, Canada.



Dr. **Alan Arbogast's** research focuses on the geomorphic evolution of Quaternary landscapes in the Midwest. Professor Arbogast believes strongly in field-based education, such as this discussion of exposed sediments in central Iowa.



Dr. **Kyle Evered** while doing fieldwork in the lakes region of Turkey.



Dr. **Jiaguo Qi** at the helm of a boat on West Lake at Hangzhou, China.



Dr. **Nathan Moore** discussing climate related issues with local pastoralists in Nguruman, Kajiado District, Kenya.



Dr. **Jeffrey Andresen** monitoring the flux of energy, water, and carbon from an agricultural landscape.



Dr. **Kenneth Corey** exploring development options Up North. Professor Corey is a strong proponent of starting knowledge exploration in the field.



Dr. **Robert Walker** while doing fieldwork in the Brazilian Amazon.



Dr. **Sarah Nicholls** taking a break from researching tourism to be a tourist at the Cut River Bridge located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.



Dr. **Jay Harman** counting tree rings while leading a biogeography field course in the Great Smoky Mountains.



The word cloud was generated from the titles and abstracts of published research performed by some MSU Geography Department faculty and free software available at www.tagxedo.com. A word cloud visually represents the frequency of word use in the documents being examined, with larger font sizes being associated with more frequently used words.



Dr. **Guo Chen** in China while doing field work on cities, inequality, and environment.



Dr. **Bruce Pigozzi** driving his Porsche while contemplating greater issues surrounding economics, urban systems, quantitative methods, spatial dynamics, and transportation geography.



Dr. **Catherine Yansa** collecting pollen samples at the Riley Mammoth dig in Ionia Co., MI.



Dr. **Ashton Shortridge** standing on the peak of Mount Sunflower, the highest point in Kansas.



Dr. **Randy Schaeztl** analyzing a soil sample collected via an auger in Northern Michigan.



Dr. **Arika Ligmann-Zielenska** at an artificial intelligence exhibit at the Pacific Science Museum in Seattle WA.



Dr. **David Campbell** at a research feedback workshop, Kimana, Loitokitok District, Kenya.



Dr. **Sharon Zhong** getting ready to launch a radiosonde during a NSF-sponsored meteorological field study near Winslow, AZ.



Dr. **Igor Vojnovic** exploring the Tokyo urban environment.



Dr. **Joseph Messina** with GPS units locating the equator in Kenya.



Dr. **David Lusch** collecting spectroscopy data on Baby's Breath growing on dunes located on the shores of Lake Michigan.

Social Media and Online Courses



Beth Weisenborn



Adrienne Goldsberry



Juliegh Bookout

Online Course Staff

“Though most of us have yet to fully embrace social media personally, we understand that ignoring it would be akin to ignoring the growing power and reach of television in the 1950s” (Niebling 2010:14).

When Dr. Groop sent out his annual email to solicit news from those connected to the Department of Geography, the Online Geography staff immediately knew that we wanted to do a piece on our recent adoption of social media as a way to communicate with our students, both current and prospective, and alumni. We first ‘stuck our toes in’ the Olympic-size swimming pool that is social media in January of 2010 with our own WordPress blog, which we called *GEOblog*. We began by posting links to direct students to relevant news and journal articles and sharing photographs, but soon found ourselves sharing our own thoughts and commentary. Check it out if you are interested: <http://geoblog.vudat.msu.edu/>. The GeoBlog has become a popular feature of our online courses, with instructors contributing posts frequently as well.

Through our experience with *GEOblog*, as well as with our personal Facebook and Twitter accounts, we were starting to grasp the enormous popularity of social networking sites. We were also beginning to understand how they could be used and growing more confident in our ability to use them. So, in October 2011, Online Geography took the next step and started a Twitter feed. We can now say, “Follow us on twitter @onGEOatMSU!” Around that same time, we started a Facebook group (onGEOatMSU) and soon after a LinkedIn group. In November 2011, National Geographic featured one of our blog posts titled “A reason to run” on their *My Wonderful World* blog as part of Geography Awareness Week—a truly exciting development in our evolution as bloggers. Though our number of Twitter followers and Facebook friends is modest at best, we are happy with where we are going.

The most obvious question that we have, and we expect others to have as well, is: “What is the benefit of social media in higher education?” Though we are still discovering the answer to that question for ourselves, as MacKenzie Hizon, director of International Outreach at Green River Community College in Washington put it, “At this stage in the game, if you don’t have a social media presence, you better hurry up because that’s where the game is” (West 2011: 88). The bottom line, it would seem, is that now and in the future we expect that nearly all of our students will be comfortable with using social media and will be connected to us and the world via these sites. If we are not there, blogging, tweeting, updating—sharing our passion about geography and geography education—we instantly become less relevant and have missed an opportunity to connect with current and prospective students, as well as alumni.

Sources:

Niebling, John. “Speaking the Language of Today’s Digital Natives.” *Community College Journal* 81 (2010): 14-15.
 West, Charlotte. “You’re on Facebook...Now What?” *International Educator* 20 (2011): 88-92.

QUEST FOR THE ANTARCTIC CIRCLE



Lifeng Luo: During the winter break, my wife and I took our first trip to the southern hemisphere with a group of MSU faculty and students in a study abroad program. Actually, we went so far south that we reached the Antarctic Circle.

We flew to Ushuaia, Argentina, the southernmost city of the world, and boarded the *MS Expedition* there. In the following 14 days, we made safely through the infamous Drake Passage, where 40 ft. swells made everyone seasick, cruised around the Antarctic Peninsula, and made all the way into the Antarctic Circle. During the trip, we made landings at many spots on the Antarctic continent, hiked the Antarctic ice sheet, visited research stations, and even camped on the continent for one night, although it never got dark. Some students also had a polar plunge into the subfreezing southern ocean.

Antarctica offers more than snow and ice; it has wildlife that is not available anywhere else. On Christmas day, we made our first landing at Deception Island and were welcomed by 27,000 pairs of cute Chinstrap penguins. In Lemaire Channel, we witnessed a group of Orcas (killer whales) chasing Gentoo penguins as the adult orcas teach their young hunting techniques. We had a close encounter with a leopard seal during a zodiac cruise to observe huge icebergs, and we saw the friendly side of the ruthless predator.

The trip is all about experiencing Antarctica—the only continent that humans are not the residents. Perhaps because of this, the pure beauty of Antarctica is beyond what words and pictures can depict, and can only be appreciated by seeing and feeling it in person.



The 345' 6-deck vessel (*MS Expedition*) looks so small when surrounded by Antarctic mountains and glaciers.

The Spartans in Antarctica

Polar swim in 33.8°F ocean & 40 mph winds



Antarctic mountains are unique & beautiful.



Many places are still covered by sea-ice during Antarctic summer



Chinstrap buddies



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GEOGRAPHY SYMPOSIUM JULY 7-12, 2013

The Geography Department at Michigan State University invites you to the 15th IMGS on our campus in East Lansing, MI. Come for a fun and very productive symposium. We expect 200 health and medical geographers from around the world to attend. Paper sessions will be held in the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, on campus. Our field trip includes a visit to extraordinary sand dunes from the glacial period and beach picnic on the shores of Lake Michigan, wine tasting at one of Michigan's award winning vineyards, and dinner and entertainment at the FireKeepers Casino with transportation back to East Lansing throughout the evening. For those of you who would like to arrive early (Friday or Saturday), we will have city tours of Detroit and Chicago and also applied GIS workshops in the Geography Department. Please watch for more information and send questions or comments to: Sue C. Grady, Chair of the Planning Committee (gradys@msu.edu). Please also welcome and direct questions to Libbey Kutch, Ph.D. student as our new symposium coordinator (kutchlib@msu.edu).



Steve Aldrich (PhD 2009) and his wife Rosalie (MA, 2005, Com Arts) live in Indianapolis with their 10-month old, Harrison. Steve continues to work at Indiana State University as an assistant professor of geography and is happy to have a newly awarded NSF collaborative grant and a new *Annals* article (with Spartan co-authors — **Bob Walker, Cynthia Simmons, Marcellus Caldas**). Rosalie works at Indiana University–East as an assistant professor and they both love spending time with their son!



Juliegh Bookout (MA 2006): In October of 2011, I ran my first half-marathon, mostly in the city



of Detroit. I live only about fifteen miles from the city limits, yet I could probably count on one hand how many times I have visited Detroit in the last three years: Once to watch a Lions Game, once to attend a musical at the Fox Theater, once to see an exhibit at the Detroit Institute of Art, you get the point. Not only do I rarely make it in to the city, when I do, I have a specific destination; a destination that I park adjacent to, and walk directly to and from. However, signing up for the Detroit *Free Press* Marathon changed that. By running the halfmarathon, I had no

choice but to see the city, to travel down the roads less traveled (by me, that is), over the bridge, through the tunnel, and in neighborhoods. As I ran those 13.1 miles, I toured one of Detroit's oldest neighborhoods, Corktown, and sensed the surprisingly welcomed smells coming from Mexicantown. I never realized until then how much I could appreciate the support of a home crowd cheering me on or the pride I could feel for a city I call home, but barely know. Although that marathon was my first race experience, it is not unlike that of other Geographers who run.

Sissi Bruch (PhD 2006): Life in the beautiful Pacific Northwest just got a bit more interesting. I just won my very first elected position to the City Council for Port Angeles, WA. It is a 4-year term and with my current job as the Senior Planner with the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, I now face some very interesting challenges that make every day a new adventure.

Dan Cole (MA 1979): This past summer, I worked in western Mongolia for 6 weeks in the Lake Khoton (Khoton Nuur) area in the Altai mountain region. My daily routine often consisted of hiking 10–15 km/day conducting field mapping and collecting data on rock art and archaeological sites. My ground control consisted of previous surveyed data points around one hill and half-meter resolution satellite imaged stereo pairs from GeoEye. We are working with a wide range of dates and cultures (Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Turkic). In addition, \directional stone lines were plotted to see if they pointed to a sacred peak, another cultural feature, or an ancient astronomical event. The weather did not always cooperate, with frequent rain showers, windy afternoons, and snow on July 4. I will be going back to our study area during June & July of 2012. In the last two issues of the *Spartan Geographer*, I mentioned that I was co-editing

with Imre Sutton a book titled *Mapping Native America*. We are now hoping for a publication date later in 2012. Because of that work, I have been asked to be the keynote speaker at the Federal Bar Association's Indian Law Conference next April in Santa Fe, NM. Talking to lawyers instead of geographers should be interesting.

Fillmore C. F. Earney (PhD 1965) retired as Professor of Geography from Northern Michigan University in 1996 where he taught for 31 years. He published widely in geographical and environmental science journals, contributed numerous chapters in books, and authored several monographs and four books. While at NMU, he received many accolades for his teaching and research, including the University's Distinguished Faculty Award in 1981; the Michigan Governing Board's Award in 1984; NMU's Telion Chapter of Mortar Board's Outstanding Faculty Award in 1992; and AAG's Coastal and Marine Specialty Group's Richard J. Russell Award in 1992. Also in 1992, NMU established the "Doc" Earney Scholarship. In 2005, his former student Dr. **Frederick Nelson** (MSU PhD 1979) established an NMU endowed scholarship in Dr. Earney's name. Seeing **Dave and Bobbie Kromm's** photo and notes in the spring issue of the *Spartan Geographer* reminded me of many memorable adventures we had together over the last four decades during AAG, IGU, and NCGE field trips. Finally, in the same issue, it is a bit of a shock to learn that my former NMU students including **Shawn Farrell Chambers** (MSU MA 1984) are now retiring! E-mail: silversnake97415@yahoo.com

Darren Grafius (BS 2004): I did my undergraduate study in geography at MSU between 2000 and 2004, and still think back very fondly on my time there. Since then I've been pursuing graduate study in geography at the University of Iowa, working under George

Malanson to write my doctoral dissertation on climate change and mountain treelines. I'm defending at the end of December, 2011 and expect to graduate and earn my Ph.D. in December, after which I'll be moving to the UK to seek a career using, and further developing, my skills and interests, possibly with a job in teaching or public service.

John Hart (MA 1979): My wife Terese and I are still involved in the Democratic Republic of Congo, working on developing community-based conservation programs. You can get an idea of what we are doing, and photos from our web site / blog: www.bonoboincongo.com It includes Geography, Landscape Ecology, GIS, and even basic cartography (we are responsible for developing the maps for the new protected area we are working to set up) are all front and center in my current program. If there are any intrepid recent graduates (undergrad or grad students) interested in our site and problems, please point them our way. Best wishes to all for 2012.

Denny Hausker (BA 1969): Although I did graduate with a Geography major, I worked for Allstate Insurance Company as a medical adjuster until I retired in 2003. I never pursued geography related employment. My wife is also an MSU graduate and retired from teaching the same year I did. Currently I do some part-time financial counseling for friends and relatives. Other than that, I write fiction books, none of which are released yet. So far, they are in the Epic Fantasy genre.

David Jones (MA 1968) and **Julie Hidegkuti Jones** (MA 1969): We celebrated 43 years of marital bliss this year. Both of our children are working geographers (in GIS) in the DC area and we expect the four grandkids to follow suit! Julie and I are enjoying active retirement in Reston,

Virginia and try to include at least one domestic and one international trip yearly. We're particularly partial to Road Scholar (Elderhostel) programs. (dave.julie.jones@gmail.com)

Tarek A. Joseph (PhD 1996): Currently in his 14th year in the Department of Geography at Henry Ford Community College, Dr. Joseph serves as chair of the department and teaches cultural, world regional, and environmental geography. He is a contributing author to the book "Arab Americans in Toledo: Cultural Assimilation and Community Involvement" (2010 — The University of Toledo Press), winner of the Arab American National Museum's 2011 nonfiction award. Dr. Joseph lives and enjoys life in Ann Arbor with his wife Christine and son Elias.



Walt Kelly (BA 1982): After serving for over 20 years in the U.S. Air Force, I retired from active duty and am currently working in Colorado Springs, Colorado for Boeing as a Training Specialist. My job includes training the military operators of our nation's missile defense system. Included in the curriculum I present is a lesson on Geography that I developed to facilitate our student's understanding of geography as it applies to their duties.

Alia Koczara (BS GIS 2008): I started out as an Education major with a focus in social studies. Sophomore year I realized that teaching wasn't the route I wanted to go, and that I had fallen in love with all the geography classes I had taken the last two years. I switched my major to Geographic Information Sciences. It was tough explaining to my dad what this was, and I still don't think he understands it! My favorite classes were the **Kirk Goldsberry** Cartography classes. I have

put a lot of what I learned in this class towards my current job. Also loved the CAD classes that were offered—it was pretty rewarding to finish those final projects! And I can honestly say that **Morris Thomas** is by far my favorite professor of all time, and I think everyone should experience one of his classes. Absolutely phenomenal! Since graduation I have been working with Western Land Services, a natural gas & oil brokerage company, as a GIS Specialist. I first started out in Ludington, Michigan for 6 months, and volunteered to relocate to Pittsburgh, PA where I've been for 2 years. My main work is mapping oil & gas leasehold throughout Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia dealing with the Marcellus and Utica shales. People in our company go to the courthouses, pull oil & gas leases, and then as mappers, we find the parcel numbers or use the metes & bounds to draw in the parcels, and create an enormous shapefile of who is operating where and what leases are soon to be expiring. This helps the oil and gas companies decide where to drill, lease land, etc. I also do work for other clients that is specific to their pipeline projects, drilling schedules, or make up topographic maps—basically anything. I mostly make wall size maps—3 ft by 4 ft usually and the clients give me the freedom to make them look as I wish, so it gives me a chance to always be developing skills & get creative with my work. I also have projects going on in California, Texas, Kansas, and



North Dakota so I am really mapping out all over the U.S.! I've attached a small map I made of the marcellus fairway. They equate the natural oil & gas under the marcellus equal to the oil in Saudi Arabia! Landowners out here get paid millions to let the oil and gas companies come in and drill and lease. I am completely changing life out here in Pennsylvania! I am getting married in May and hope to get a GIS job back in the Detroit area within the next 18 months to 2 years.

James L. LeBeau (PhD 1978): It has been busy. I co-edited the May 2011 issue of *The Professional Geographer*. I spent last semester on sabbatical at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia and I am now a Senior Research Fellow in The Institute for Canadian Research Studies (ICURS). I am working on projects pertaining to the spatial patterns of graffiti; the directional movements of offenders; and crime and disorder at hotels/motels pre-, during, and post 2010 Winter Olympics. The latter research is a replication of my recently published book chapter *Sleeping with Strangers: Crime and Disorder in Hotels and Motels*. I'm close to retirement but still having fun, learning, and curious.

Mohsin Mansory (PhD 1984) is now Counselor to the President of King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.



Thomas S. Miller (BA 1978): Thank you for the opportunity to briefly put forward what I have been doing lately. I have been married 21 years to Darnell Elizabeth Miller with one son who is at MSU (Montana State University, Bozeman MT). I have worked in the oilfields as a wellsite geologist and logger since 1979. During slow times I was a freelance journalist, construction and landscape laborer, and went back to get a teacher's certificate from Central Michigan University in 1987. Although a certified teacher, I missed the activity in the oilfield and returned without ever becoming a full-time teacher. In 2004 I started T.S. Miller, Inc, a geology consulting firm with one employee--me. It has done extremely well and I was in at the beginning of the Bakken discovery. Now the subsequent development is amazing. Business is too good- -I am presently working thirty to forty days on the rig, then eight or ten off. I hope to reduce that amount of time, perhaps when our son is closer to finishing school. I follow Michigan State sports, and enjoyed this year's football season immensely. I have an Izzone t-shirt to watch basketball in and my wife is also a big fan. We support the intramural and Essential Edge programs with small but steady donations, a small scholarship for a 4-H kid at Montana State since we were active raising sheep, horses and chickens while the boy was young. My family and I have provided a scholarship in my sister's name at our old high school in Newaygo, Michigan. It is a mild winter here in Eastern Montana on the Great Plains. I live near the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers and occasionally canoe them.

Suzanne Picken (BA 1970): I am employed as a Systems Librarian at the Washington Research Library Consortium in Washington, DC and have been for several



years. I have very fond memories of MSU while I was an undergraduate way back in the '60s and when I was employed as a Serials Librarian at the MSU Library in the '80s. Here is a picture of me in my Frostburg State University sweatshirt—my son earned his BA in Communications in 2005 from FSU.

Mike Plivelich (MS GIS 2004): I'm now managing a GIS-centric project and administering the database in Alaska from my home in Grand Rapids as a consultant to the USFS, USGS, State of Alaska and the University of Alaska. Here are two links that may be of interest: <http://events.esri.com/uc/2011/sag/list/?fa=Detail&SID=1272> <http://juneauempire.com/neighbors/2011-10-30/uas-celebrates-success>



Ivan Ramirez (PhD 2011) is now a Visiting Assistant Professor of Geography/ Environmental Studies at The New College (The Honor's College) of Florida.

Hae Un Rii (PhD 1983): I finished successfully my duty as Deans of College of Education and Graduate School of Education at Dongguk University from 2009 to 2011. I was re-elected as a member of the Executive Committee of the International Council on Monument and Sites (ICOMOS) in 2011 at the 17th General Assembly of ICOMOS in Paris, France. ICOMOS is an NGO and an advisory body for the World Heritage Center of



UNESCO. I also received the Okkwan Culture Medal from the national government (Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea) in December and I consider it a real honor. I hope you are proud of me as an alumnus of the Department of Geography, MSU.

Paul Rindfleisch (MA 1999): Hello fellow Spartan Geographers! Originally from Wisconsin, I did my undergraduate work at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point where I graduated with a major in geography and minors in soils, geology, and earth science. Michigan State's Geography Department was a perfect fit for my research interests in soil geomorphology, and I enrolled in the Master's program. Dr. **Randy Schaetzl**, my advisor, helped me to develop an interesting and important Master's thesis project in northwestern Lower Michigan investigating soils on drumlins, which resulted in two publications. I also received an outstanding education from the Department faculty, including classes like GIS, statistical methods, and regional geomorphology which were great preparation for my future career as a soil scientist. Equally important were all the wonderful field experiences the faculty provided while I was at MSU. These included a number of weekend trips around Michigan investigating soils, two separate trips to Kansas with Dr. **Alan Arbogast**, and a trip to northeastern Lower Michigan the summer before I started my program. In addition to all this, it was great to be Spartan. I loved attending a Big 10 school and I made friends and professional relationships there that I hope will last a lifetime. My education in geography has paid great dividends. For the last 6 ½ years, I have worked for the Natural Resource Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service), an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as a soil scientist. Currently, I am the soil survey project leader for the Anza-Borrego area soil survey in southern California. The

classroom and field experience I received at MSU taught me how to read the landscape and understand the processes occurring in that landscape that drive the distribution of soils; this is the essence of being a soil scientist. Thanks to all the faculty and staff in the Geography Department for helping me to have a successful career in a field that I love!



Associate Research Professor at South Dakota State University. At WES I was involved in the evaluation and assessment of environmental assessment techniques in an effort to standardize the environmental assessment process by developing a set of approved methodologies for such assessments, thereby theoretically providing a method of cross-assessment evaluation. I was also involved in the evaluation and development of a recreation use analysis program for the Corps' campsite system, which, at the time, was actually larger than all the national parks' camp facilities combined. Due to federal budget cuts, I elected to return to the public sector, joining a family business in Florida. I was involved in the construction, development, and real estate industries in West Central Florida, along with occasional environmental consulting and landuse planning. In 1991, I was elected the Chairman of the Mining and Industry Taskforce, as part of the first Comprehensive Landuse Plan for Hernando County, Florida. In 2002, I moved to Canada. Between 1982 and 2006, my business activities left no time for writing. Finally in 2006-07, an opportunity presented itself and I chose to take early retirement. It is at that point that I resumed writing. At first, my efforts were directed toward non-fiction then, later, I began writing fiction. All in all, I have had a remarkably satisfying career. I could not have done so many exciting things had it not been for geography. It prepared me for so many unrelated ventures. I will admit, the hiatus I took in my writing I do regret. Thankfully, I am back at the keyboard every day and enjoying the challenge.

Surazues Simon Seamount (MS GIS 2008): I am using my MS in GISci degree these days to work as a Terrain Developer at Maneuver Battle Lab at Fort Benning. I use a program called TerraTools from TerraSim.com to convert geospatial data into 3D terrain used in various software programs

John Rorabacher (BA 1967): Thank you so much for sending me the latest copy of the *Spartan Geographer*. It was a treat to receive and read. Following graduation in 1967, I attended the University of Texas–Austin, where I received my M.A. in 1970. I became a lecturer in Regional Analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. After two years, I returned to pursue my Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. After my return following a year of field work in India and working full time for the Minnesota Center for Social Research, I received my degree in 1978. That same year I took a position with South Dakota State University (SDSU), as an Assistant Professor, with a joint appointment in the departments of Geography and History. Following my first year at SDSU, I was nominated for teacher of the year and elected to the Academic Senate. A year later, I was lured into the public sector and joined a consulting firm in McLean, Virginia. The firm, NUSAC, Inc., provided consulting services to the nuclear power industry. I became the manager of the newly created Environmental Assessments Division in 1980. Due to a hostile takeover of the company by the Wackenhut Corporation, I left NUSAC and joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at their Vicksburg Waterways Research Station (WES) and simultaneously became an

to conduct live war game experiments. A war experiment that we conducted led to a story in the local paper in Columbus, Georgia, including a picture of me at work.



Tom Smucker (PhD 2003) and Edna Wangui (PhD 2004) married in 2006 and teach in the Department of Geography at Ohio University. Tom serves as Director of the M.A. program in International Development Studies. Edna is active in the African Studies and Women & Gender Studies programs. They have twin toddlers, Nadia and Theo, who have already spent two field seasons in rural Tanzania as junior researchers on the NSF-funded LKCCAP project: <http://tzclimadapt.ohio.edu/>.

Kathy Thorne (PhD 1991): In 2008 my husband received an offer he couldn't refuse from CalTech. I had just been through a debilitating drug reaction that was the career equivalent of getting whacked in the head with a two by four. Given this combination of events we decided to trade off leading spouse roles and he moved to Louisiana to work at the gravitational wave observatory east of Baton Rouge. Wrapping up a 15-year stint in the Geography and Geology department of Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, I followed him in May of 2009. We have now completed our transition. In the fall of 2009, we purchased a five acre hay field about an hour's drive north of New Orleans. We

moved in to our customdesigned green home this past August. Last week our 3 kilowatt solar power system was installed. I have a half acre of land under cultivation and am building a market for sustainably grown vegetables, marketing heavily to the workers at the observatory and the faculty at Southeastern Louisiana University. The learning curve has been steep as I adjusted from growing in the short, cold season of the Pennsylvania mountains to a growing season that runs from mid-August through the following June. I have dug pretty deeply into the sustainable farming literature as I restored the exhausted hayfield with cover crops and rotations. I am also learning irrigation techniques as I have found that I am growing crops in near desert conditions for most of the growing season. It has been a frustrating process but I am finally seeing my efforts pay off, after killing a LOT of plants. I am learning something new (or several new things) every day. An old friend pointed out to me that not many people my age can say that! I have been blogging about this project for the last two years at kathythorne.livejournal.com.



Jenni van Ravensway (BS 2004, MS 2008) is currently a research associate/outreach specialist for **Jiaguo Qi** at the Center for Global Change and Earth Observations, a part of the College of Social Science at MSU. Her main research projects involve developing remote sensing applications

that facilitate the study of global change issues including the spread of infectious diseases in Australia, land use/land cover trends in Southeast Asia, and agricultural forecasting in Senegal. On a more personal note, she reconnected with an old classmate in November of 2010. By July of 2011 he had proposed to her and they will be married in June 2012 at the English Inn. She will be making a transition to the Dayton, OH area over the next few months, where he lives and works as a civil engineer (but is also a professional beekeeper).

Josh Watkins (BA 2008, MS 2010): Having received both my degrees in Geography from MSU, I consider myself lucky to have spent much time in the Department interacting with its faculty, staff, and students. Currently, I am pursuing a Ph.D. in Geography at UC Davis, working on a dissertation exploring how the refugee Hmong population functions as a social network to produce trans-regional ethnic enclaves, facilitate cultural reproduction, and reshape urban space. I would not be in the position, either intellectually or personally, to pursue such research without my time at MSU. While I thank the Department as a whole for their support during my time there, if I may, I would like to single out the specific contributions of three people (in no particular order!) who had a dramatic impact on my maturation as an undergraduate and graduate student. Firstly, I would like to thank **Ellen White** for the contribution she makes to the Department, and made specifically to my development. She lent much support to me as my undergraduate advisor, encouraging and motivating me to continue seeking out new opportunities. I would not have known, nor ever been able to secure, many of the great opportunities she presented to me through her advising. Secondly, I would like to acknowledge the impact Professor **Kyle Evered** has had on my academic career. Through his teaching, research, advice, and endless

support, I have greatly benefited. His knowledge of the discipline is inspiring (I dare anyone to find a geographic concept for which he cannot immediately provide a verbal lit review). Without Professor Evered I would have never believed I could attend graduate school, let alone progress to a Ph.D. program, and for his continuous support I am thankful. Lastly, my M.S. advisor Professor **Ken Corey** has tirelessly been my advocate. In serving as my advisor he showed endless poise, intelligence of action, flexibility, class, and mastery of the discipline. I am still amazed he agreed to serve as my advisor, and thankful for the time he graciously devoted to providing me with an education. Professor Corey continues to aid my progress from afar, and I truly look forward to each of our frequent email exchanges. I am certain all alumni have similarly benefited from their time in the Department. I am equally certain each could tell a similar story of how they have been aided by its members. This just happens to be my story, and thanks for letting me share it!

Kristy Watson (BA 1992), owner of Polonyx Designs, is currently working on maps and other graphics for the Hill Country Mile project in Boerne, Texas. The Hill Country Mile is an initiative that seeks to breathe new life into Main Street by enhancing economic development, promoting business diversity, preserving cultural history and finding ways of making Boerne more “visitor friendly.”

Thanks to all of you who contributed to the various Geography Department funds and scholarships. We are making continued efforts to increase our departmental contributions to enhance our programs and benefit students. Please consider donating to one of the Geography Department funds listed below.

Make checks payable to: **Michigan State University** and please specify desired fund.

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Established in 2008 by Harm de Blij to fund yearly cash awards for outstanding graduate and undergraduate students based on GPA, progress towards degrees, and other quality indicators such as field work and research.

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