



Inside this issue:

Grosvenor Center Hosts GeoSummit	3
Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration	4-5
New Geography Staff Members	9
Nicaragua's Jewel	12-13
Cooper Named Grosvenor Scholar	14
Undergraduate Activities	16-18
ARSC Registration Form	20

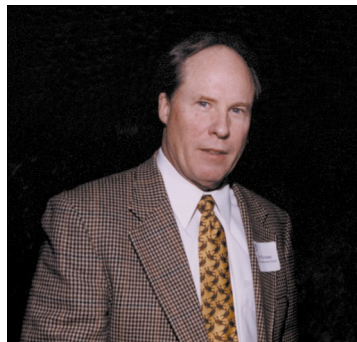
Department Hosts 5th Annual Texas Geography Student Research Symposium

The Department of Geography hosted its 5th annual Texas Geography Student Research Symposium on Friday, March 6, 2009. The TxGSRs is an opportunity for geography students to participate in a professional mini-conference and to share their research with a local audience. This year, geography students from other institutions, including Texas Tech University, Sam Houston State University, and San Antonio College, added to the overall excitement and professionalism of the conference. (continued on page 3)



At right: PhD students Jon Kedrowski, Khila Dahal, Roberto Campos, and Charles Yorke

Conservationist Patrick Noonan to Deliver Grosvenor Distinguished Lecture



The 11th Annual Grosvenor Distinguished Lecture will be held on Tuesday, April 7, in the Evans Auditorium on the Texas State University campus.

This year's lecture, "Conservation in the 21st Century," will be given by Patrick F. Noonan, founder and Chairman Emeritus of The Conservation Fund, former President of The Nature Conservancy, and Vice Chairman of the National Geographic Education Foundation. Gilbert M. Grosvenor, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Geographic Society, will be present that evening to introduce Mr. Noonan.

The Conservation Fund is a non-profit organization dedicated to conserving America's natural and historic heritage. By working with public and private partners, the Fund has protected more than six million acres of America's outdoor heritage since its founding in 1985. In addition to his extensive work with The Conservation Fund and The Nature Conservancy, Noonan is also a founder and former chairman of the American Farmland Trust, and currently serves on its President's Council. He is a Trustee Emeritus of Gettysburg College and is currently a member of the Board of the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy at Duke University.

Noonan, who holds an MBA and a Master's in City and Regional Planning, has received numerous awards, including a five year "genius" fellowship from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in 1985 for his pioneering work in fostering partnerships between businesses and the environmental community. In 2005, he was awarded the Pugsley Medal, which acknowledges exceptional 20th century champions of parks and conservation. He was recently recognized by the National Audubon Society as 1 of 100 conservation leaders whose lives and work shaped the growth of the American conservation movement of the 20th century. (continued on page 3)



Greetings from the Chair...

Dr. Philip Suckling, Professor and Chair

In December, Geography's Academic Program Review process concluded with the development of an "Action Plan" for the future. This was the culmination of a year-long process that included an external review team visit last September. The review team's very complimentary report and our final "Action Plan" can be viewed at http://www.geo.txstate.edu/about/strategic_plan.html.

As evident from the program review process, the Department continues to have superb undergraduate and graduate programs. Our PhD program has been highly ranked among the 56 doctoral geography programs in the nation on the website PhDs.org (<http://graduate-schools.phds.org/rankings/geography>). Using four different scenarios, the Texas State University-San Marcos geography PhD program consistently ranks in the Top 20 (even Top 10 under two of the scenarios) and ahead of all other Texas PhD programs.

Congratulations to the following three faculty colleagues who have been awarded Professional Development Leaves (PDL) during the 2009-10 academic year. Dr. Alberto Giordano has been granted a PDL for the full 2009-10 academic year, during which he will conduct research on the Geography of the Holocaust and the history of Nantucket. Alberto's research on the Holocaust is also supported by a significant NSF grant. Dr. James Kimmel has been granted a PDL for Fall 2009, during which he will conduct research on the Rio Grande region in the United States to try to determine if and how a paradigm shift from power-domination to Earth Community is underway. Dr. Richard Dixon has also been granted a PDL for Fall 2009, during which he will work on three projects involving the geographical and historical analysis of the concept of "energy balance" in early American climatology textbooks, develop a state-wide tornado vulnerability analysis, and investigate the interest in marketing a Texas Weather Calendar.

The Department has concluded three searches for new faculty members who will join us in August. Dr. Edwin Chow (PhD 2005, University of South Carolina) will join the faculty as Assistant Professor with specialization in the computational aspects of geographic information science and will also teach multivariate quantitative methods. Edwin is currently in his fourth year on the faculty at the University of Michigan-Flint. Jennifer Jensen, who is in the final stages of completing her PhD dissertation in environmental science at the University of Idaho, will also join the faculty as an Assistant Professor. Jennifer's specialization involves remote sensing, and she will also teach biogeography. From Canada, Niem Huynh will join the faculty as Assistant Professor with specialization in geographic education, and will also contribute to our GIS teaching program. Niem is in the final stages of completing her PhD dissertation in geography at Wilfrid Laurier University, while teaching high school in Toronto.

In December, the department welcomed a new staff member, Chelsea Franklin, as our undergraduate staff advisor. This is a new position funded by the Liberal Arts Advising Center. Joyce Lawson, who has been serving double duty including undergraduate advising, will now concentrate on her administrative duties for the Undergraduate Coordinator (Dr. Earl) and Internship Coordinator (Mr. Carter). More information about Chelsea and her role can be found elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter.

Spring is upon us, so I want to strongly encourage our students, faculty, and alumni to attend the 15th Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration, which will be held on April 25, 2009. This year's event will include a special celebration of the four-decade long academic career of Dr. Byron (Doc) Augustin. I look forward to seeing you there!

A Friend of Geography Remembered...

Margaret Bamberger passed away quietly in her sleep on Friday, March 6, 2009, after an exhausting battle with cancer. She was honored and remembered by her family with a green burial on the ranch she loved so dearly. Margaret married J. David Bamberger in the early 1990's and became an equal partner in the ongoing creation of Bamberger Ranch Preserve. She is credited with creating the ranch's educational programs and giving the ranch its credibility as an educational institution. She won national awards for conservation, university awards, and had a middle-school greenhouse dedicated to her. Margaret was not only a good person, but a person who did good. She will be greatly missed by many. If you would like to help Margaret's legacy live on, the family suggests contributions be made to the Margaret Bamberger Education Fund which she established in 2007. Donations can be mailed to:

Bamberger Ranch Preserve, 2341 Blue Ridge Drive, Johnson City, TX 78363.

Department Hosts 5th Annual Texas Geography Student Research Symposium (continued from page 1)



High school students were invited to attend this year's TxGSRS in order to observe college-level research and participate in special activities designed specifically for them. Over 150 Advanced Placement Human Geography students from Samuel Clemens, Brackenridge, Bastrop, New Braunfels, and Thomas Jefferson High School attended the event. One visiting teacher reported, "My kids had fun while learning. They were also excited to listen to and participate in the Health and Geography forum." One student exclaimed, "That's what college is going to be like!! I can hardly wait!"

Dr. Byron "Doc" Augustin gave an engaging plenary address about the importance of field research in geography. With inspiring photographs and stories, Doc's plenary emphasized how geographers should not only get out into the field to conduct research, but should also adapt to their research environment.

The 5th annual Texas Geography Student Research Symposium was a great success that underscored a high level of professionalism and learning. We wish to thank all of the sponsors, including Texas State alumnus Eric Pimpler of GeoSpatial Training Services, and all of the students, faculty, and staff that made this conference possible. We hope to see you next year!

At left: PhD students Desserae Shepston and Kevin Barrett present their original research.

Grosvenor Center to Host GeoSummit Research Conference



The Gilbert M. Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education invites Department of Geography faculty, students, and alumni to participate in the *GeoSummit: An International Symposium on Teaching and Learning in Geography*. This is the 5th series of biennial research conferences sponsored by the Grosvenor Center and will take place on the Texas State University campus on May 27-30, 2009.

The goals of the *GeoSummit Symposium* are to engage geography educators, professionals, and students in international collaborative research; to facilitate the development of emerging scholars and students through international mentoring networks; and to support the dissemination of high quality research in geography and geographic education. The five research strands that will serve as the focus for the conference program are (1) K-12 geography education, (2) international geography education, (3) information education and environmental issues, (4) tertiary-level geography education, and (5) new technologies for teaching and learning within geography. The program, which will also include paper and poster sessions, panel sessions, workshops, and special sessions, will also be supplemented by a student paper competition and field trips.

Scholars from over 45 countries have been invited to participate in the May conference. Symposium keynote addresses will be provided by two of these international scholars. João Francisco de Abreu, Professor of Geography and Dean of Research and Graduate Studies at Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais in Brazil, will discuss "Mapping Geography Research in Latin America using GIS and Multidimensional Scaling." A second keynote address will be presented by Hakhee Kim, who teaches World Geography at Gyeongin National University of Education in Korea. The title of her presentation is "Rising Geography Education in Asia: The Dream We Can Share."

For more information about the *GeoSummit Symposium*, visit www.geo.txstate.edu/grosvenor/geosummit2009 or contact the Grosvenor Center at 512.245.1823.

Conservationist Patrick Noonan to Deliver Grosvenor Distinguished Lecture (continued from page 1)

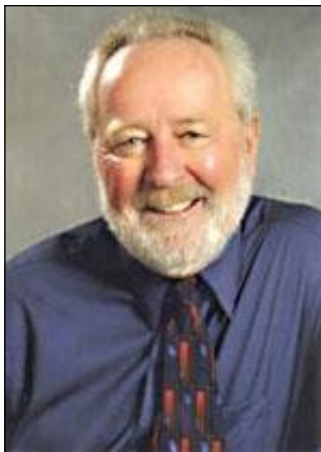
Mr. Noonan has served on three Presidential Commissions - the President's Commission on American Outdoors (1985-1987), the President's Commission on Environmental Quality (1991-1993), and the President's Commission on White House Fellows (2001-2008).

For more information about the upcoming Grosvenor Distinguished Lecture, or to obtain free lecture tickets, please contact the Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education at 512.245.1823 or email bh1123@txstate.edu.

Department of Geography's 15th Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration

The Department of Geography is excited to announce its 15th Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration! It is time to gather all of our current and former students, faculty, staff, and friends of the Department for the annual all-day event.

The Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration is held every year by the Department of Geography in order to recognize and award the hard work of its students, faculty, and staff. It is an opportunity for everyone to reunite and enjoy good food, good friends, and (as Doc says) "good refreshments." The development of a healthy and productive relationship between our current students and our alumni is extremely important to the Department of Geography. The Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration was introduced as a means of promoting such development, in addition to celebrating our current students' achievements. The event gives our students the opportunity to hear alumni stories and learn from them - where they are, how they got there, and what is available to the geographic community. Students are able to network and gain connections in a relaxed and fun setting that they may otherwise be unable to attain.



This year's Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration is particularly special. The Department of Geography is recognizing and celebrating an extremely important and beloved faculty member. Dr. Byron "Doc" Augustin has committed 31 years of outstanding teaching and service to the Department and to Texas State University. This is our opportunity to thank him for his many accomplishments and for the students he has inspired in his years of service. Please join us for this important celebration.

The 15th Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration is also unique in the fact that the Department has joined forces with the Aquarena Center and will celebrate Earth Day as part of the festivities. The celebration will begin at 9:30 am on Saturday, April 25, with registration in the Alkek Teaching Theatre. The Formal Program I will begin at 10:30 am, in which scholarships for the upcoming academic year will be awarded to students. Presentation of awards will follow at 11:45 am, as part of the Formal Program II. Between 2-3 pm, the festivities will move to the Aquarena Center for the formal Earth Day program. A Meet & Greet session will follow, in which old friends can catch up and new ones can get acquainted. The Aquarena Center's glass bottom boat rides will be available for guests between 4-6 pm, and a delicious fajita dinner with all the fixings will be catered by Fuschak's BBQ at 5 pm. The celebration will wind into an evening of friends, refreshments, and live music.

So come and help us celebrate another great year in the Department of Geography. With the addition of Earth Day and honoring Doc's years of service, the 15th Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration is sure to be one to remember.

To register, you may pick up a registration form from Geography's Main Office (ELA 139) or go online and register on our website at <http://www.geo.txstate.edu/alumni/reunion.html>. We hope to see you there!





Register at <http://www.geo.txstate.edu/alumni/reunion.html>

Learning Oriented Objects in Geography Education



Dr. Osvaldo Muniz-Solari, Associate Professor, and Angela Wranic, PhD Summer Cohort student in Geographic Education, attended the 3rd Latin American Conference on Learning Objects and Technology Enhanced Learning (LACLO) in Aguas Calientes, Mexico, on October 28-31, 2008.

LACLO is an international network of interdisciplinary scholars devoted to new technologies and online procedures to develop research for the purpose of enhancing virtual learning. Dr. Muniz and Wranic presented a peer-reviewed paper titled, "Composite Learning Objects in Geographical Sciences: Experience from Online-Collaboration." The research was based on Angela's experience developed at Long Beach City College in California, as part of her Independent Study on Learning Objects guided by Dr. Muniz.

Congratulations to Our Distinguished Faculty for Their Awards and Achievements!



Dr. Richard Boehm was featured in an interview with *Technos e-Zine*, a monthly electronic newsletter published by the Agency for Instructional Technology. The interview can be found at http://www.ait.net/technos/e-zine/interviews/richard_boehm.php.



Mr. Mark Carter has been named the College of Liberal Arts nominee for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching in the Assistant Professor/Lecturer category. Mr. Carter will now compete for the university-wide award in the same category.



Dr. Richard Dixon was awarded a Professional Development Leave for the Fall 2009 semester. Dr. Dixon will work on the geographical and historical analysis of the concept of "energy balance" in early American climatology textbooks, develop a state-wide tornado vulnerability analysis, and investigate the interest in marketing a Texas Weather Calendar.



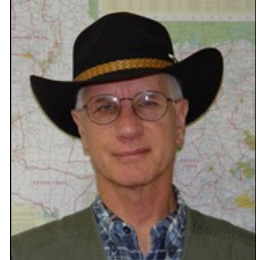
Dr. Richard Earl has been named the College of Liberal Arts nominee for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Service in the Professor/Associate Professor category. Dr. Earl will now compete for the university-wide award in the same category.

Dr. Lawrence Estaville was the recipient of the Faculty Award for Outstanding Achievement in International Education for 2008, recognizing his contributions to International Education related to his implementation of the 2006 Race, Ethnicity, and Place Conference and commitment to study abroad.

Dr. Alberto Giordano was awarded a full-year Professional Development Leave for Fall 2009/Spring 2010, including a supplemental stipend award. He will use this time to research the geography of the Holocaust and the history of Nantucket. His Holocaust research was featured in an ad in the March 2009 volume of *Texas Monthly*.

Dr. Ron Hagelman was featured in an article entitled "Weighing benefits, costs of nuclear energy" published by the *Victoria Advocate*. The article relates to an academic paper he is finishing entitled "Welcome to the Nuclear Neighborhood" and can be found at <http://www.victoriadvocate.com/833/story/408140.html>.

Dr. James Kimmel has been awarded a Professional Development Leave for the Fall 2009 semester. Dr. Kimmel will conduct research on the Rio Grande region in the United States to try to determine if and how a paradigm shift from power-domination to Earth Community is underway.



Dr. David Butler Invited to London



Dr. David Butler traveled to London and Oxford, England, in November at the invitation of Elsevier Publishing. He was accompanied by his wife, Dr. Janet Butler, Assistant Professor in the Department of Accounting at Texas State. Dr. Butler was invited to participate in the multi-volume *Treatise on Geomorphology*, which is currently being developed by Elsevier, to act as co-editor of the volume *Ecogeomorphology*. The editors of the various volumes met with the Elsevier publishing team for three days at the Elsevier editorial offices in Oxford. After the meetings were completed, the Drs. Bulter spent a few days sight-seeing in London before flying back “across the pond” and returning to Texas.



Counter clockwise from top left: Dr. Butler and his signature pose in front of the Tower Bridge across the River Thames; standing in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres at the same time; in front of Buckingham Palace and the Queen Victoria memorial; with one of the “Beefeaters” - the royal guards at the Tower of London.



8th Annual Groundwater Festival



Submitted by Lara Bryant

On November 18-19, the Aquarena Center at Texas State University-San Marcos hosted the 8th Annual Groundwater Festival. The Aquarena Center, which is also the site of more than 200 springs that feed the San Marcos River, opened its doors to 4th, 5th, and 6th graders from throughout the Austin-San Antonio Corridor Region.

Local and state organizations joined Aquarena Center staff to provide over 1,200 students with two fun-filled days of learning activities designed to stress the importance of groundwater. Participants were encouraged to interact with a large model of the Guadalupe River Basin watershed, presented by the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority. Staff from the Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education and Texas Alliance for Geographic Education created an outdoor Geo-

Jeopardy game for the students to test their knowledge of local groundwater and geography trivia. Other organizations that were represented included the San Antonio Water System, the city of San Marcos, and the Edwards Aquifer Authority. Students were treated to a play put on by the Edwards Aquifer Authority at lunch. The Lower Colorado River Authority brought many animals and reptiles that are dependant on the groundwater system and the Aquarena Center offered glass bottom boat rides so the students could observe the amazing underwater environment of Spring Lake.

The two-day festival is a great opportunity for elementary students to take part in hands-on activities related to groundwater issues in the region. For more information about this annual event, please visit <http://www.aquarena.txstate.edu/Educational-Tours/Groundwater-Festival.html>.

Department of Geography Donates Textbooks to Alvin Community College

In September 2008, Alvin Community College was hit by Hurricane Ike and many of its academic and administrative buildings were destroyed in its wake. The college library was destroyed by a tornado spawned during the hurricane, resulting in the loss of most resources. Geography faculty were asked to donate textbooks and to aid in the creation of a list of 100 books that would be integral in the rebuilding of their library. A collection box was set up in Geography's main office and received much response.

At right, Dr. Richard Earl delivers the collected textbooks to ACC adjunct faculty member Lloyd Bishop.



Department of Geography Welcomes New Staff



Lillian Dempster began working for the Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education in July 2008. Her official job title is Grant Secretary, but she can be found doing all sorts of things in the office and she is the glue that holds everything together.

Lillian grew up in San Antonio and moved to Seguin in 1993, where she graduated from high school. (Go Matadors!) After getting married, she moved to Alvin, TX, for two and a half years, but eventually decided to settle down in Seguin. Lillian graduated from Texas State University in December with her Bachelor's degree in history. The past year and a half has been an exciting time for Lillian and her husband, as they are in the process of adopting their foster son, Landen. He was placed in the Dempster home at three days old and is now 18 months old. Besides running after her son, Lillian enjoys riding horses, camping, and hanging out

with friends and family.

Lillian can be reached at 512.245.3827 or by email at ld19@txstate.edu.

Chelsea Franklin joined the Department of Geography in January 2009 as a satellite advisor to the College of Liberal Arts. Appointment scheduling should be directed to the Liberal Arts Advising Center at 512.245.1852. Her office is located in Evans Liberal Arts 136.

Chelsea graduated from Texas State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies and a minor in Mass Communication. She has continued her education at Texas State and will graduate with her Master's degree in Students Affairs in May 2009. As an undergraduate, Chelsea was involved in several organizations, including Black Student Alliance and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She now serves as the primary advisor for Delta Sigma Theta.



Chelsea recently became engaged and will be married on April 11, 2009. In her spare time, she enjoys watching soap operas, dancing, reading, and going to church. Chelsea is delighted to serve as the undergraduate advisor for the Department of Geography. She is able to assist students with degree audits, class schedules, and other issues related to academics. Please feel free to contact her with any questions, concerns, or comments at cf29@txstate.edu

Welcome to the Department, Chelsea and Lillian!

On Friday, February 20, the Department of Geography was the only academic department represented at the Department of Athletics' Bobcat Bonanza, an event held in order to raise money for scholarships. Rich and Terri Earl, Kevin and Julie Romig, Joe and Janice Collins, Doc Augustin, and Sheri Wahl attended and sponsored a VIP table in honor of the Department of Geography. Approximately 500 Bobcat supporters turned out for the festive event. Julie Romig participated in the "closest to the pin" contest on a par 3 golf hole located at TDS Exotic Game Ranch in Creedmoor and won the contest and a nice prize.

The event was a successful and fun time!



From the Graduate Coordinator... Dr. David Butler, Professor

The Spring semester is always an exciting, busy time in the Department, and the graduate program is no exception. Several of our doctoral students have completed and passed their doctoral comprehensive exams, while many are currently engaged in taking them - a major step in the completion of their program. Others have successfully defended their dissertation proposals and taken the official step to becoming ABD (All But Dissertation), and some are in the process of completing their dissertation. At the Master's level, several M.S. students have completed or are scheduling their oral exams and busily writing their theses, and M.A.G students are working toward completion of their Directed Research projects. All of these activities are occurring alongside their planning and preparation for the national Association of American Geographers conference in Las Vegas,

Nevada, in which 38 of our students are presenting original research. Many of our students also presented papers and posters at the Geography Student Research Symposium that was held in the Department on March 6. So it has been a busy time, indeed!

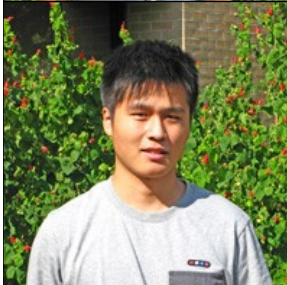
Of course, all of this activity also means that many of our students will be departing the program at the end of the Spring or Summer semesters. Like proud parents, these are bittersweet times for the faculty. We are pleased to see our students move on and begin their new careers, but we have spent many hours with them and will miss them dearly. Thank you to all of our students for giving us the opportunity to work with you!

The guiding principle of the James and Marilyn Lovell Center for Environmental Geography and Hazards Research is that many minds working together can find imaginative solutions to the challenges facing our fragile planet. In support of that conviction, we recently announced to the geographic community our "Geographic Resources: Publication Listing" (www.geo.txstate.edu/lovell/linksjournal/) of over 200 geography, or geographically-oriented, publications and their website links. The list represents every professional outlet we could locate that has accepted/published material with a geographer as a first or co-author. Response has been fantastic, with the "hits" on that page jumping from 343 (over the last eight months) to over 1,000 in less than two weeks. Please take a look, and if you are aware of any journal that should be added or would like to suggest ways to improve the listing, please contact the Center at: JMLC@txstate.edu.

Graduate Student Honors, Awards, and Achievements



PhD candidate **Khila R. Dahal** won the Jeanne X. Kasperson Student Paper Award offered under the "Hazards" specialty group at the 2009 Association of American Geographers conference.



Master's student **Xingjian Liu** was one of five finalists in the Cartography Specialty Group Honors Student Paper Competition at the 2009 Association of American Geographers conference.

Audrey Mohan, PhD candidate, has accepted a tenure-track Assistant Professor position in the interdisciplinary studies program within the College of Education at the University of Texas-San Antonio. Audrey anticipates graduating from the Geographic Education PhD program in May.



Nancy Tian, PhD candidate, was accepted into the extremely competitive ESRI T3G Institute for GIS training in June. The ESRI T3G Institute is designed to enhance participants' ability to use GIS and other geospatial technologies in their own education program, teaching and encouraging other educators to do the same.



Activity in the Department of Geography's Graduate Forum

Submitted by Lara Bryant and Johanna Ostling, PhD Students

This year, the Graduate Forum has been extremely active. Besides volunteering for departmental events, such as hosting SWAAG and the TxGSRS, they have taken on the task of developing their own series and presentations throughout the semester. These seminars are designed with graduate students in mind and are meant to help them during their assistantship and to prepare them for life beyond graduate school.

The first series has been coordinated by Dr. Laura Stroup and is a Climate Change Discussion Group. The session is open to any interested geographers, including alumni, who would like to learn more about the research being done on climate change and how it plays a role in daily life. Meetings will be held on a more regular basis during the fall semester, and everyone is encouraged to suggest and/or lead a topic of interest. Dr. Rich Dixon will be leading the first session, which will discuss the misperceptions in the news media concerning climate change and the statistics used in popular press articles.

In February, Dr. David Butler and Dr. Ron Hagelman hosted an "Online Research Tips" presentation. During this session students were able to learn about how to effectively and efficiently conduct research online using databases that are available through the library at Texas State University. The session was well-attended and received. One important tip that graduate student Tammy Biegas took from the seminar was that students should remember the fact that all work stored in the RefWorks program through the library will not be accessible once they graduate. Students should therefore make plans to backup their data and transfer it to a different program, such as Endnotes, before they leave the university. The students really appreciated the efforts of Drs. Butler and Hagelman.

The Graduate Forum also hosted a poster session workshop at the end of February that provided students with tips on creating a successful poster for presentations. This workshop was intended for graduate students who were to present posters for the first time at TxGSRS or AAG this year. The hope was that these students would be more comfortable and prepared when presenting their research and would, in turn, represent Texas State University and the Department of Geography well.

There has also been some interest among the graduate students in learning the process involved in writing grants. The Graduate Forum, therefore, contacted Judy Behrens and Lara Bryant to conduct a short series of lectures pertaining to grant writing. Judy is the grant specialist for the Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education and has literally written millions of dollars worth of grants for the Center. The Forum is lucky to have her expertise and help during these ongoing sessions. Lara Bryant is a graduate student who took a grants course through the Department of Education and is sharing what she learned with her fellow students.

Exciting regional presentations have also been planned throughout the semester. These lunch time presentations should be of great interest not only to graduate students, but to the faculty and staff as well. Jon Kedrowski, graduate student, will be conducting a presentation related to the Colorado Rockies, the location of his research. Graduate student Sayali Gokhale has volunteered to give a presentation about India, her native country. These topical presentations highlight our students' experiences worldwide.

The Graduate Forum has been very busy trying to provide meaningful opportunities for learning by tapping into the expertise that exists right here in the Department of Geography. It is great to have such a large, diverse and talented group of scholars to call upon. The Department is also lucky to have such outstanding alumni, and the graduate students would love the chance to hear from them. If anyone is interested in providing a topical or job-specific session to our graduate students, please feel free to contact one of this year's co-presidents: Anthony Warzecha (awl142@txstate.edu) or Keith Bremer (kbl103@txstate.edu).

The Graduate Forum looks forward to hearing about your experiences!

For more information on the Graduate Forum visit <http://geoweb.evans.txstate.edu/studentorgs/gradforum.html>.

Nicaragua's Jewel



Submitted Eric Samson, PhD Student

At the dawn of this new year, I attended the 39th Conference of Latin American Geographers (CLAG). Hosted this year in Granada, Nicaragua, on January 7-9, Latin American researchers from the around the world came and presented over 90 papers on a wide range of geographic study. CLAG's historical literature reveals that, "[It] was the first organization of specialists within the Association of American Geographers to establish, in 1970, its own independent structure and membership. This move prompted the AAG to begin forming its own specialty groups, including the Latin America Specialty Group."

I was very curious to visit Nicaragua, a mysterious place known to me only from the infamous Iran-Contra Affair, where Sandinista socialists held their ground against the interventions of the U.S. The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN, for the Spanish *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional*, aka the Sandinistas) held power in Nicaragua from 1979 to 1990, first by revolutionary force and then by democratic rule when

Daniel Ortega was elected in 1984. After a long lapse, Daniel Ortega was again elected President of Nicaragua in 2006.

Before visiting Nicaragua, my knowledge of the history and geography of this country really only coincided with current events and the facts and characters of the Iran-Contra scandal: Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Oliver North, and, of course, Ortega somewhere down there on the Central American isthmus and - Iran?

Unknown to me was that Granada, Nicaragua, was founded in 1524 and is one of the oldest cities in the New World. I did not know that Nicaragua had suffered a civil war of more than fifty years in the middle of the 19th century after independence from the Spanish Crown, with an American named William Walker shortly conquering Nicaragua and attempting to install his own monarchy over Central America. Nor had I learned that Lake Nicaragua (aka *Lago Cocibolca*, *Mar Dulce* (Spanish for Sweet Sea - "sweet water" is the Spanish nomenclature for fresh water), *Gran Lago*, *Gran Lago Dulce*, or *Lago de Granada*) was the 21st largest lake on Earth, with the San Juan River flowing 50 miles from its southernmost shore to the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean just a little more than ten miles from its western shore. This made Nicaragua a very strategic and wealthy place for transportation commerce before the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914.

So here I was in Granada, billed as the "Jewel of Nicaragua." I was interested to see how socialism was doing here. To be fair, there was a municipal strike going on in Granada preventing trash pick-up and maintenance, but if this was the jewel, I would hate to see the armpit. Trash covered most areas, but most notably in the grey water ditches leading to and ultimately polluting Lake Nicaragua. Colonial architecture was everywhere but was often closed up or in ruined disrepair. The fountain in the middle of the central park was not flowing but held rancid, algae laden water bursting with mosquitoes. And I must say that I have visited places where children beg for food and money but never where they steal it from your plate and run as they did in Granada, Nicaragua.

The landscape and society seemed overused and tired, as if the struggle between socialism and neoliberalism had imploded the will of the people to continue any struggle at all. As a geographer and social observer, I wanted answers. Why didn't children have programs to feed them? Why wasn't wastewater treated? How could the cultural heritage of architecture from antiquity be left to decay? But the biggest question I had from my aloof and hegemonic perspective was, "How much did the clandestine intervention of the government of my own country bring about this condition of apathy?"

As is often stated at the end of many observations, this problem requires further study.

At right: "Lake Cocibolca is in Danger. Together we Can Save it. A Message for a better future."



Nicaragua's Jewel (continued from page 12)



Counter clockwise from top left: Translation reads, "Swimming Prohibited in this Zone"; children are found swimming in the same Zone; *Iglesia de Guadalupe*, constructed in 1626, exemplifies colonial architecture in Granada; a grey water ditch in Granada, Nicaragua, running to Lake Nicaragua about 100 meters in the distance.

Catherine Cooper Selected as 2009-10 Grosvenor Scholar



Submitted by Judy Behrens

Texas State doctoral student Catherine Cooper has been selected as the 2009-10 Grosvenor Scholar. The Grosvenor Scholar Program, developed as a partnership between Texas State University-San Marcos, the Roy F. and Joann Cole Mitte Foundation, and the National Geographic Society (NGS), provides a one-year residency at the NGS headquarters in Washington, D.C. for a Texas State PhD student in Geographic Education. The Grosvenor Scholar participates in various aspects of the geographic education mission of the Society, assisting NGS Education Foundation personnel with their public advocacy campaign, grant making, the NGS public engagement initiative, and various outreach projects.

Cathy Cooper earned a Bachelor of Arts with Honors from Brown University, a Master of International Management from Thunderbird School of Global Management, and a Master of Arts in Geography from George Washington University. She began her PhD studies in Geographic Education at Texas State University as part of the 2007 Summer Cohort Program, and is currently in the process of completing her comprehensive exams. She is also working to finalize her dissertation proposal, which builds on national standards and concerns the intended and taught curriculum of geography in selected Maryland K-12 classrooms.

After extended employment in the field of commercial banking, Cathy served as a Research Fellow for the Institute for Urban Environmental Research at George Washington University for seven years. She has also been an Environmental Geography instructor at the USDA Graduate School in Washington, D.C., a lecturer for the introductory Geography classes at Montgomery College, and a professional lecturer for Human and Physical Geography courses at George Washington University. Cathy has authored a number of academic articles, including one that was honored with the 2007 Best Content Award for *Journal of Geography* articles. In addition, she has compiled a long list of presentations that she has made at professional academic conferences and meetings.

Ms. Cooper will assume her role as Grosvenor Scholar in August 2009. For additional information about the Grosvenor Scholar Program at Texas State University-San Marcos, contact Dr. Richard Boehm, Director, Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education, at 512-245-3615 or rb03@txstate.edu.

Department of Geography Business Card Directory Update!

We have begun working on the next edition of the Department of Geography's alumni business card directory. We are looking for current business cards from all Texas State geography graduates. To have your information included in the next iteration of this publication, please mail a copy or e-mail a scan of your current business card to:

Grosvenor Center for Geography Education
Texas State University-San Marcos
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666
or
E-mail to: sp1162@txstate.edu



April 2009 is Texas State Cancer Awareness Month and Community Outreach.
Marrow Donor Drives, Smoke-Free Campus Stop Smoking Commitments, Relay for Life, Student and Community Cancer Health Fairs, Texas State University Cancer Symposium for Health Professionals, and many more events will be held throughout the month.
For more information go to <http://www.cancerawareness.healthcenter.txstate.edu>

38 Texas State University Students Present at AAG

Listed below are the 38 PhD, Master's, and undergraduate students who presented original research at the annual Association of American Geography conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. Their project titles follow. Congratulations and thank you for your excellent representation of Texas State University!

- Stephen Tsikalas** - Exploring the Geographies of Food II
Christi Townsend - Historical Geography, Geographic Thought, and Education
Nancy Tian - The Geography of Cancer
Desserae Shepston - Climatology and Environment
Kathleen Seal - Historical Geography, Geographic Thought, and Education
Eric Samson - Teaching Geography 2: Undergraduates
Elizabeth Ray - Teaching International Perspectives on Geographic Issues
Susan Peters - Teaching Geography 7: Departmental Development
Johanna Ostling - Hazards and Health; Land Use and Environment
Edris Montalvo - Ethnic Geography 2
Audrey Mohan - GESG Student Paper Competition: Session I
Shelley Miller - Zoogeography
Xuelian Meng - GIS in Geographical Analysis
Xingjian Liu - Cartography Specialty Group Honors Student Paper Competition
Erin McAuley - Strategies for U.S. Water Resources Management in the 21st Century
Jon Kedrowski - Human Dimensions of Change in Mountains
Xueqin He - Climatology and Environment
Cheryl Frazier - Pedagogy and Educational Assessment
Tianfang Fang - Land and Water
Andrew Day - Land and Water
Khila Dahal - Emerging Scholars in Hazards Research: Winners of the Jeanne X. Kasperson Student Paper Awards
Mary Curtis - GESG Student Paper Competition: Session II
Melody Warren-Crenshaw - GESG Student Paper Competition: Session I
Bonnie Garrett (undergraduate) - Regional, Economic, Political, Population
Tamara Biegas - GIS in Geographical Analysis
Keith Bremer - Urban Geography, Planning, Social Geography, Transportation
Christine Coats - GESG Student Paper Competition: Session II
Matthew Connolly - Applied Geography, Spatial Analysis and Modeling, and Cartography
Neng Wan - Locating Health in the U.S.
Jiao Wang - Water Issues in the West
Clayton Whitesides - Treeline Ecotones I: Geomorphology and Soils
Charles Yorke - Hazards and Health; Land Use and Environment
Jamie Zech - Greening the Urban Environment
Naizhuo Zhao - RSSG Student Honors Paper Competition III
Kevin Barrett - Hazards and Health; Land Use and Environment
Sayali Gokhale - Topics in Cultural and Population Geography
Suzi Wiseman - Topics in Cultural and Population Geography
Waverly Ray - Teaching International Perspectives on Geographic Issues

Joyce Lawson Now Undergraduate Staff Administrator



Joyce Lawson, who many have known as Geography's undergraduate staff advisor for the past three and a half years, is now the department's undergraduate staff administrator. With the addition of Ms. Chelsea Franklin, satellite advisor to the College of Liberal Arts, Ms. Lawson now has the resources and time to focus on her other administrative duties. These duties include aiding Dr. Richard Earl with his work as Undergraduate Program Coordinator and assisting Mr. Mark Carter in his role as Internship Director. She will also help Ms. Franklin with her advising duties when needed and can better dedicate herself to her roles on the Undergraduate Committee and Student Diversity Committee. She will continue to act as the Geography Undergraduate Recruiter and can be contacted in regards to departmental field trips, scholarships, and faculty evaluations.

Important Dates

Advance Registration for Summer I & II 2009: March 30 - April 9, 2009

Advance Registration for Fall 2009: April 13-29, 2009

- The Geography Learning Community (formerly FIG) is now in search of the Fall 2009 Peer Mentor. GLC members are encouraged to continue working towards their goal of attaining the highest GPA within the Learning Community, as they have held for the past two semesters.
- The Liberal Arts Awards Celebration will be honoring 34 Geography majors with the "Academic Excellence Award" on April 2, 2009, at 6 pm in the Centennial Teaching Theatre.

Congratulations to all May 2009 graduating geographers!

If you are considering graduate school, please contact Joyce Lawson at 512.245.0372 or email her at joyce.lawson@txstate.edu.

Energy Resource Management Students Tour Natural Gas Electrical Generating Plant

Submitted by Mark Carter

Each semester, students from Mark Carter's Energy Resource Management class visit the Hays Energy natural-gas fired power plant. Geography Alumnus and plant employee, Kurt Wiedenfeld, led the tour, explaining how the 1,000 Megawatt power-station turns natural gas into electricity to feed into the distribution grid. As the Environmental, Health and Safety Coordinator for Hays Energy, Kurt also described his job of making sure that all emissions are within permitted limits and that OSHA (Occupational Health and Safety Administration) requirements are met. Students learned that the gas-turbine generators are very efficient in transforming natural gas into electricity and also very clean-burning, emitting few pollutants. Everyone enjoyed seeing the equipment in operation and taking a close look at the process that helps provide us the electricity that is so important to our daily lives.



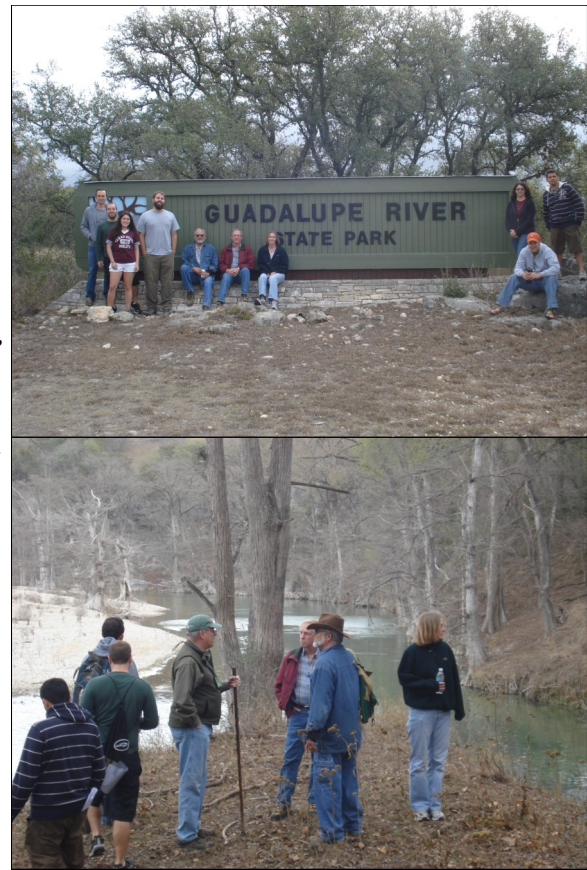
Geology Club Visits Honey Creek State Natural Area

Submitted by Matt Anding

Members of Texas State University's Geology Club traveled to Honey Creek State Natural Area to investigate some rather out-of-place rocks on February 21, 2009. Located adjacent to Guadalupe River State Park, Honey Creek State Natural Area is a beautiful representation of the Texas Hill Country. Honey Creek is a clear spring that runs from the limestone hills into the Guadalupe River. It's where these two waters meet that that Geology Club paid a visit to see some late Cretaceous basalt rocks. That's right - dark igneous rocks in the middle of limestone country. Lead by Dr. Richard Earl and Dr. Rene DeHon, the club visited two sites in the park containing the basalt. The first and most impressive, located right on Honey Creek, is a basalt dyke that sticks out of the valley and overlooks the water. A clear distinction can be made between the basalt and limestone. The second feature is located in a filled-in sink hole above the Guadalupe River where the basalt can be seen in the hole. In the end, it was a unique opportunity for the club to visit a rare rock sight in limestone country.

For the remainder of the semester, the Geology Club will host a variety of guest speakers at their meetings to discuss different geologic topics. The club will also be making its third trip to the Heritage Museum of the Texas Hill Country, where members of the club help clean and preserve dinosaur tracks in the Glen Rose Formation that are roughly 100 million years old.

For more information regarding the Geology Club, contact Matt Anding at ma1171@txstate.edu.



Student Planning Organization Takes Trip to Memphis

Submitted by Dr. Kevin Romig

In January, members of the Student Planning Organization embarked on a field trip to witness the downtown revitalization process in Memphis, Tennessee. This coincided with SPO's topic for the fall (rail transit), as they toured redeveloping areas along the trolley line including downtown and the South Main district. SPO Co-Presidents, John Foster and Cody Clarke, gave walking tours of Overton Park and some of Memphis' historic neighborhoods. Dr. Kevin Romig provided side tours of notable cultural spots, such as Beale Street, Graceland, and Sun Studios where Elvis Presley made his first recording. They sampled local cuisine at Gus' Famous Fried Chicken, Charlie Vergos' Rendezvous, and Corky's Barbeque. Perhaps the highlight of the trip was visiting the Civil Rights Museum on the weekend before the inauguration of President Barack Obama. This museum, at the site of the Lorraine Motel, commemorates the life and times of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the location of his assassination. This visit served as a poignant reminder of the grand historical context of electing an African-American president and underscored the importance of the Civil Rights Act and Lyndon Johnson's leadership, which is the Common Experience theme this year at Texas State University. The trip participants returned to San Marcos with a greater appreciation for a typical Southern city, as well as a renewed sense of hope for future civil rights progress in the United States.



At left: Andrew Simon, Stephanie Hughes, Lacy Patterson, John Foster, and Cody Clark visit the Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee.

NAEP Host Texas Recycles Day in the Quad



For more information on NAEP go to <http://www.geo.txstate.edu/studentorgs/naep/index.html>.

Geography Alumnus Nicholas Maloukis - "Call Me Ranger Nic!"



My name is Nicholas Maloukis, and I am a Park Specialist I at Government Canyon State Natural Area in San Antonio, Texas. When I started college at Southwest Texas State University in the fall of 2003, I opted for a history/political science double major. I dreamt that I would one day be a senator for the state of Texas. It took one year for me to realize that I don't actually enjoy having to cut my hair on a regular basis, spending all day indoors, or being forced to wear a tie. Thus, my impending history/political science degree was not going to result in a job that I would personally enjoy.

In 2005, I spoke with Joyce Lawson and immediately changed my major to Geography. I graduated from Texas State University-San Marcos in the spring of 2007 with a BS in Resource and Environmental Studies and a minor in Geology. I had plans of entering the Geography Graduate Program the following semester. On advice from Mark Carter and Andrew Sansom (River Systems Institute), I decided to apply for an internship with the Texas

Parks & Wildlife Department for the summer of 2007. This internship was carried out at McKinney Falls State Park in Austin, Texas. I had such a great experience with my 2007 internship at McKinney Falls that I applied for the Government Canyon State Natural Area summer internship in 2008. This second internship was very different from my first one and really got me thinking more seriously about a career with the Texas Park & Wildlife Department.

Near the end of my 2008 summer internship at Government Canyon, my direct supervisor, Laura Cauley, became engaged and decided to go back to school for another degree. This left her position open. It didn't take much convincing for me to put in an application. That was in June of 2008.

On January 5, 2009, I began my first day as a full-time permanent employee of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. My official job title is Park Specialist I, and my position at Government Canyon is Interpreter/Park Police Officer. At this time, my major responsibilities include completing law enforcement academy and becoming a commissioned police officer, coordinating volunteers and recruiting park hosts (volunteers that live at the park in RVs in exchange for 12.5 hours per week), assisting in further development of Government Canyon's interpretive programs, conducting research, leading education and recreational hikes, being on-call pretty much all of the time, implementing customer service/fee collection, and assisting other rangers with day-to-day tasks. Did I mention that the job came with a house in the park? That was probably the easiest job requirement to fill!

It is because of the Department of Geography at Texas State University that I have this wonderful job today. Joyce Lawson helped me change my major to Resource and Environmental Studies, giving me the educational background needed to teach others how to be good stewards of the Earth. Mark Carter got me involved in NAEP, which taught me everything I am now using as a volunteer coordinator (he also helped me become an Excel whiz!). Andrew Sansom's class, Parks and Protected Places, opened my eyes to the diversity of opportunities that the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department has to offer. The internships I held got my foot in the door and ultimately gave me an edge over other applicants for the job I now have.

My name is Nic Maloukis, but you can call me Ranger Nic. I love my job and thank the Department of Geography for giving me the skills I needed to find it, obtain it, and keep it.

Nickolas J. Maloukis
Park Specialist I
Government Canyon SNA
12681 Galm Road
San Antonio, TX 78254
210.688.9055 ext. 291



Texas State University-San Marcos
 Department of Geography
 15th Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration
 Saturday, April 25, 2009 at the Aquarena Center
 Registration Form

Name(s) of Registrant(s): _____

Address: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____ Fax: _____

1) Award Recipients, Scholarship Recipients, and Volunteers: **Registration fee is waived**

Number of: Award Recipients _____
 Scholarship Recipients _____
 Volunteers _____

2) Students, Alumni, Faculty, Staff, and Friends of Geography:

Pre-Registration thru April 17, 2009 \$10.31 (per adult)
 April 18, 2009 thru April 25, 2009 \$15.31 (including at the door)

Number of: Students _____
 Alumni _____
 Faculty _____
 Staff _____
 Friends of Geography _____
 Children Under 12 _____ (NO REGISTRATION FEE)



**31¢ OF EACH REGISTRATION FEE WILL BE USED TO FUND SCHOLARSHIPS TO HONOR
 DR. BYRON "DOC" AUGUSTIN'S**

31 YEARS OF SERVICE TO TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY-SAN MARCOS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE REGISTERED: _____
 TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE ATTENDING FAJITA DINNER: _____

Are you interested in the free Glass Bottom Boat Rides from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.? Yes No

Method of payment: Cash Check # _____ (Please make checks payable to Dept. of Geography)

Credit Card: Mastercard or Visa Expiration Date: _____

Credit Card Number: _____

Total amount included with this registration form: \$ _____

Registration includes admission to all activities, a souvenir program, and B-B-Q Fajita dinner with all the fixings!

Return this form to:

Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration
 Attn: Patricia Hell-Jones
 Department of Geography
 Texas State University - San Marcos
 San Marcos, TX 78666

Phone: (512) 245-2170 FAX: (512) 245-8353 E-mail: ph19@txstate.edu