



GEONews

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SPRING 2008

BIG BEND SPRING 2008 FIELD TRIP

Dr. Jim Petersen led his annual spring break field trip to Big Bend National Park this year for the 28th time! Dr. Petersen explained and interpreted many aspects of Big Bend including mountain and Chihuahuan Desert environments, geomorphology, vegetation, geologic history, biogeography and climatology. Students kept field notebooks and took lots of pictures as they learned to recognize geologic formations and identify desert flora and fauna.



Highlights of the trip included visiting the Big Bend Badlands, exploring the Rio Grande as it flows through Boquillas and Santa Elena Canyons, a rugged van-ride on River Road to the Mariscal Mercury Mine and a hike on the Lost Mine Trail to the top of a 6,850 ft. overlook in the Chisos Basin. In addition to daily field work identifying and discussing various elements of the Big Bend landscape, students enjoyed the Big Bend culture of the Study Butte Mall, live western music and a traveling circus at the Starlight Theater in Terlingua as well as a farewell night of karaoke at La Kiva Bar and Grill. Kathy's Kosmic Kowgirl Kafe served-up some pretty good breakfast burritos too.

CARTER NAMED NTSO PROFESSOR OF THE YEAR



The Non-Traditional Student Organization (NTSO) has selected Mark Carter as its Professor of the Year for 2007. The President of NTSO, Joseph Brown Porter, writes that "Mr. Carter was chosen by a student vote for his exemplary teaching style and his commitment to our goals of helping non-traditional students integrate into campus life. In addition to recognizing the needs of non-traditional students, he provides his student with the skills necessary for successful entry into the workforce."

In addition to Mr. Carter's excellent classroom performance, he does a stellar job of organizing and running the Department of Geography's large internship program. He also spearheads the department's learning outcomes activities and academic program review, as well as scheduling for upcoming semesters and assisting the Undergraduate committee. Congratulations on this prestigious, well-deserved honor!

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GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR... *By Dr. Philip Suckling, Chair and Professor*

The 2007-08 academic year has indeed been an exceptionally busy and successful time.

The Department has successfully concluded its search for a new faculty member with specialization in water resources. Laura Stroup, who will graduate during 2008 with a PhD in geography from the University of South Carolina, will join the department in August as an Assistant Professor. Unfortunately, two other searches for new faculty members (in remote sensing and geographic education) did not come to fruition. We plan to reformulate these positions and conduct new searches during the next academic year.

I wish to extend my personal welcome to Jessica Koesler who has joined our staff as an administrative assistant responsible for grants accounting and travel. Jessica joins a group of wonderful hard-working staff members who are truly dedicated to the success of this department.

The Association of American Geographers' annual meeting will be held in Boston during April 15-19. We will have a very large contingent

of geographers from Texas State University-San Marcos participating on the program, including almost 20 faculty members and approximately 30 students. We look forward to seeing many of our alumni and geography friends when the department once again hosts a reception during the Wednesday evening at the conference site.

I wish to extend an invitation to all alumni, current students, faculty, staff and friends of the department to attend the 14th Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration which is scheduled for Saturday, April 26, 2008. Additional information about this event can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

This semester, the Department of Geography is preparing its "self-study" report as part of our formal Academic Program Review. External evaluators will visit the department during Fall 2008, after which we will develop a new five-year plan. Preparation of this report has clearly reinforced the fact that Texas State's Department of Geography has outstanding programs. It is indeed a pleasure to be associated with such a fine group of faculty, staff and students!

"IT IS INDEED
A PLEASURE
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Alumni

Do you have e-mail addresses for other Texas State Geography Alumni? If so, please send their e-mail address to

angelika@txstate.edu

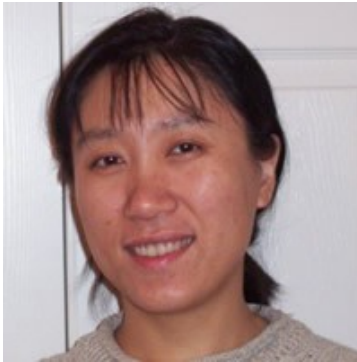
**CONGRATULATIONS! FELICITACIONES!! GLÜCKWÜNSCHE!!
CONGRATULAZIONI!! 恭喜你!! PARABÉNS!! ПОЗДРАВЛЕНИЯ!!**

Once again, Geography professors are recognized for their skills, talent and dedication...



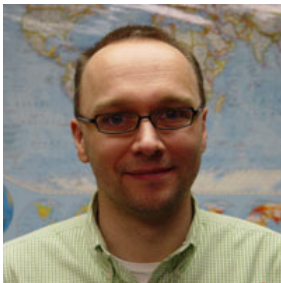
Dr. Brock Brown is the Minnie Stevens Piper Professor nominee from Texas State University for 2008. He will also be honored with the Everett Swinney Faculty Senate Award for Teaching Excellence at the fall 2008 convocation.

Dr. Byron Augustin has been selected as one of three Honor Roll Advocates nationally in his institutional category by the National Resource Center for the First Year Student Advocates for his outstanding work on behalf of first-year students.



Dr. Yongmei Lu received one of the five \$20,000 awards President Trauth established for faculty who receive faculty development leave. She will be on development leave for the 2008 - 09 academic year to conduct research in China.

Dr. Jim Kimmel and his wife Jerry received the "Friends of the River" award from the San Marcos River Foundation in recognition of their book about the San Marcos river



PRESIDENTIAL AWARD NOMINEE
Dr. Sven Fuhrmann was selected as Liberal Arts Nominee for the Lecturer / Assistant Professor for scholarship category



PRESIDENTIAL AWARD NOMINEE
Dr. John Tiefenbacher was selected as the Liberal Arts Associate/Full Professor Nominee for service category .

PRESIDENTIAL AWARD NOMINEE
Dr. F. Benjamin Zhan was selected as Liberal Arts Nominee for the Associate / Full Professor for scholarship category



PRESIDENTIAL AWARD NOMINEE
Dr. David Butler was selected as Liberal Arts Nominee for the Associate / Full Professor for teaching category



NEW GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

*By John Tiefenbacher,
Chair of the Scholarships and Awards Committee*

Approximately two years ago, the Department of Geography was informed that an endowment in the name of Bernard "Bernie" Detlefsen was to be established and would provide financial support for new student scholarships. Within the last year, the department has learned of the approximate yield of that endowment and for the first time this spring we will award \$4500 in scholarships to graduate and undergraduate students. In future years, we expect that we will be able to award up to 14 scholarships, which swells the number of scholarships available to Geography majors, minors and graduate students to close to 45!

For 2008, the faculty has decided to offer four scholarships and they are entitled: the Detlefsen Senior Opportunity Scholarship, the Detlefsen Senior Academic and Leadership Scholarship, the Detlefsen Masters Excellence Scholarship and the Detlefsen Doctoral Scholarship. The first two of these scholarships provide financial assistance to Geography majors who have achieved academic excellence and have provided leadership in Geography student organizations or through other forms of service to the department. The Masters-level scholarship will be awarded to a student actively pursuing the M.A.G. or M.S. degrees who has demonstrated scholarly achievement by either having published original research or having presented their research at professional meetings. The doctoral scholarship awarded this year will go to a new Ph.D. student who will begin the doctoral program in the fall of 2008. This scholarship is intended as a competitive inducement to doctoral applicants of the highest caliber, as demonstrated by the academic record, scholarly achievements prior to the start of their doctoral program, and

the strength of recommendations for admission to our program.

Although the amount of funding available for Detlefsen scholarships that will be awarded in 2009 has not yet been determined, the faculty has "mapped out" a plan for disbursement of up to 14 scholarships divided among the programs: 6 undergraduate scholarships and 8 graduate scholarships. The undergraduate scholarships (for which more than one award may be made annually) are named: The Detlefsen Junior Academic Achievement and Leadership Scholarship, the Detlefsen Junior Opportunity Scholarship, the Detlefsen Junior/Senior Academic and Leadership Excellence Scholarship, the Detlefsen Senior Opportunity Scholarship, and the Detlefsen Senior Academic and Leadership Scholarship. The graduate scholarships (multiple awards for each may be made) include: the Detlefsen Masters Excellence Scholarship, the Detlefsen Doctoral Scholarship (for an incoming student), the Detlefsen Doctoral Excellence Scholarship, and the Detlefsen Dissertation Scholarship.

Annual awards will be made during the department's traditional scholarship "season" and are the purview of the Department of Geography's Scholarships and Awards Committee. As is true of all university-funded scholarships, all money awarded during the spring semester is to be applied toward tuition during the following fall semester. Students must be enrolled to be eligible and must meet all eligibility requirements as described in brochures available from the department. Questions regarding the Department of Geography scholarships can be directed to me at tief@txstate.edu.

DID YOU KNOW?

Santa Fe, New Mexico is the highest state capital at 7,000 feet above sea level; is the only State Capital with no regularly scheduled commercial airline service; is the ending point of the 800 mile Santa Fe Trail; is home to the oldest government building in the United States, the Palace of Governors building; and was founded in 1607 making it the oldest continuously occupied state capital.

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS NAMED

The College of Liberal Arts has named its inaugural 2008 College of Liberal Arts Distinguished Alumnus Achievement Award recipients. The awards will be presented at a ceremony on Friday, May 2.

Mr. Timothy Staskus (BS in Psychology with a minor in Geography, 1985) of Chandler, Arizona will be among the recipients. Tim and his family have been long-term supporters of the Department of Geography including being donors for a scholarship. Tim has been a frequent visitor to our alumni reunion and student celebration and was awarded the departmental outstanding alumnus award in 1998.



Another honoree will be Mr. H.S. Garcia who is director of the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality. Garcia is political science alumnus, rather than geography. However, our department has a long-standing close relationship with TCEQ, especially through Dr. Larsen's contract activity. Many geography graduates have found employment with TCEQ over the years.

Congratulations on these well-deserved recognitions.

FROM BACKPACK TO BRIEFCASE

By Aaron Preine - Texas State Alumnus



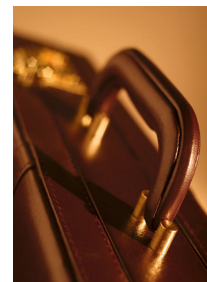
My transition from college to the workplace was not an easy time. No matter how much I tried to prepare myself for interviews it never seemed enough. Words flew over my head and I never seemed to know what was occurring around me at the office. I found myself debating on whether or not I learned enough in college and if I was going to be able to find a place to begin a career. Fortunately I was able to impress employers at P2 Energy Solutions enough to hire me as a GIS Technician for their research and editing department. After a few months of work I finally realized where the complications in my interviews came from - I didn't know anything about business world.

The first working day after graduation I was signing new employee documents at P2. I was given a name plate, a desk, and instructional books on software and geography that I've never seen before. Everything was sort of a blur for several months. I didn't know any of the business terminology, news, and names. My supervisor explained to me that it would take about one year for me to learn to the work required. Similar to my stay Texas State, time has gone by fast. As I approach the one year mark I am preparing to move on to new assignments with the company and help train new employees. I recently attended the 2008 Spring Career Expo held by Texas State. It was a bit strange for me that within one year I was standing on the opposite side of the table but I felt I was able to help relax the students approaching the table.

The biggest project a student will ever work on in college is his or her own self. For students, the best advice I have is for you to begin networking. Seek out former students in the workforce and ask questions. Apply for internships, ask for company tours, and attend expos and conventions. Make people remember your name and your face. Set up appointments with counselors and professors and through it all take notes. Be able to offer something companies do not have and not just another name to send a paycheck to. With that, I hope your preparation for life beyond the diploma is as smooth as possible and I wish you all well in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Aaron
GIS Technician III - P2 Energy Solutions



DR. KEVIN ROMIG CRITIQUES NEW BRAUNFELS PLAN

By Dr. Kevin Romig

The City of New Braunfels requested that Texas DOT study the best possible route for an outer loop highway circumnavigating New Braunfels through Comal and Guadalupe Counties. This process has been illuminating to students in the Urban and Regional Planning courses because it is a poorly designed study with little articulation to the public about the need for this kind of road. As readily evident in most of Central Texas, this is New Braunfels' attempt to encourage further development and real estate speculation in lands on the periphery of their extra-territorial jurisdiction. However, the justification for this study was to keep up with the transportation needs stemming from population growth.

In critiquing this plan and study, Kevin Romig designed an interactive web site (<http://nbouterloop.blogspot.com>) to inform the public about the true motives and drawbacks of the proposal. This alternative web site has been forwarded to Texas DOT, the private consultants who were hired by Texas DOT to conduct the study, and members of the New Braunfels City Council. Like David Letterman, Romig lists the Top 10 Reasons this is a Bad Plan. The main arguments against the plan are: it will increase sprawl and haphazard development in critical areas of the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone; the research design of the study was poor, unimaginative and the location of the proposed road will unfairly affect long time residents and land owners of the area; and a circumferential road does not make sense geometrically or geographically. Significant improvements to the existing infrastructure should be a much higher priority than an outer loop of a medium sized city that already boasts half of an inner loop.

Dr. Romig attended two local workshops, held over summer 2007, about the study conducted by consultants. It was so surprising to witness how seemingly little public input shaped the proposed route. While being interviewed on KGNB, Romig articulated that New Braunfels needs, "to manage growth in more proac-

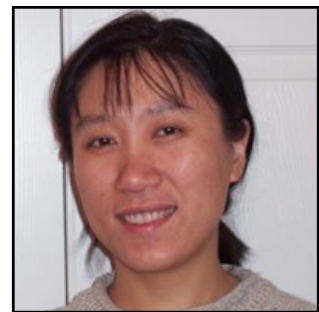
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LU RECIPIENT OF FOUNDATIONS OF EXCELLENCE 2008 AWARD

Dr. Yongmei Lu has been honored as a recipient of the "Foundations of Excellence 2008 Award", which is an award honoring "the Top 10 Texas State Distinguished Educators".

The award is sponsored by the Texas State Student Foundation, which is comprised of a premiere group of student leaders who serve as presidential ambassadors for the President at Texas State University-San Marcos. Recipients of this award are selected based on students' nomination essays.



DID YOU KNOW?

- ◆ The place name of Riverside can be found in all but four states (it does not exist in Hawaii, Alaska, Louisiana, and Oklahoma).
- ◆ The Free Independent Republic of West Florida (parts of Florida, Mississippi, and Louisiana) was independent from the United States for ninety days in 1810.
- ◆ The state of Maine was once known as the "Earmuff Capital of the World." Earmuffs were invented there by Chester Greenwood in 1873.
- ◆ The only continent without reptiles or snakes is Antarctica.

DR. BEN ZHAN TO SERVE AS GUEST CHAIR PROFESSOR

Congratulations to Dr. Ben Zhan, who has won the Chang Jiang Scholars Award from Wuhan University. As a result of this award, Ben will serve as a guest chair professor at Wuhan University for three years.

The prestigious Chang Jiang Scholars Award Program is jointly established and funded by the Ministry of Education in Beijing and the Li Ka Shing Foundation in Hong Kong. To be considered for this award, the candidate must have an outstanding research record and be internationally recognized in his or her field. The Chang Jiang Scholar's award is part of an ambitious program initiated by the Chinese government to rapidly develop and improve the quality of research conducted at major research universities in China through the development of close collaborations with eminent scientists throughout the world. They are nominated by top research universities in China through international searches and selected by an expert review panel organized by the Ministry of Education. The Chang Jiang guest chair professors are expected to continue their normal duties at their current affiliated institutions and are usually appointed on a 3-year fixed term. It is also expected that Chang Jiang guest chair professors visit their respective host universities in China occasionally, collaborate with colleagues in a host university, and develop synergistic research and education programs that benefit both their affiliated institutions and their host universities in China.

Some very impressive Americans have won this award, including Dr. Dian Zhou, a faculty member in the University of Texas-Dallas' Erik Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science, Qingyan (Yan) Chen from Purdue University's School of Mechanical Engineering, and Rutgers University's Dr. Bingru Huang.



ALUMNI REUNION IS APRIL 26, 2008!



NOTES FROM JOYCE*By Joyce Lawson, Geography Undergraduate Advisor*

Brightest Stars Reception for Liberal Arts will be held – April 23rd.

As always our Geographers will be honored.

Liberal Arts Awards Ceremony – April 24th

This year's Geographers receiving awards have the highest GPA of the past recipients.

Summer 2008 Advance Registration begins – March 24 - April 3 / Late Registration begins – May 28 – 30th

Fall 2008 Advance Registration begins – March 24 – April 3 / Late Registration begins – August 14 – 26st

2008 FIG's (Freshman Interest Group) News!!!

Geography FIG Students: Chanell Goodright, Cody Clarke, Justin McCreight, Andrew Simmons and FIG mentor, Kevin Kemp had the highest overall GPA of all residents in Tower.

Common Experience Event: The Department of Geography and the River Systems Institute are leading a canoe trip on Saturday, March 29, on a section of the San Marcos River near Luling that has been designated as a Scenic Waterway by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Trip leaders are Drs. Richard Earl, Donald J. Huebner, and Jim Kimmel of Department of Geography. We will also have 3-4 river-experienced students. The **Common Experience** is designed to cultivate a common intellectual conversation across the campus, to enhance student participation in the intellectual life of the campus, and to foster a sense of community across our entire campus and extended community.

CONGRATULATIONS!

to all geographers graduating May 2008

If you are considering Graduate School, please contact Joyce Lawson at (512) 245-0372 or joyce.lawson@txstate.edu



Be wise and be advised!



WELCOME JESSICA KOESLER!



We are delighted to welcome Jessica Koesler, Grants Accounting and Travel Administrative Assistant II, to the Geography family! Jessica grew up in Muenster - a tiny German community in North Texas where her family has resided since 1889. After a brief stint at Midwestern State University, she moved to San Marcos to finish her education at Texas State University. She graduated with honors in May of 2006, holds a BA in English, and is a first generation college graduate.

In her spare time, Jessica enjoys cooking, reading, and crafting. She wants to see as much of Texas as possible, and is amazed at the difference in scenery a short drive can reveal. A long time ago Jessica decided that the best part of going to college (besides the degree) was making friends from across the state and being able to take in all of the different areas of Texas. She loves being outside, and is a self proclaimed "water baby". She is happiest at a river, the lake, or on the beach. Jessica spent three summers during her undergraduate career working for Gruene River Company in New Braunfels. While working there, she became addicted to rafting, and still makes time for it whenever possible. She loves the Texas Hill Country, but also loves to get back to her parents' home in the North Texas countryside whenever she can.

JAMES AND MARILYN LOVELL CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL GEOGRAPHY AND HAZARDS RESEARCH (JMLC) NEWS

Reminder: Spring JMLC Distinguished Lecture to be given by Dr. Sylvia Earle

By Pamela S. Showalter, Director

The James and Marilyn Lovell Center for Environmental Geography and Hazards Research (JMLC) is hosting Dr. Sylvia Earle, National Geographic Explorer in Residence and JMLC Board Member as its Spring Distinguished Lecturer. Dr. Earle's visit is being supported not only by our Department, but also by Common Experience, the Deans of Liberal Arts and Science, the Mitte Honors Program, and the River Systems Institute.

Dr. Earle has been referred to as a "Living Legend" by the Library of Congress and will be making not one, but two presentations. On Wednesday night, March 26, at 8:00 p.m. at the LBJ Student Center Mall, Earle will present, "Sustainable Seas: The Vision and the Reality." On Thursday morning, at 10:00 a.m. in the auditorium of Evans Liberal Arts, she'll provide a somewhat more technical and less formal presentation about her life's work performing deep sea research and supporting the health of our planet's oceans.

We hope you can attend—and, please check the department website for any last minute changes to times or venues.



Dr. Sylvia Earle

(Photo credit: www.keplerspeakers.com/speakers/speakers.asp?1+EV+2166.)

OUTER LOOP "A BAD PLAN"

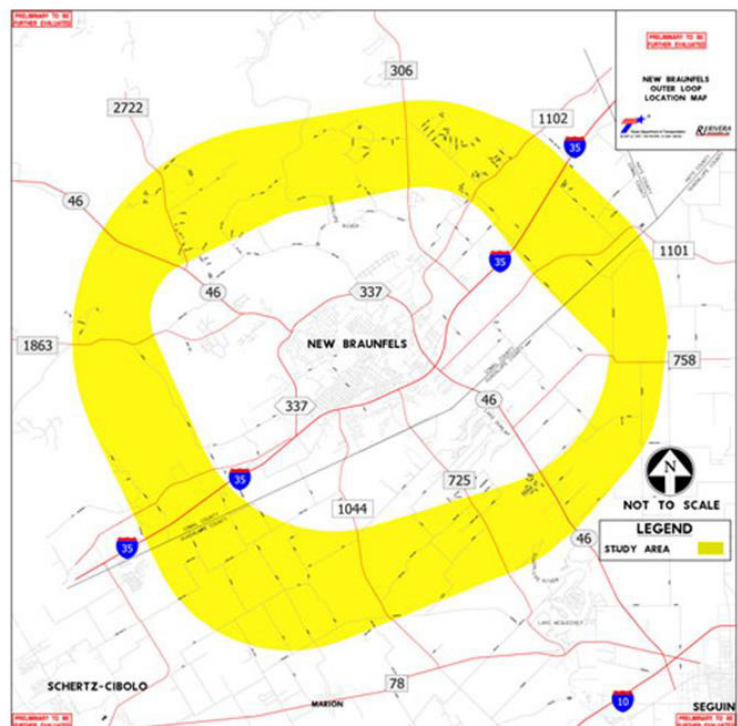
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tive and environmentally conscious ways—this is not a campaign to eliminate growth all together."

Dr. Romig, his wife Julie, and other concerned citizens picketed outside the Open House, January 31, held to unveil the proposed route. They handed out information directing citizens to their web site which also has a direct link where citizen comments are forwarded to TX DOT and become part of the public record. The plan still needs City Council approval before it is formally adopted into the long range transportation plan. This is an important step in the lengthy process to more effectively manage sprawl and development, and this interactive web site is intended to be another way of encouraging the community to participate in the public planning process.

Study Area

The New Braunfels Outer Loop Study will evaluate possible corridor locations for an outer loop within a study area that is approximately a 40-mile band around the City of New Braunfels and encompasses portions of both Comal and Guadalupe Counties.



MOUNTAINEER TO BE 2008 GROSVENOR DISTINGUISHED LECTURER

By Judy Behrens

The Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education proudly presents the 10th Annual Grosvenor Distinguished Lecture Series with special guest Dr. Rodrigo Jordan Fuchs. He is an educator and mountaineer, President of Vertical S.A., a Chilean organization devoted to using mountains as classrooms for groups from company managers to school children, and Chairman of the Chilean National Foundation for the Alleviation of Poverty. Nominated by Time magazine in 1994 as "one of the 100 young leaders for the new millennium", Dr.



Rodrigo Jordán is known for his values as well as his vision.

Leader of the first successful South American expeditions to Mt Everest and K2, Jordán has applied the leadership and team-building skills needed to

climb the world's most challenging mountains to business and education. His mountaineering successes gave Jordán, a civil engineer and university lecturer, the idea to launch his own company called Vertical S.A.

This organization, along with the charitable foundation Fundación Maitenes, delivers outdoor education and training services to corporations and individuals, particularly children from inner-city areas. By involving children in nature conservation, Jordán hopes to rear future generations of environmentally con-

SAGE'S SECOND SUCCESS *By Lara Bryant*

The Second Annual San Antonio-Austin Geographic Educators Conference was a great success this year. The decision to hold the Conference in the fall appears to have been a popular choice as teachers were able to begin the new year with great ideas they had discovered at the conference.

Troy Kimmel gave a dynamic plenary address discussed the issue of coordinating the fields of GIS and meteorology. It was a fascinating session that the participants enjoyed while eating lunch. Besides the many wonderful presentations that were provided during the conference, SAGE was able to provide the extraordinary experience of bringing the largest map of Asia to the conference. The map was borrowed from the National Geographic Society and was big hit as people were literally able to walk across Asia during the session.

Special thanks go out to Suzan Pitman who volunteered Hays High School in Buda, Texas to host the conference. The new facilities were wonderful, and provided a great place to hold the conference. Suzan was instrumental in organizing the conference and her many hours of dedicated were greatly appreciated by those who attended the conference.

As SAGE begins its third year, we are in the process of strengthening the organization and expanding its membership. We have been trying to increase the opportunities available to geographic educators to network, continue their professional development, and enhance geographic education in the region. If you are interested in volunteering to help in the next conference, or have some great ideas on how we can better serve you please contact Lara Bryant at LBryant@txstate.edu.



ESC INVESTS STUDENT FUNDS BACK INTO THE UNIVERSITY

By Hayat Qurunful

The Environmental Service Committee (ESC) has been putting student funds to work by investing them back into the university through green research, projects that reduce our footprint on the environment and reduce waste and other activities aspiring to better our university and citywide environments. In the past semester, the ESC has approved funding for some very exciting projects that will materialize this spring and throughout the rest of 2008.

The first project for the fiscal year that we have approved is for a 10,000 gallon Rainwater Collection tank to be built by Tank Town, out of Dripping Springs. The cistern will collect rainwater to irrigate plants in the Horticulture greenhouse and in the gardens around the Agriculture building. The collection tank will be built out of sight in an area behind the Agriculture building, where it will

collect the runoff from the 36,000 sq ft surface of the greenhouse. We shall hopefully see the tank up before the first summer session.

The second project is funding for our local Bike Cave to buy a utility tricycle that will be able to haul up to 500 pounds of tools and other cycling materials needed to perform the functions of serving our community and helping the residents of San Marcos get around on two wheels. Made in Colorado by Main Street Pedicabs, the tricycle will help the cycling community in San Marcos grow by means of promoting sustainable methods of travel and lifestyle.

The most recent project we approved funding for is going towards purchasing the GreenPrint software program for eighty computers in the Geography Department. All faculty computers and two of the five Geography labs will receive the software, which will enable

users to reduce the amount of ink, toner and cartridge they use to print. Once installed on a computer, the software would remove blank and unwanted pages and extraneous graphics and advertisements before printing, and then give a detailed account of how much has been saved over a daily, weekly or monthly period. This will be the first green software to be used on the Texas State campus!

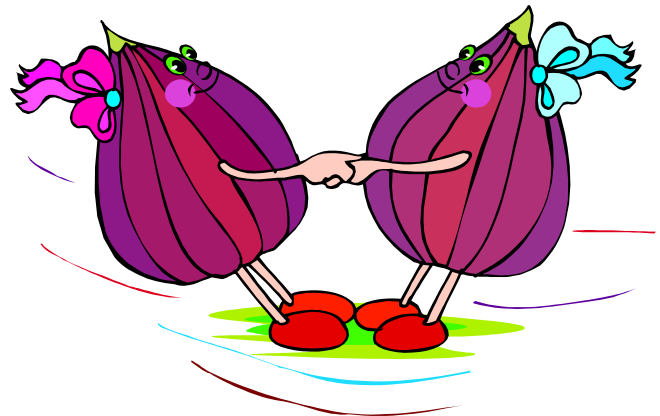
The ESC looks forward to receiving more applications for projects and encourages all students, faculty and staff to submit their own brilliant green idea to us if they would like to be a part of positive change on the Texas State University campus. Please contact us at esc@txstate.edu, or visit our website at www.txstate.edu/esc and print out an application. Or come to one of our meetings, held the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at 5:15 in ELA 313. Onward green!

MEET FIG - THE GEOGRAPHY FRESHMEN INTEREST GROUP

By Chanell Goodright cg1365@txstate.edu

As part of the Geography FIG, I have firsthand knowledge how it can help freshmen adjust to college life. All the students in FIG live across the hall from one another in the Tower, take Geography classes together, and have student sessions in the living room area outside of our rooms. If you need help there are other students who are taking the same classes available, as well as an upper-classman who has taken these classes and passed. Students in the FIG grow in the college experience together and also become close friends. The group helps calm the pressure of new classes, a new environment, and basically a new life. Due to the tight knit community we have formed, our grads have risen above all others, and the Geography FIG had the highest cumulative grade point average of all the FIG groups for the fall semester.

Activities are plentiful - during the fall semester we had a barbeque with all of the other FIGs to welcome us to our new homes, took a trip to the Hays County Power Plant to better understand the inner workings of a possible future career field for someone with a geography degree, and attended a Geography department bar-



(Continued on page 13)

UPCOMING STUDENT ORGANIZATION MEETINGS

GEOLOGY CLUB

Meets in ELA 311 at 5:00 pm on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month in ELA 311

GTU

Gamma Theta Upsilon
Geography Honor Society

Meets in Evans 311 at 5:00 pm on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month.

NAEP

National Association of
Environment Professionals
Meets in Evans 311 at 5:00 pm on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday each month.

SOGIS

Student Organization for
GIScience
Meets in Evans. Contact SOGIS at sogis@geo.txstate.edu for information on upcoming meetings.

SPO

Student Planning Organization
Please see the bulletin board outside Evans 156 for meeting dates and times.

SWIG

Supporting Women in Geography
Meets in ELA 314 on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month at 12:30 p.m.

GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT WELCOMES GEOLOGY CLUB

By Barbara Grahmann, Geology Club

The Geology Club of Texas State is a new student organization in the Geography Department. It is only our second semester, and we are quickly gaining momentum.

Fall 2007 was our first semester, but it was a great one. We took a field trip to the West Cave Preserve in the Texas Hill Country to visit this beautiful limestone cave along the Pedernales River. Dr. Rene DeHon gave a great presentation (with an interesting twist) on the geology and prospect of life on Mars, and hosted Andy Grubbs, a professional geologist, who gave a presentation on karst caves and landforms, including carbonate aquifers in the Northern Marina Islands.

Our semester started with a wonderful presentation at our first meeting by Dr. James Petersen of the Geography Department, who gave a presentation about the Geology of Enchanted Rock. We had a great turnout, including exchange students from the University of Hanover. Future plans include Dr. Richard Earl's presentation about his summer trip, Physical Geography and Geology of the Southwest; acting as host to Dr. Jane Knaus of the Texas Railroad Commission;

and a lecture by Dr. David Butler of the Geography Department. In addition, we want to give back to the community, so we have a variety of community service projects planned for the semester. In March, the Geology Club will head to Canyon Lake to help clean up and preserve dinosaur tracks that have been discovered and will join forces with Gamma Theta Upsilon in lower income neighborhoods, providing the youth of these areas information about colleges and universities, especially about geography and geology programs.

The Geology Club is fired up and ready for a good semester. The club meets every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month in ELA 311. For more information contact Dr. Rene DeHon (dehon@txstate.edu) or president Barbara Grahmann (bg1116@txstate.edu) or check out our bulletin board in the hallway by the Geography Departmental Office.



The Geology Club at West Cave Preserve, Fall 2007.

STUDENT PLANNING ORGANIZATION STAYS BUSY

The Student Planning Organization (SPO) has been busy since the first day of this semester. If there is one sentence to best describe how SPO has changed from a year ago, the previous sentence says it all. We have been involving ourselves in such things as community service, conferences, and visits to places like the Mueller Development in Austin to see how planning really works. This semester we have already participated in a Habitat for Humanity workday. It was a lot of fun even though the first part of the morning was freezing! That's part of what made it fun and memorable though. We will be helping the San Marcos community by working with Amy Kirwin, Dunbar Neighborhood Association President and we're arranging to participate in Bobcat Build. The friendly people at Mueller gave us an insightful and informative presentation about the new urbanist development. We are very grateful and appreciate of their time; I know we all really enjoyed the visit. The presentation was a great precursor to the Congress for New Urbanism Conference we hope to attend in Austin. To offset the high registration costs, we are trying to set up a fundraiser event that should be a really great time and we will keep the geography department posted on the happenings with that. If you have any questions please contact: Natalie Diaz - Co-president, Adam Johnson - Co-president, Paul Loesch - Vice President, or Cody Clarke - Secretary

ENCOURAGING WOMEN IN THE FIELD OF GEOGRAPHY

By Emily Davis-Watson, SWIG Vice-President

SWIG (Supporting Women in Geography) is a student organization that networks with and encourages the participation of women in the field of Geography. Our diverse membership includes male and female undergraduate and graduate students as well as Texas State faculty from a variety of countries and areas of study. The group is headed by President Danielle Del Castillo Shelton and Vice-President Emily Davis-Watson, who are both undergraduate Resource and Environmental Studies majors.

On Thursday, February 21, SWIG introduced Texas State's German foreign exchange students to a bit of Texas culture and history at Gruene Hall, the oldest dance hall in Texas. Among other activities planned for the Spring 2008 semester is a fundraising bake sale with proceeds benefiting the San Marcos Women's Shelter.

SWIG meets at 5:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursday of every month at the Coffee Pot on the square in downtown San Marcos. We welcome anyone interested to come and join us for a cuppa joe and some great conversation!

THE GEOGRAPHY FRESHMEN INTEREST GROUP - FIG

(Continued from page 11)

beque at Sewell Park for undergraduate Geography students. This event enabled us to meet with our professors and peers on a more comfortable and relaxed level. During the spring semester we will participate in two more big events. One of these, a canoe trip down the San Marcos river, is tied to the Common Experience theme "The Water Planet: A River Runs Through Us". The second event is volunteering at the Geography department's 14th Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration on Saturday, April 26, 2008.

Through all our experiences and accomplishments I can't help but remember the famous quote by Margaret Mead "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has", since after all we are the smallest of the FIGs. Next year we plan to make the FIG into the Geography Learning Community, which will also allow sophomores to join who may have missed the opportunity the first time around.

March

Mar. 10 - 14 - Spring Break

Mar. 17 - St. Patrick's Day

Mar. 21 - Good Friday

Mar. 23 - Easter

Mar. 24 - Registration
for Summer

I & II

Mar. 27 - JMLC Lecture



April

Apr. 1 - April Fool's Day

Apr. 4 - Geography Student Research Symposium

Apr. 7 - Fall 2008 Registration

Apr. 14 - 18 - National Student
Employment WeekApr. 13 - 20 - AAG Conference in
Boston, MA

Apr. 26 - Alumni Reunion

May

May 1 - 6 - Finals

May 9 - 10 - Commencement

May 11 - Mother's Day

May 12 - Grades Available @
12:00

May 26 - Memorial Day



MARY CURTIS SELECTED AS 2008-2009 GROSVENOR SCHOLAR

Mary Curtis, a geography educator from Clear Brook High School and a Ph.D. candidate in the Texas State Department of Geography, has been selected to serve as the 2008-09 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 NGS headquarters in Washington, D.C. for a Texas State doctoral 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.



Mary earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Texas A&M University and a Master of Science degree in Instructional Technology from the University of Houston-Clear Lake. She entered the doctoral program at Texas State University in summer 2005, and is currently working on a dissertation that addresses the use of geo-spatial technologies in K-12 classrooms. For several years, Mary has played an active role in the Texas Alliance for Geographic Education, serving as a Teacher Consultant for a number of Alliance-sponsored workshops and training events.

Ms. Curtis will assume her role as Grosvenor Scholar in August 2008. 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.

2008 TEXAS STATE BONE MARROW DONOR DRIVE EVENTS

April 9, 5:30 p.m. - Texas State Cancer Survivors Panel, public presentation, LBJ Student Center Teaching Theater

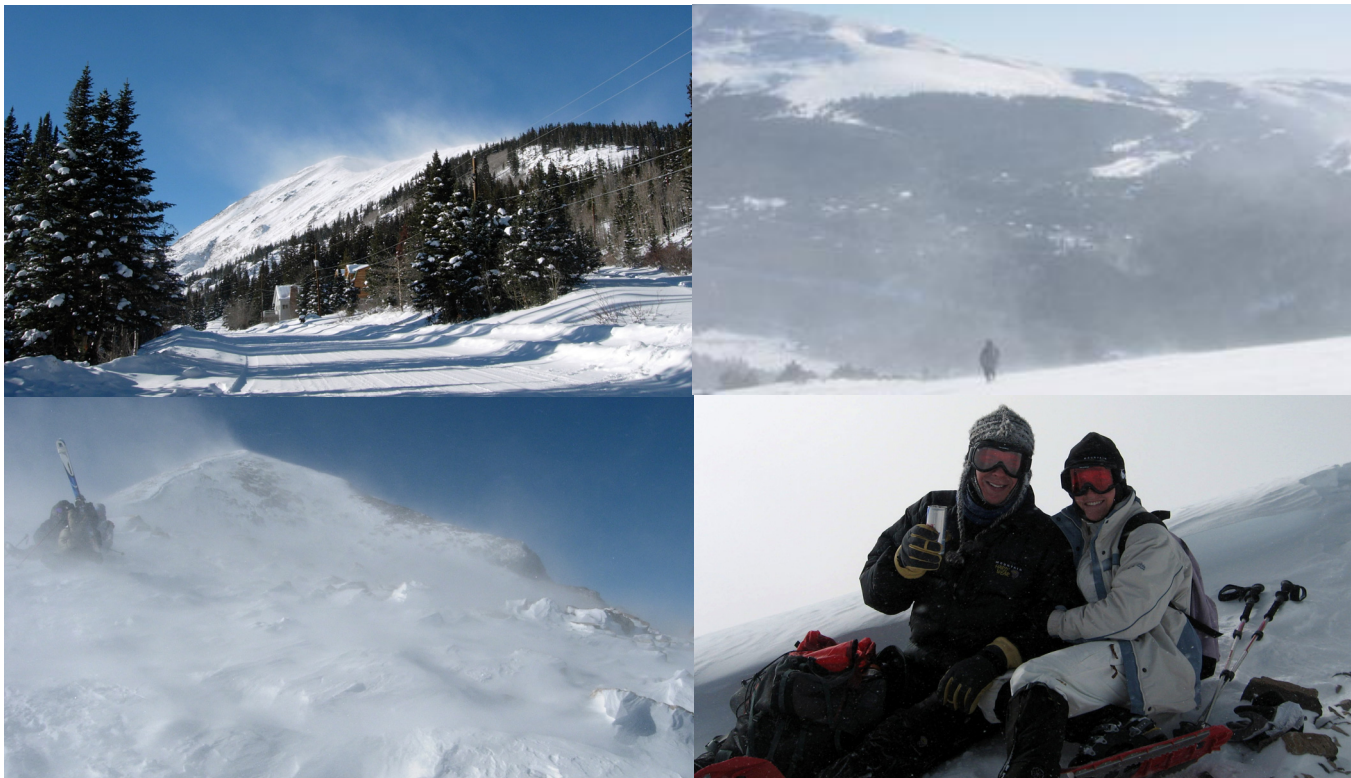
April 9, 7:00 p.m. - Bone Marrow Swab Training Session, LBJ Student Center Teaching Theater, pizza provided for participants

April 22, 5:30 p.m. - Dr. Marcos de Lima, internationally acclaimed bone marrow transplant expert from M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, public presentation, Alkek Teaching Theater

April 22-24, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. - Texas State Bone Marrow Donor Drive, donor tables at various locations on campus

ADVENTURES IN THE COLORADO ROCKIES: A WINTER CLIMB OF QUANDARY PEAK, 14,265'

Photos Courtesy of Jon Kedrowski



LARA BRYANT EXPERIENCES MYWORLD

MyWorld is a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) application developed by the GEODE initiative using the Java™ platform. The GEODE initiative was funded using a National Science Foundation Grant given to Northwestern University in Illinois. The purpose of the grant was to develop a user friendly GIS program for the K-12 level in education. One of the commonly cited drawbacks to using GIS in the K-12 classroom is that teachers state that more time is spent learning to push buttons than learning the geographic concepts. It is hoped that with a product designed specifically for the K-12 classroom, GIS can become more widely and effectively used as a pedagogical tool.

MyWorld has finished its field testing and is currently in the final phase of its development, which is to create appropriate curriculum designed specifically for the MyWorld program. Lara Bryant's proposal for curriculum development was accepted this last fall, and in December she went to Northwestern University for a weekend to fully develop her lesson. She was one of fifteen author's who met to work collaboratively on a book designed for use in a middle school classroom. The experience allowed Lara to work collaboratively with professors, K-12 teachers, and educational consultants from across the United States on the project. The curriculum will be field tested this spring, and the book is scheduled for publication in the fall.

As a geographer, she was a bit disappointed that there was no time to explore Chicago. However, the view of Lake Michigan from her station made up for the inability to wander. As a southerner, witnessing the onslaught of the beautiful winter weather was also an experience she was grateful to have; but, thankful she could leave behind!





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SHARING
THE SPIRIT OF GEOGRAPHY



LAST, BUT NOT LEAST...

Congratulations to doctoral candidate **Zach Moore**, who has been appointed Assistant Professor of Geography at Rowen University in New Jersey effective Fall 2008. Zach is currently completing the writing stages of his dissertation in geographic education under the direction of Dr. Boehm. Zach will also be involved in trying to re-start the New Jersey state geographic alliance.





Amanda Keen-Zebert (PhD graduate, August 2007) has accepted a two-year NSF post-doctoral fellowship beginning in May in their International Research Fellowship Program. Her project title is "Determining Bedrock Incision Rates using Cosmogenic Isotope ^3He Analysis to Chronologically Constrain the Wetland Development Cycle in the Highveld of South Africa." She will be working with Dr. Stephen Tooth at the University of Aberystwyth in Wales.

GRADUATE STUDENT KUDOS



Lara Bryant Recipient of TAGE Distinguished Service Award

Ph.D. student **Lara Bryant** was chosen as recipient of a 2007 Texas Alliance for Geographic Education Distinguished Service Award. She will receive the award at a regional Alliance meeting in San Antonio this spring. Lara is being recognized for her work in helping to develop the San Antonio-Austin area regional Alliance organization, SAGE.

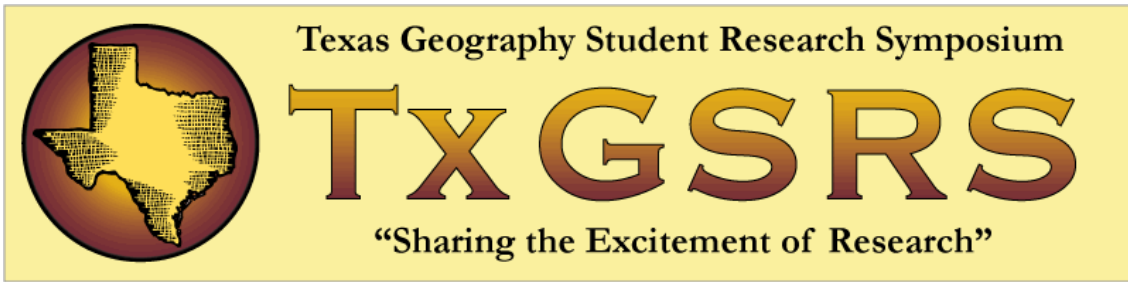
Susan Peters Awarded Scholarship

Second year environmental Geography doctoral student **Susan Peters** has been awarded the 2008 Texas Military Forces Retiree Scholarship from the National Guard Association of Texas Education Foundation. The award is for \$2,500 to cover any costs of her education, and will be made to her at the National Guard Association of Texas Annual Joint Conference Award Dinner on March 29, 2008 in Austin, Texas. Susan's advisor is Dr. Richard Dixon.



Meng Receives Award

Doctoral student **Xuelian Meng** was recently informed she will receive the 2008 BAE Systems Award for best student paper, to be presented by the American Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing at the annual conference in Portland, Oregon in May. The award consists of a certificate and \$2,000 grant, and the paper will be published in Photogrammetric Engineering & Remote Sensing, the official journal of ASPRS. Xuelian's advisor is Dr. Nate Currit. Dr. Currit and former colleague, Dr. Le Wang, are co-authors on the paper.



The 2008 Texas Geography Student Research Symposium: Friday, April 4th, 2008

TOP FIVE REASONS TO ATTEND AND PRESENT AT THIS YEARS TXGSRS:

- 5 – FREE FOOD AND AWESOME DOOR PRIZES, INCLUDING TWO IPODS!
- 4 – OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITY FOR GEOGRAPHY GRADUATE STUDENTS TO REHEARSE FOR THE BOSTON AAG MEETING!
- 3 – INFORMATIVE PANELS CONCERNING SOME OF TODAY'S MOST CUTTING-EDGE GEOGRAPHIC RESEARCH!
- 2 – PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR FACULTY, UNDERGRADUATE, AND GRADUATE STUDENTS TO INTERACT, NETWORK, AND COLLABORATE!
- 1 – CELEBRATES TEXAS STATE GEOGRAPHY STUDENTS AND ALLOWS PRESENTERS TO SHARE THEIR GREAT WORK WITH OTHER STUDENTS AND FACULTY!

Register NOW for the 2008 TXGSRS:

Friday, April 4th 2008!!!!

Register on-line at: <http://geosites.evans.txstate.edu/~txgsrs/>