

## Table of Contents

### FRONT PAGE

Geographers Give Serious Geography a Silly Spin .....	2
Angelika Wahl Employee of the Month .....	2
Brock Brown Steps Down .....	2
Fonstad and Stea Publish in the Annals .....	2
Geography Annex .....	2
<b>GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR</b> .....	3
<b>UNDERGRADUATE COORDINATOR COLUMN: Geography Minor Improved</b> .....	4
<b>GRADUATE COORDINATOR COLUMN: Celebrating Excellence, Envisioning Greatness</b> .....	4

### FACULTY NEWS

Petersen Co-authors New Physical Geography Textbook .....	5
Communicating Risk at the 2003 Boulder Hazards Workshop .....	5
Blanco Watershed Project .....	6
We Welcome Our New Faculty Members! .....	7

### STAFF NEWS

The Department is Pleased to Welcome New Staff Members! .....	8
<b>ALUMNI REUNION AND STUDENT CELEBRATION: 10th Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration:</b> .....	9
What's in Store as We Celebrate Ten Years .....	9
Children's Activities Available .....	9

### DEPARTMENT NEWS

The Jim Wacker Undergraduate Geography Scholarship .....	12
Texas State Geography Adds New Scholarship .....	12
Wetzel Family National Geographic Magazine Collection .....	12
Texas State University-San Marcos .....	13
Record Year for Texas State Geography Grants and Contracts .....	13
Evans Beautification Project .....	13
9-11 Remembrance .....	14
Lithuanian Student's Perspective on Central Texas .....	15

### RESEARCH CENTERS

Grosvenor Center Project Incorporates Geography into the Teaching of U.S. History .....	17
TAGE's Field and Stream 2003 Brings Students and Teachers to Texas State .....	17
Oceans for Life: Linking Oceanography with Geography .....	17
Texas GIScienceCenter .....	18
Lovell Center Happenings .....	18
Rain or Shine: Teachers Explore Texas Environments .....	19
Thinking About Getting Involved? .....	19
<b>INTERNSHIP NEWS; Geography Internship Students Gain Career-Building Experience</b> .....	20

### STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Graduate Student Forum .....	21
NAEP Promotes Volunteerism and Environmental Stewardship .....	21
GTU Provides Opportunities for Students .....	21
SWIG: Past, Present and Future .....	22

### STUDENT NEWS

With Great Sadness, the Department Mourns the Passing of Two of its Own .....	23
The Planet Drum Foundation in Ecuador .....	23
New Ph.D. Students and Master's GA's .....	24

### AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Texas State Alumna Linda Hammon Awarded Austin High School Teacher of the Year .....	26
Texas State Geography Recognizes Contest Winners .....	26

### ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

Glacier National Field Season, 2003 .....	27
Big Bend: A Texas Wonder .....	27

### AROUND THE WORLD

Exploring International and Intercultural Views of Landscapes .....	28
Yucatan: The Land of the Maya .....	28

### ALUMNI BITS

Alumni Bits .....	30
-------------------	----

## Geographers Give Serious Geography a Silly Spin

Jessica Mefford

Mark Fonstad recently introduced the geographic discipline to a new level of maturity. We can now make fun of ourselves! Fonstad recently published a



Kansas landscape

paper in the *Annals of Improbable Research* detailing a scientific study proving Kansas is indeed flatter than a pancake. The motivation to conduct this research seems a little silly, but the methods used to address this question were pure science.

Continued on page 5

## Angelika Wahl Employee of the Month

Lawrence Estaville



Angelika Wahl

Texas State University-San Marcos honored Angelika Wahl as its University Employee of the Month for November 2003!!! Indeed, we are hopeful, given all of her outstanding accomplishments as our Department Office Manager, that she will be honored with the University Employee of the Year Award for 2003-04!! Simply put,

Continued on page 7

## Brock Brown Steps Down

Lawrence Estaville

After five illustrious years, Brock Brown stepped down at the end of the fall 2003 semester from his administrative post as Texas State Geography's Undergraduate



Program Coordinator. Brock has done a superb job as your department's Undergraduate Program Coordinator, bringing a very

sincere, caring personality to the leadership of the nation's largest and best undergraduate program! Brock's nationally recognized, high energy teaching is famed throughout the discipline of geography, but many people may not know that Brock spends hundreds of hours each semester providing

Continued on page 13

## Fonstad and Stea Publish in the *Annals*

Mark Fonstad and David Stea were co-authors of two articles published in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, the most important geography journal in North America and one of the most prestigious in the world! Their articles are:

Fonstad, Mark, and W. Andrew Marcus. Self-organized criticality in river bank systems. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93, no.2: 281-96.



Blaut, James M., David Stea, Christopher Spencer, and Mark Blades, Mapping as a cultural and cognitive universal. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93, no.1: 165-85.



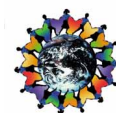
## Geography Annex

Evans Liberal Arts & Medina



Texas State Geography is now a two-building department!! Last August the University assigned Medina Hall (old Tech 5), located on the south-side of Pleasant Street between the Agriculture Building and the parking garage, to your Geography Department. This Geography Annex in Medina Hall provides the department with almost 3,000 square feet of additional space that we have converted into the prime location for several large contracts from the

Continued on page 30



**Don't Miss Alumni Reunion & Student Celebration April 24, 2004**

Visit <http://www.geo.txstate.edu>

## Inside *GeoNews*

<b>Alumni Reunion &amp; Student Celebration</b> .....	8
Faculty News .....	4
Staff News .....	7
Department News .....	11
Research Centers .....	16
Internship News .....	19
Student Organizations .....	20
Student News .....	22
Scholarships & Awards .....	25
Across the U.S. ....	26
Around the World .....	27
Alumni Bits .....	29

# Greetings from the Chair

Department 2003-04 Theme: "Celebrating Excellence, Envisioning Greatness"

Texas State Geography! Texas State Geography!! Texas State Geography!!! What a nice sound, a great ring to it, don't you think? Well, we now have a university name that matches the international reputation of your geography department! Hey, let me take a minute to tick off some Texas State Geography highlights that you might have forgotten about:

- \* Largest Undergraduate and Graduate Geography Programs in the U.S.
- \* One of the Best Undergraduate Programs in the Nation
- \* Best Geographic Education Program in the U.S.
- \* One of the Best Environmental Geography Programs and one of the Best Geographic Information Science Programs in North America
- \* Largest Number of University Distinguished Teaching Awards in the U.S.
- \* Largest Number of Women Faculty in Any U.S. Geography Department
- \* Geography Faculty Have More Than 1,250 Publications
- \* \$10,000,000 in Grants, Contracts, and Gifts in the Past Five Years
- \* Computer Systems Infrastructure that Leads the Discipline
- \* Internationally Recognized Research Centers

And the highlights could go on and on!! The point is that you should be very proud of the many achievements of your department because each of you has contributed in some way in making our department one of the best in the world!!

Let me give you a handful of specific examples of the excellence of Texas State Geography faculty during the past few months. Mark Fonstad and David Stea published articles in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, the most prestigious professional geography journal in North America! This fall Mark gave presentations at M.I.T., the London School of Economics, and the Russian Academy of Science! Fred Shelley was one of only a handful of geographers in North America to have published chapters in the Association of American Geographers three books focused on its centennial! David Butler was selected as the chair of the Steering Committee of the Binghamton Geomor-

phology Symposium, the most important annual geomorphological conference in North America! Ben Zhan, in leading our new GIScience Research Center, has collaborated with faculty at other universities, bringing millions of dollars of federal funding to the department! And Bryon Augustin was honored once again—this time with Texas State University's Presidential Award for Excellence in Service! Byron is one of only two Texas State faculty to have been honored with two Presidential Awards for Excellence in the University's history!

What better way to express your Texas State Geography pride than bringing your spirit to the 10th Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration! Led by Angelika Wahl and Allison Glass, the Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration Committee has planned a simply spectacular day filled with presentation of awards and scholarships, workshops, exhibits, tours, and the big BBQ blast at Aquarena Springs—all punctuated with high-end door prizes! The Texas State Salsa Band will once again rock us into the night! Mark your calendars for April 24 for this year's Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration!!

Your department now has 507 undergraduate, 164 master's, and 39 Ph.D. students and continues to be the largest Geography Department in North America! Our students continue to participate enthusiastically in Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU), the Student Planning Organization (SPO), the National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP), Support for Women in Geography (SWIG), and the Graduate Student Forum. Our GIScience students established the Student Organization for Geographic Information Science (SoGIS). Some of our students continue to participate in the interdisciplinary American Water Resources Association. Several of our students were honored once again during the past year with awards at national and state conferences or were congratulated for their publications!

Rich Dixon is the new director of the Lovell Center for Environmental Geography and Hazards Research. Alberto Giordano, a cartography/GIS specialist with a Ph.D. from the University of Syracuse, and Bing Xu and Leo Wang, both

remote sensing experts with Ph.D.s from the University of California-Berkeley, joined our growing faculty this fall, bringing the faculty total to 30! Michael Solem left the department to become the Education Affairs Director at the Association of American Geographers but keeps strong ties with us via a large National Science Foundation grant that supports his On-line Center for Global Geography Education.

Angelika Wahl continues to do a simply superb job as our department office manager! Elena Morgan, our new Undergraduate Staff Advisor, and Barbara Hilliard, our new main office administrative assistant, joined Allison Glass, our Graduate Staff Advisor, and they are all doing excellent jobs to make certain our ship stays on a steady course! Without wizard Dan "the computer man" Hemenway and his fantastic partner, Dave Jordan, a.k.a the "Clark Kent of Computing," we would be dead in the water with more than 475 department computers to be maintained! Pat Hell-Jones continues to manage in a wonderful way all of our grants and contracts that help us bring in funds to keep on the cutting edge of research and technology and to support our graduate assistants. And Kenny Jones joined Texas State Geography this fall as our new, energetic Internship Coordinator who is making this program even better!

You can see that I am very proud to be the chair of your department! You, too, should be very proud to be a part of your internationally recognized Texas State Department of Geography! Well, I could go excitedly on and on, but more details are in this newsletter (edited by Emariana Taylor), and check out our award-winning Web site at [www.geo.txstate.edu](http://www.geo.txstate.edu). For "up close and personals," be here for your 10th Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration on April 24!







## Geography Minor Improved

*Brock Brown*

*Undergraduate Program Coordinator*

The Department of Geography has long been known for its quality undergraduate programs and the large number of majors the programs attract. Program viability is maintained by continuous program and course review. In order to help ensure that our students receive up-to-date and in-demand knowledge and skills, changes in the field of geography and job market are constantly monitored and reflected in our programs. Over the last year, we have worked to modify and improve the geography minor, and we believe that the greater flexibility will serve to make the minor more attractive to a wider array of geography students in other majors.

Before the changes, the minor required ten hours of nonadvanced course work with the remaining nine to fifteen hours elected by the student. Geography minors had to take at least nine hours of advanced courses in the department. The revised minor requires seven hours of specific nonadvanced course work. Introduction to Physical Geography (GEO 2410) is still required for all geography minors. However, students may choose from Introduction to Cultural Geography (GEO 1309), World Geography (GEO 1310), or Economic Geography (GEO 3303) to meet the human geography requirement. Remaining course work is selected in conjunction with a geography advisor.

The revised minor makes it possible to obtain a GIS certificate within the prescribed work of the geography minor and still meet the nine advanced-hour requirement. The newly configured minor also

offers an array of possible course permutations that complement many majors across campus and allow students to concentrate their work in specialized advanced geography courses that will strengthen their major and be more useful for career goals and/or graduate school objectives. We are developing recommended course groupings that focus on areas of departmental expertise such as environment, planning, resource management, physical geography, and the GISciences. Additionally, we are compiling recommended course lists to enhance majors in areas such as business, anthropology, sociology, biology, computer science and computer information systems, criminal justice, public administration, and others. It is increasingly apparent that a well planned geography minor can help students in other fields to be better prepared and more competitive on the job market among their nongeography minor peers.

**“Revised Minor makes it possible to obtain GIS certificate”**

We greatly appreciate the good public relations work our alumni do for the department with regard to helping recruit majors and minors. Of course, we agree that a geography major is an excellent choice. However, many students who do not want to major in geography would benefit from a focused set of geography courses that can enrich their majors. If you encounter such students, tell them about the new and improved geography minor and send them our way to discuss the strategy that might be right for them. Or, better yet, bring these students with you to the Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration on April 24, 2004. We hope to see you there!

**Visit Undergraduate Advising Services TODAY and talk with Elena Morgan or Mark Carter to learn more! Or, for more information visit us on the Web at <http://www.geo.txstate.edu/programs/undergrad/index.html>.**



## Celebrating Excellence, Envisioning Greatness

*Fred Shelley*

*Graduate Program Coordinator*

This year, we celebrate excellence and we envision greatness.

What do these words mean? As we reflect on our many achievements over past years, we have much excellence—as a graduate program and as a Department in general—to celebrate. Our students and our graduate assistants are truly excellent, as students and as colleagues. Our faculty are outstanding teachers and scholars; our facilities and resources are unparalleled; our Department’s commitment to our students is unwavering. Our alumni and our current students continue to be recognized in many ways on numerous occasions for their academic and professional achievements.

Without a doubt, we are an excellent department. On many occasions, the faculty, staff, students, and alumni of this Department have been recognized for excellence in their professional activities, as documented throughout this issue of the newsletter as well as in past issues. And, as we continue to enhance our reputation for excellence in research and teaching, we will be well on the road to greatness.

But what does greatness mean? The deserved recognition we are receiving for our achievements is only a small part of what it means to be great. Greatness means making a difference. Greatness means

going the extra mile, and it means giving back. In Luke 12:48, it is written that “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded, and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” As Americans, as geographers, and as members of this outstanding Department, we have been given much and we must therefore expect much of ourselves and one another.

Greatness means serving one another, serving our University, our community, our country, and the world. And it means doing so with humility, honesty, caring, and compassion. Persons in all walks of life whom we regard as great—persons such as Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Cesar Chavez—were great not only because of what they achieved, but because they served others in their daily lives, and because their actions in service contributed to making our world a better one in which to live.

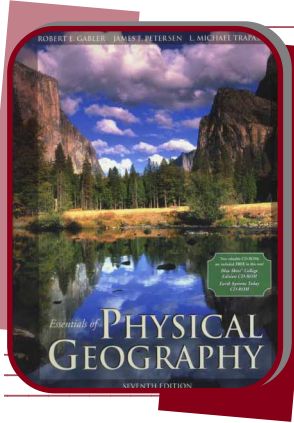
In our Department, we are privileged to be associated with two such great men. Gilbert Grosvenor and Captain James Lovell are great because the integrity with which they have lived and achieved is oriented to service, providing a shining beacon for all of us.

We recently lost another great person. We mourn the loss of SWT’s legendary football coach, Jim Wacker, who passed away on August 26. Coach Wacker held a master’s degree in Geography and was a steadfast friend of our Department. Coach Wacker’s excellence and greatness as a football coach is evidenced by his four national championships, including two at SWT. Even more important, Coach Wacker won and lost football games as he lived his life—with class and integrity.

*Continued on page 13*

# Faculty News

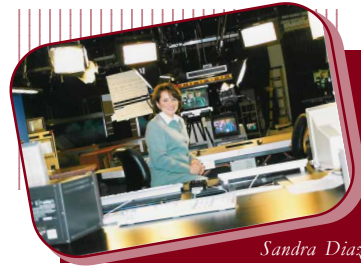
## Petersen Co-authors New Physical Geography Textbook



Jim Petersen, who for nearly 30 years has been teaching subjects related to physical geography, recently published the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of *Essentials of Physical Geography*, co-authored with Robert Gabler and Michael Trapasso. The text, published by Thomson Brooks/Cole, is being used at colleges and universities across the United States and Canada. Written and produced for the student user, the text includes two CD-ROMs

that deal with Earth systems and is supported by other materials accessible on the Internet. The new edition includes many new maps, photographs, and written material that place a stronger emphasis on the scientific and applied aspects of physical geography. A set of illustrated features focuses on the discipline of geography as a physical science, as a spatial science, and as an environmental science. The book is also illustrated with many examples of GIS applications and digital terrain models, which, along with remotely sensed images and GPS applications, stress technologies used by geographers to study the physical environment.

Interviews with a variety of recent graduates from several geography programs show the student readers what some geographers are now doing in their professional careers. One interview features Sandra Villalobos Diaz, who graduated from our department and is now a meteorologist with the Weather Channel. (Sandra won the Outstanding Alumni Award in 2002). Texas environments, often neglected in textbooks that are frequently used nationally as examples, receive attention in



Sandra Diaz

this book. Big Bend National Park and Enchanted Rock are each included, and a river basin and stream gage provide examples from the Hill Country. In addition, a photograph of Texas State students wading in water to measure the discharge of the San Marcos River near the Clear Springs apartments is included—a common experience of many of our graduates who have taken our Field Methods course. With the publication of this textbook, students from around the country and Canada gain some exposure to the geography program at Texas State, and the physical environments that make Texas an interesting place for learning geography.

## Communicating Risk at the 2003 Boulder Hazards Workshop

E. J. Hanford

Denise Blanchard-Boehm represented the Department and the James and Marilyn Lovell Center for Environmental Geography and Hazards Research at the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Hazards Research and Application Workshop in Boulder, Colorado this past July. She was one of more than 340 academics, researchers, and governmental agency representatives from across the nation and the globe who participated in the workshop.

Blanchard-Boehm moderated a plenary session titled, “Communicating Risk: Overcoming the Challenges,” exploring the identification of difficulties in properly communicating risk, what research is needed to correct deficiencies and what opportunities exist to improve public risk communication problems. The panel featured Martha Moore of *USA Today*, John Sorenson of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and Caron Chess of the Society for Risk Analysis. Other plenary sessions addressed current and anticipated trends in risk management and risk communication.

Blanchard-Boehm also presented a poster that highlighted the current research activities of both faculty and doctoral student scholars of the Lovell Center. Concurrent sessions addressed issues including: the challenges of protecting public health, the immediate aftermaths

**“...emphasis on Homeland Security threatens to overshadow progress toward an all hazards approach to disaster management”**

of catastrophic disasters, all-hazard mitigation, drought crises, transportation systems in emergencies, and recent research efforts in such topics as homeland security, hurricane storm surges, and inland flooding. According to Blanchard-Boehm, the ideas discussed at this workshop were very beneficial to our department’s objectives and to society. Blanchard-Boehm observed there is an enormous emphasis on Homeland Security in Washington at the present time that threatens to overshadow the significant progress that we have made over the past 30 years toward an all-hazards approach to hazards and

disaster management. Although Michael Brown, Undersecretary for Emergency Preparedness and Response from the Department of Homeland Security [DHS] reassured participants that this would not be the case, Blanchard-Boehm and others feel otherwise: “Terrorism is a top-priority in DHS and the large budgets allocated for terrorism-mitigation on state and local levels reflect this. I am concerned that much-needed funding for continued work in mitigating the impacts from more frequently occurring disasters will now be diverted toward risk-reduction in terrorism,” remarked Blanchard-Boehm.

On the more positive side, Blanchard-Boehm notes that emerging threats from counter-terrorism have changed the policy and funding environment in Washington with more opportunities for researchers and practitioners than ever before. “It could be that these large expenditures toward antiterrorism mitigation will generate, by default, multiple benefits for research at all types of occurrences, especially where first responders are concerned,” she concluded.

## Faculty News

### Blanco Watershed Project

*Joanna Curran*

In the serene setting of the Texas Hill Country, Joanna Curran and M.S. student, Dennis Fowler, will conduct a hydrologic study of the Blanco River as part of a grant funded jointly by the International Institute of Sustainable Water Resources and the Texas Nature Conservancy. The research project is part of a holistic study on the Blanco watershed that will incorporate work from both a geographical and biological perspective. Biology graduate students Brad Littrel, David Pendergrass, and Mike Cave will perform a study of the aquatic assemblage found at determined sites along the river and its major tributaries. Their study will incorporate fish and macroinvertebrate populations as well as water quality data. The portion of the study to be completed by Curran and Fowler will focus on the hydrology as well as hydrogeologic data compiled to model stresses on the aquatic life in the river.



*Blanco River*

As Hill Country residents are aware, many creeks and rivers often have relatively low flow for the duration of the year. However, high precipitation events can cause destructive flooding. The Blanco River is no different, having a mean annual flow of 135 cubic feet per second (cfs) and floods that can be 700 times the average of 100,000 cfs. Hydrologic instability establishes a systemic stress on life in the watershed. By understanding the hydrologic and hydrogeologic processes that determine baseflow, stormflow, and water quality, the study will aid in conservation efforts to protect aquatic life.

Hydrologic and hydrogeologic data collected from the ten sites will include: flow rate, depth, and velocity measurements. Curran and Fowler will collect sediment for size analysis both on the bed and behind dams, and then analyze changes in channel morphology with the insight gained from the new data. Using the Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) watershed model, apportioning and prioritizing key threats to the Blanco River will be possible. The SWAT watershed model is a physically-based watershed scale model developed to predict the impact of land management practices on water, sediment, and chemical yields in large complex watersheds with varying soils, land use, and management conditions over long periods of time. SWAT employs GIS layers for soils, land use, and other geographic information. In the present application of the watershed model, integrated modeling is critical to conduct viability assessment of the Blanco River aquatic assemblage—perhaps through a critical reach concept using an instream flow or similar methodology.

The study is a collaborative effort, not only between departments here at Texas State, but also between the university and The Nature Conservancy of Texas. The Nature Conservancy will perform the third year of the study and use the information gained by the foregoing research to enact a conservation strategy for the watershed area, also known as conservation area planning. Everyone involved with the effort is enthusiastic to study the basin and assist the rapidly growing region to protect its natural resources.

*continued from page 1*

### Serious Geography with a Silly Spin

While completing his dissertation research at Arizona State University (ASU), Fonstad longed to answer this seemingly absurd geographic question. He collaborated with then ASU doctoral student Brandon Vogt to develop a method to test this question. Fonstad possesses an understanding of representing geographic objects across space, while Brandon's background was weathering geomorphology. The two combined their perspectives of macro and micro-level geomorphology, respectively, to answer this research question. Upon developing a method, the two traveled to their neighborhood International House of Pancakes in Tempe, AZ to obtain their specimens. They used a confocal laser microscope to scan a pancake to detect irregularity in the pancake's surface. One problem with this method of measurement was that the microscope only scanned a two-centimeter area of the pancake at a time, a process that would require the seaming of multiple microscopic measurements. At Texas State, Mark and graduate student William Pugatch used photogrammetry to better capture the idiosyncrasies of the pancake. The photogrammetric and microscopic data were both used in calculating the flatness of the pancake.

The geographic problem was comparing these two objects of very different spatial scales. Fonstad and his colleagues began with a technique called a fractal dimension that can be used to measure objects at different scales. Fractal dimension did not appear to be the

appropriate technique for such an analysis; it emphasized the surface texture of the pancake rather than flatness. Fonstad, Pugatch, and Vogt turned to a flattening

ratio, a technique used to calculate flatness of a surface using the two main axis, length and height. The flattening ratio of a surface ranges from 0-1, where 0 is perfectly round and 1 is perfectly flat. In the case of the pancake, they measured two lengths of the ellipsoid. The flatness of the pancake turned out to be 0.957. To measure the flatness of Kansas, they seamed together 60m digital elevation models; interestingly this process was the most time-intensive aspect of this study. They also measured the flatness of Kansas using the flattening ratio; length was measured across the state from east to west. The result was 0.997, a ratio even flatter than that of the pancake.



*Kansas Landscape*

**Don't forget to register  
for AR&SC 2004 **TODAY!****





## Faculty News



Joy Adams

Joy Adams is a Visiting Lecturer for the department of geography at Texas State University – San Marcos this academic year. Joy is a 1999 graduate of Texas State's Master of Applied Geography program. After completing her degree, she returned to The University of Texas at Austin to pursue a Ph.D. under the direction of Steven Hoelscher and the late Terry Jordan. Born in Wisconsin, but having lived in Texas for over 20 years, Joy considers herself to be a naturalized citizen of the Republic of Texas. Her research has focused on the state's ever-expanding ethnic diversity and how

Texas communities are marketing ethnic heritage as a tourist attraction. Her current dissertation project explores how communities in Central Texas that have traditionally marketed their German heritage to potential tourists are addressing the changing ethnic profile of the state and region in tourism development and promotion. Joy's other specializations include the regions of North America and Europe, cultural landscape studies, and urban geography. Her main interests outside academia are travel and karaoke.

# We Welcome Our New Faculty Members!

Alberto Giordano is an Assistant Professor in the department of geography at Texas State University – San Marcos. He received his B.A. from the University of Padua (Italy) and his M.A. from the University of California Santa Barbara. Dr. Giordano's Ph.D. is from Syracuse University. His research and teaching interests are in cartography and GIS, and in particular multimedia cartography and GIS, scientific visualization, and the representation of historical information in GIS. In the past, he has worked on geographic data quality issues and on the development of standards for the exchange of geographic information. Giordano comes to Texas after four years at the University of Massachusetts in Boston.



Alberto Giordano

Le Wang is an Assistant Professor in the department of geography at Texas State University – San Marcos. He obtained his bachelor degree in the department of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing at Wuhan Technical University of Surveying and Mapping in 1996. He got his master's degree in the department of Geography at Peking University in 1999 and received his Ph.D. degree from the department of Environment Science, Policy and Management at U.C. Berkeley in December 2003.



Leo Wang

Dr. Wang's research focuses on developing new methods to automatically extract detailed forest parameters from high-resolution remote sensing image. He is also interested in investigating long-term mangrove forest dynamics with remotely sensed imagery and GIS techniques. He has authored several papers in remote sensing journals, including the *Journal of Photogrammetric Engineering* and

*Remote Sensing*, *Remote Sensing of Environment* and *International Journal of Remote Sensing*. He has made four professional presentations at AAG annual meetings, UCGIS summer assemblies, and GIScience conferences. He has received several awards including USGS scholar, CPGIS best paper, UCGIS best poster, and AAG remote sensing specialty group student competition winner. Dr. Wang served as the secretary general for CPGIS from 1999 to 2002. He is an active member of ASPRS, CPGIS and AAG. He is now a scholar with the Texas Center for Geographic Information Science (TxGIS).

Bing Xu is an Assistant Professor of remote sensing and GIS in the department of geography at Texas State University – San Marcos. She received her B.E. (1993) from Beijing Polytechnic University and her M.S. (2001) and Ph.D. (2003) from the University of California at Berkeley. She studied industrial engineering at Lund University from 1995-1997.

Her research interests include land-cover/land-use mapping and change detection, hyperspectral and high spatial resolution image analysis, photo-ecometrics, and spatiotemporal modeling of endemic diseases. She is an author/coauthor of 3 book chapters on remote sensing and 9 journal articles. She is a winner of several awards including the 2003 William A. Fischer Memorial Award from the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing and First Place in Student Honors Paper Competition organized by Remote Sensing Specialty Group in the 2003 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers. She has been a reviewer for several journals.



Bing Xu



## Staff News

### The Department is Pleased to Welcome New Staff Members!



#### Elena Morgan Undergraduate Staff Advisor

Elena Morgan has called San Marcos "home" since August 1998. Elena met her husband, Brent, as a SWT student. Today, Brent and Elena share their home with their

miniature schnauzer, McKenzie. In 2000, Elena went to work for the Financial Aid office before transferring to the SWT Vice President for Academic Affairs office. Elena is now Texas State Geography's new Undergraduate Staff Advisor. Elena enjoys working with students and is jumping into her new position with both feet.

On the weekends, Elena teaches young ballerinas (ages 3 through 7) for The Pointe Dance Studio. Her other hobbies include sewing, painting (objects, not pictures), and someday, gardening.



#### Kenny Jones Internship Coordinator

Kenny was born and raised in Texas. He served in the U.S. Air Force and is a veteran of the Vietnam conflict. He and his wife, Patricia Hell-Jones, live in the country near New Braunfels, Texas. He has a daughter, Melanie, a son, Robert and a step-son, Casey, none of whom live with him, "Thank God." Kenny is an avid fisherman and hunter and attempts to play the guitar (but only when no one is looking or listening).

Prior to coming to Texas State, Kenny was employed in the oil and natural gas industry in West Texas and New Mexico. Kenny has been with the department since the beginning of the fall semester, as our new Internship Coordinator.



#### Barbara Hilliard Administrative Assistant II

Barbara is a native of Lufkin and holds a B.A. in General Business from Stephen F. Austin State University. She and her husband,

Kenneth, have recently moved to San Marcos from Nacogdoches where they have a farm. Their farm is home to three horses, two of which they recently adopted from a horse rescue program. Her step-son, Kerry lives in Douglas, Texas; daughter Bridget is a radiology student at Angelina College in Lufkin; and a step-daughter, Brandi lives in Melrose.

Barbara's responsibilities in the Department include managing the department's main office, purchasing, coordinating travel, and preparing the *GeoNews*. She is a voracious reader and enjoys horseback riding, rodeo, and country music.

*continued from page 1*

#### Angelika Wahl Honored

Angelika is the best Administrative Assistant III on campus. She essentially manages in a truly outstanding way the office activities of Texas State's most complex and active academic department.

Let me share with you some of Angelika's accomplishments that won her the prestigious University Employee of the Month Award:

In September 2003, Angelika not only had to complete all of the budget and personnel matters, like RBCs and faculty hires, in a timely manner, but she also had to train a new Administrative Assistant II in the Department's main office. Further, she worked feverishly to help principal investigators and others with critical issues

about large grants and contracts. On top of all of this, she led in the organization and implementation of two very successful September 11 events: a tribute presentation in the Alkek Teaching Theater and a candlelight remembrance in the Quad.

Angelika, moreover, is the leader in organizing our highly successful Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration events. The planning for this most important Department event begins in September, and this year we expect about 1,000 people to attend the 10th annual event. Angelika was likewise focused on this huge undertaking this September!

Angelika Wahl is an amazing office manager who juggles numerous tasks, both large and small, simultaneously, on a daily basis. Angelika does all of this

important work in a highly stressful environment while always having a big, cheerful smile. She, indeed, is a warm, caring person who is constantly helping others as if it were second nature to her.

Angelika Wahl is certainly a jewel in our Texas State Geography's crown!! And we love her dearly for all the remarkable things she does for us and for being a kindhearted, sensitive person!! If you, as a student or an alumnus, feel the same way as we do about Angelika, let me encourage you to write a letter of support to me for her nomination as Texas State Employee of the Year so I can pass it on to the selection committee and President Denise Trauth.

**Texas State Geography**  
"Sharing the Spirit of Geography"



# 10<sup>th</sup> Annual AR&SC, April 24<sup>th</sup> 2004

## 10th Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration:

### What's in Store as We Celebrate Ten Years

*Angelika Wahl & Allison Glass*

“ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL!?” – ok, so we’ll pretend to understand the game, between the commercials!! We can, however, relate to the Superbowl frenzy overall.

This year’s Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration (AR&SC) is *our* “Superbowl.” TEN YEARS! Can you believe it? As we all know, we wouldn’t be where we are today if it was not for our Superbowl MVP: Lawrence Estaville. Words cannot describe the admiration we at Texas State Geography hold for Estaville. His leadership, guidance and support have been second to none. We invite all current and former students, faculty, staff, and friends of the department to help us celebrate ten years of excellence on Saturday, April 24, 2004. Things are movin’, shakin’ and a changin’ this year!



MVP Estaville

The AR&SC will begin at 10 a.m. at the Alkek Teaching Theater with some AWESOME door prizes and other exciting entertainment! For those who arrive in time to attend Presentation I and Presentation II, door prizes will be awarded at 10:00 a.m. and again at 1:00 p.m. Now that the tradition has been set, be sure not to miss out on GeoJeopardy, hosted once again by the wonderful John Schutz. Come test your knowledge and skills in geography and win fabulous geography prizes. Following the Scholarship presentation, Lawrence Estaville, Department Chair, will give his annual state of the department presentation. There will be a wonderful slide show accompanying Estaville’s presentation – you won’t want to miss it!

Byron Augustin strikes again!! We have yet ANOTHER new scholarship to award at this year’s event! Mark Taetz has graciously agreed to sponsor the “Taetz Family Geography Scholarship,” which will award \$500 each year to an undergraduate geography major. Mark graduated from the department in 1984 with a B.S. in Geography and Computer Science. We truly appreciate the generosity of the Taetz family!

## Children’s Activities Available



Due to the overwhelming response, children’s activities will be available throughout the day! For more information about this year’s children’s activities, you may visit <http://www.geo.txstate.edu/Reunion/Schedule> and click on the hot links. Bring your entire family this year as we celebrate ten years of greatness!!

## Look for things to be a little different this year

Immediately following lunch, door prizes will be given for those who arrive in time for Presentation II. There will be surprise entertainment immediately following the door prizes. We will then present our department awards (check out the Web site for detailed information).

**...You’ll have to be there to see what we mean!**

## Casino Night Returns!



Due to popular demand, we have incorporated Casino Night on Friday, April 23, to raise money for our Geography Scholarships! Casino night will include black jack and craps tables along with some wonderful prizes. Be sure to visit us on the Web at <http://www.geo.txstate.edu/Reunion> for updates also please see the registration form in the back of this newsletter.

items before AR&SC on the web. If you are interested in donating to the silent auction please contact [angelika@txstate.edu](mailto:angelika@txstate.edu)

The fun doesn’t stop there, in the afternoon we will relocate for the Bar-b-que! This year the annual barbecue festivities will return to the Pecan Grove portion of Aquarena Springs! Entertainment will kick off the evening, and the Texas State Salsa Band will continue the tradition and help us dance the night away! Don’t forget about the glass-bottom boats at Aquarena Springs (tickets available at the registration table at Aquarena).

Visit us on the Web at <http://www.geo.txstate.edu/reunion>

See Next Page For Registration Info

# 10<sup>th</sup> Annual AR&SC, April 24<sup>th</sup> 2004

## Have Questions?

Please feel free to contact the AR&SC Co-Chairs.



**Allison Glass**  
(am13@txstate.edu)



**Angelika Wahl**  
(angelika@txstate.edu)

**AR & SC Committee 2004**  
Alexis Buckley  
Brian Cooper  
Sarah Cummings  
Emariana Taylor

## Admission Information

**Prior to March 13, 2004:**

**\$5 Students**  
**\$10 Non-students**

**From March 14 to April 20, 2004:**

**\$10 Students**  
**\$15 Non-students**

**After April 20, 2004 and at the door:**

**\$20 Everyone**

**(children 12 and under are free)**

**REGISTER NOW!**  
See form in the back of this newsletter

*Don't forget about the Silent Auction. Check out this year's items on the Web!*

**TWO BIG PRIZE DRAWINGS will take place for folks registering prior to March 13, 2004.**  
Prizes include items such as a CD changer or DVD player!

## Food Drive to Support Local Food Bank

One of every five people in Texas lives in poverty and has trouble meeting basic food needs. In support of our local community, Texas State Geography will again purchase canned food with 10% of the registration and donate it the San Marcos Food Bank. To help out you don't have to do a thing, just register for this year's event. You may mail the AR&SC registration form attached to this newsletter. Or alternatively, you may download and print the registration form directly from <http://www.geo.txstate.edu/Reunion/forms/2004%20Registration%20Form.pdf>. If you would like learn more about our local food bank or make a donation you may visit San Marcos Food Bank on the Web at <http://www.balconesbankcommunity.com/foodbank/>.



*Guess Who?*

## New This Year ... Can You Name This Prof ?

This year's event will feature a "Can you name this Prof?" Contest. See if you can identify your favorite "Prof" from their baby picture. The first person to correctly identify a particular image will win a prize!



*Mystery Prof*

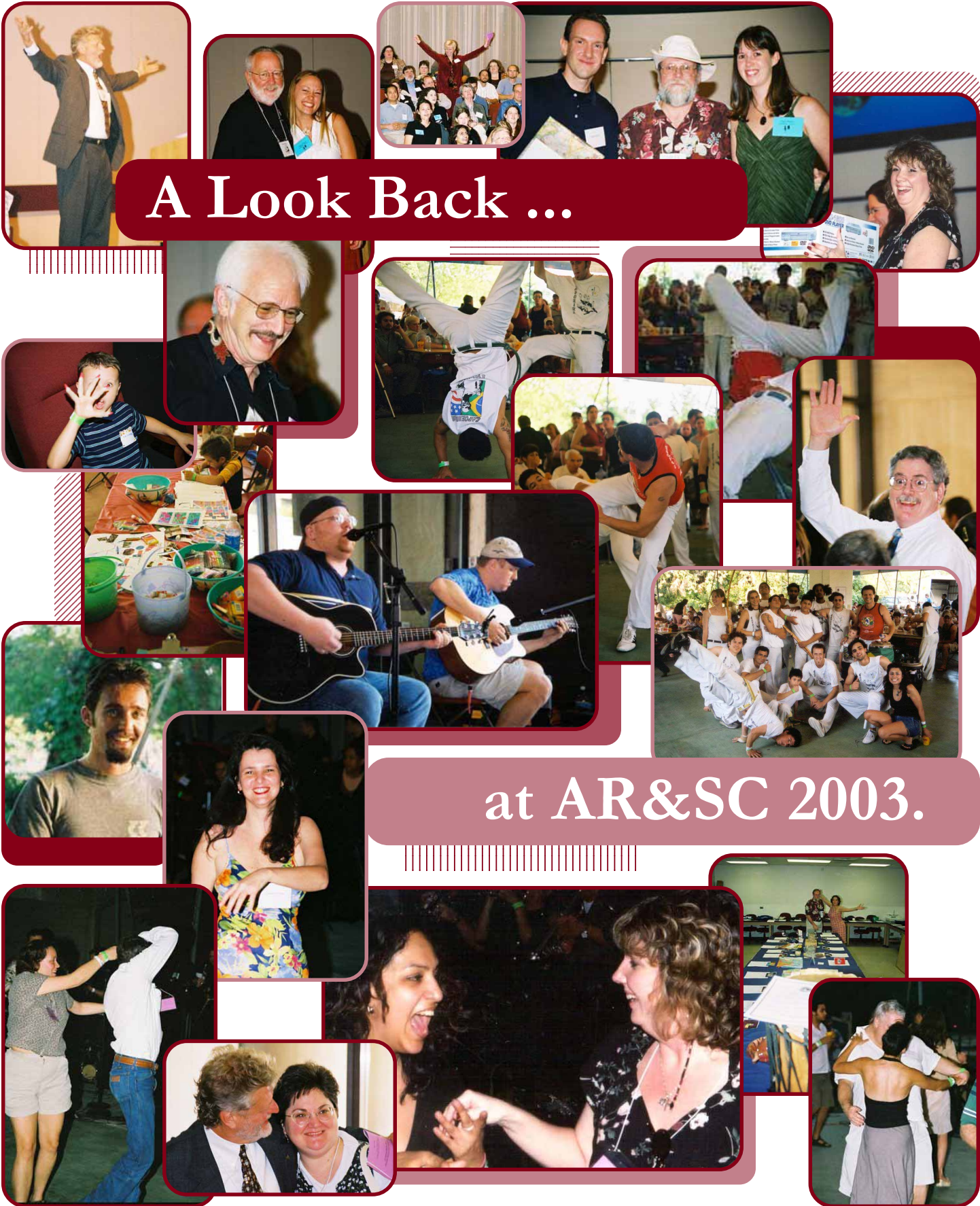
**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU**

**APRIL 24, 2004**



# 10<sup>th</sup> Annual AR&SC, April 24<sup>th</sup> 2004

## A Look Back ...



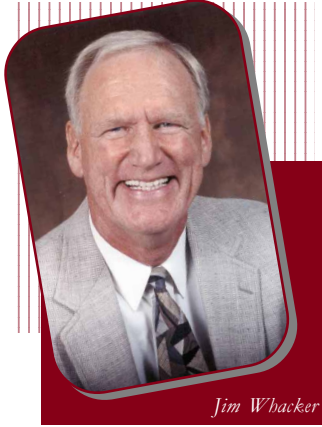
## at AR&SC 2003.



# Department News

## The Jim Wacker Undergraduate Geography Scholarship

*Fred Shelley*



*Jim Wacker*

The Department mourns the passing of Jim Wacker (1937-2003), who passed away in August after a long battle with cancer. As everyone associated with the University knows, Coach Wacker led SWT's football teams to NCAA Division II national championships in 1981 and 1982. He later coached at Texas Christian University and the University of Minnesota before returning to Texas State as Athletic Director.

Every Bobcat football fan knows about Coach Wacker's achievements on the gridiron. And, everyone who knew Coach Wacker knew of his commitment to winning with class and integrity—lessons that applied not only on the football field, but in all aspects of life. What many may not know is the depth of Jim Wacker's love and

support for the discipline of geography, and for our Department. He held a master's degree in geography and a doctorate in education. Upon his return, the Department named him an honorary member of our Faculty, and he was a steadfast supporter of the Department's programs and initiatives. To the very end of his life, Coach Wacker cherished his association with Texas State Geography, as we did with him.

In memory of Coach Wacker, the Department has established the Jim Wacker Undergraduate Geography Scholarship. The scholarship will be presented each spring to an undergraduate geography major with a minimum grade-point average of 2.75. The first Jim Wacker Undergraduate Geography Scholarship will be presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration on April 24, 2004. Please join us for the presentation of this scholarship, as well as the many other scholarships and awards that will be presented to our outstanding students.

## Texas State Geography Adds New Scholarship



### Taetz Family Geography Scholarship

The Taetz Family Geography Scholarship honors the family of Mark Taetz, who graduated from Southwest Texas State University in 1984 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geography and Computer Science. Mark's family, including his grandparents Oliver and Corinne (pictured

above), his father Philip, his mother Marilyn, and his brother Michael have loved, inspired, challenged, and supported Mark, while also sharing an appreciation for the significance of place.

Growing up, his father's NOAA Corps career allowed Mark to experience many different places – from Virginia to Hawaii, from Seattle to Boulder. These early travel experiences, along with attending several universities before arriving in San Marcos, contributed to an increasing interest in geography. Mark's time in San Marcos was special and influential, and provided many lasting memories of the people, the campus, and the beautiful geography of the Texas Hill Country.

This scholarship is to support and encourage students to pursue a quality geography education and to discover that geography really does matter.

## Wetzel Family National Geographic Magazine Collection

*Nancy Middlebrook & E. S. Taylor*



*Otto & Jane Wetzel*

On June 13, 2003, Texas State Geography celebrated Otto and Jane Wetzel for their generous donation of a comprehensive collection of the *National Geographic* magazines, dating to its first issue in 1888, classic map inserts, and beautiful oak barrister cabinets to hold their marvelous collection, all valued at \$25,000. Kramer Wetzel accompanied his parents, along with Diana Engels, Mr. Wetzel's administrative assistant, to the reception that took place in the Gilbert M. Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education. Dr. Ann Marie Ellis, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Dr. Lawrence Estaville, Geography Department Chair, and Dr. Richard Boehm, Director of the Grosvenor Center, spoke in turn about the importance of the magazine in promoting geography and the serendipity of the collection coming to the very center that Mr. Gilbert Grosvenor, Chairman of the Board of the National Geographic Society, gave his name. Otto Wetzel shared a brief history of the collection and anecdotes about his mother, the driving force behind the collection. After the reception, the Wetzels toured the department with Estaville and attended a dinner in their honor at Palmer's Restaurant. The Wetzel Family collection of National Geographic magazines is an important primary source for geography faculty and students.

Check out our award-winning Web site today!  
[www.geo.txstate.edu](http://www.geo.txstate.edu)

# Department News

## Texas State University-San Marcos

*Lawrence Estaville*

Old Main now overlooks a campus called Texas State University-San Marcos!! And Texas State Geography is proud and happy about our university's new name. Here are some of the reasons for our delight.

As geographers, of course, we took to task the past name of our university because it is not in southwest Texas, which was very irritating to us when our colleagues and others across the nation joked about this misnomer. Let me focus, however, on the essence of our solid support for changing our university's name to Texas State University.

As you know, the Department of Geography was successful in developing and implementing our university's first two doctoral programs—one in Environmental Geography and the other in Geographic Education. And we now have a third Ph.D. program in the exploding high-technology field of Geographic Information Science. To support these three Ph.D. programs, we must attract nationally recognized faculty, the highest quality students, as well as large grant and contract funding to provide vital support for the programs. We have faced difficult challenges in accomplishing these goals to create an internationally recognized center of excellence in geography. One of the factors that has significantly hindered our efforts was the name of our university, Southwest Texas State University, a title that does not evoke thoughts of national and international prominence, but instead harks back to days of a small, regional college that primarily served a student body from rural Texas.

Without a name like Texas State University, we would have continued to have a powerful perceptual obstacle to overcome every time we advertise for a nationally recognized scholar-teacher who could just as easily go to Penn State, Ohio State, or Michigan State. Similarly, nationally competitive students and students from around the globe think more than twice before they consider a university with a regional name. As important, when our faculty members apply for grants from, for instance, the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Health, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or NASA, it is very difficult competing with proposals from universities that have national names, recognition, and perception. In other words, the name of a university is exceptionally critical if it is to be considered as a national player. We in our Geography Department are internationally known for our superb programs, faculty, students, and for our three research centers—the Gilbert M. Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education, the James and Marilyn Lovell Center for Environmental Geography and Hazards Research, and the Texas Center for Geographic Information Science. We are now a part of a university that has the same medallion of excellence—the Texas State University.

*Continued on page 30*

## Record Year for Texas State Geography Grants and Contracts

*Pat Hell-Jones*

The fiscal year 2002-2003 was a banner year for the Department of Geography Grants and Contracts Office. In a first for the department, faculty submitted a total of \$13,617,726 in grants, contracts, and development proposals, and funding sources awarded \$6,191,681 (45% of the total) to Texas State Geography!!!

It is important to emphasize what these grants, contracts, and gifts mean for our Geography programs and students. Here are a handful of highlights: During 2002-03, grants and contracts supported 24 graduate students and 16 undergraduate students for nearly \$300,000; purchased more than \$24,000 in computers, software programs, and new geomorphology laboratory and field equipment; and funded almost \$10,000 in various other supplies and materials.

*Continued on page 13*

## Evans Beautification Project

*Steve Hart & Joan Pasquali*

Two years of cooperation came to fruition this past summer and fall with the completion of the new xeriscape garden outside the Evans Liberal Arts Building (ELA). Xeriscaping refers to landscaping that uses native, slow-growing, drought-tolerant plants. While many of the plants are indigenous, xeriscaping is not just about using native plants. In fact, most of the materials and products utilized in the garden are natural, from the soil to the soaker hose. The use of these natural materials represents a philosophy consistent with the conservation ethic of reuse, reduce, and recycle.



The Evans garden is a showcase of some of the native plants of Central Texas including: ferns, grasses, cacti, short-lived perennials, shrubs, and trees. In addition to the scenic views and tranquil pathway, the garden offers nourishment to butterflies, hummingbirds, and other wildlife. Since the first specimens were installed last fall, the garden has experienced remarkable growth, transforming the plants into beautiful flowers and distinctive foliage.

Although the installation portion of the project is complete, a garden is always a work in progress. It is inevitable that some plants will die and need to be replaced. Other plants, for various reasons, may need to be relocated, and it is always fun to find different varieties to add to the garden. Aldo Leopold wrote: "The individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts." Volunteers helped make this garden a community. Each contributor was indeed an interdependent part. The colors, patterns, and pageantry reflect the teamwork of

*Continued on page 15*

# Department News

*continued from page 1*

## Brock Brown Steps Down

one-on-one curricular advice to many of our more than 500 undergraduate majors—an incredibly important contribution to our department and its students!!

During Dr. Brown's leadership as Undergraduate Program Coordinator, the department undertook many critical initiatives to ensure that our undergraduate programs provide the highest quality pedagogy possible and that they reflect the cutting-edge needs of society. Let me highlight a handful of Brock's many programmatic accomplishments. He led in the complete review of our five traditional undergraduate majors and instituted numerous important changes that made our programs even stronger and more attractive to students from Texas and beyond. In the past five years, Brock led in establishing a new B.S. in Water Studies, two certificate programs—one in GIS, and one in Water Resources Policy—and an undergraduate pre-major. He ensured that our Geography minor is as solid as a rock, and he oversaw the creation of learning outcomes for each of our undergraduate majors and for each course! Brock led the department in having our course, Introduction to Physical Geography, become an extra science course option for B.A. majors across the campus—a historic achievement indeed!

Over the years, he streamlined and strengthened our important group advising program and became a co-chair of the department's Mentoring Committee that provides vital insight and guidance about teaching strategies and skills to our graduate teaching assistants. He played a significant role in establishing a four-year schedule of undergraduate courses that is located on our Web site that allows students to better structure their course plans over the years. And he led in providing a huge document, including many appendices with tabular and graphical data, that an external team of reviewers renowned as geography educators from across the nation praised as the best undergraduate program self-study they had ever seen, once again underscoring Texas State Geography's primacy in undergraduate teaching!!

Brock has been an untiring, visionary leader of our undergraduate programs, an extraordinary teaching exemplar, a wonderful faculty colleague, and, perhaps most important, a sincere, caring friend to our students!! We will always remember Dr. Brown's many unselfish contributions as our Undergraduate Program Coordinator! Brock Rocks!!!

## 9-11 Remembrance



*Candlelight Remembrance*

Texas State Geography sponsored a 9-11 Candlelight Remembrance, featuring keynote speaker, David Simchik.

David T. Simchik is a licensed funeral director at Goetz Funeral Home in Seguin, TX, as well as a Mortuary Officer for the Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT), Department of Homeland Security. As part of the DMORT team, Mr. Simchik played an active role in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. In his keynote address, Simchik presented his first-hand account of the day-to-day operations at Ground Zero.

The event provided an opportunity for faculty, staff, students, and friends to come together to share the light and spirit of peace and hope.

*continued from page 3*

## Grad Coordinator

Wacker won and lost football games as he lived his life—with class and integrity.

Football was much more than a game for Coach Wacker. Football was the stage upon which he was able to lead his life of faith, integrity, and service to others in ways great and small. Let us follow Coach Wacker's example. As he used football to serve, let us use our knowledge and expertise in our beloved discipline of geography to serve one another, our community, and Planet Earth. In that way, we too can celebrate excellence and envision greatness.

*continued from page 12*

## Grants and Contracts

Texas State Geography obtained funding from a wide variety of university, state, national, and international sources: The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), which initially awarded Robert Larsen \$1,350,000 in contracts. Larsen later received an additional \$1,590,000 three-year contract from TCEQ, bringing his total to \$2,940,000. Pam Showalter, in collaboration with Sue Johnson, a professor in the Sociology Department, was awarded a \$175,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Joanna Curran received \$25,400 from the Texas Nature Conservancy and the International Institute for Sustainable Water Resources. Rich Earl received TCEQ funding of \$20,000 for his Teaching Environmental Science program. Mark Horner received a \$1,500 travel grant as a participant in the Texas Department of Transportation's Research Technical Assistance Panels in Support of the TxDOT Research Program. David Butler has a \$15,000 grant from the National Park Service for a project to correct and complete Surficial Mapping of Glacier National Park. The National Geographic Society Educational Foundation awarded \$500,000 to Richard Boehm for his Grosvenor Scholars Program, and the Texas Legislature awarded Dr. Boehm \$50,000 for Texas Alliance for Geographic Education projects. The Autonomous Universidad of Tamaulipas through COTACYT awarded David Stea \$29,000 for a project in Tamaulipas, Mexico. And Lawrence Estaville accepted a \$25,000 gift from the Otto Wetzel family of three oak barrister's cabinets filled with a complete collection of the *National Geographic Magazine*, dating from 1888.

Texas State entities funded \$105,000 in research projects for the department. Rich Earl and Rich Dixon were awarded \$10,000 to conduct the symposium "Beyond the 100 Year Flood: Lessons to be Learned."

*Continued on page 15*

**Texas State  
GEOGRAPHY**

*"Sharing the Spirit of Geography"*



# Department News

## Lithuanian Student's Perspective on Central Texas

*Steve Hart*

During the past summer, Texas State Geography hosted Lithuanian graduate student Jolita Piliutyte, while she visited and attended classes in our department. Jolita agreed to share her geographical experiences and observations in Central Texas compared to her homeland with *GeoNews* field reporter Steve Hart.

Since our interview, Jolita, 28 years old, has returned to Lithuania and earned a Ph.D. in public administration. She plans to use her education in public administration in government work. She speaks five languages and expects to utilize all during her career.

A brief overview of the physical geography of Lithuania (56 N, 24 E) may help readers to better understand Jolita's point of view. Lithuania (one of the three Baltic states) is slightly larger than West Virginia and has 99 kilometers of coastline and the highest elevation peaks at 330 meters. The countryside is a rolling terrain with many lakes, rivers, and streams. Its natural attributes and stable government make Lithuania a popular tourist destination for Europeans (Germans and Poles in particular) and Russians.

Lithuania declared independence from the former Soviet Union on March 11, 1990 and was recognized as such in September 1991 (Russian soldiers did not leave until 1993). Although Lithuania has suffered invaders for centuries, the people have maintained their ethnic heritage. Today, the population of 3.6 million is largely Lithuanian (ethnically and linguistically) and Roman Catholic.

### Interview

Steve Hart (SH): A theme in geography is "Place" or the uniqueness of location. What did you experience in Central Texas that gives it its sense of place?

Jolita Piliutyte (JP): To me everything in Central Texas was unique. I came from another continent, from another geographical zone, from a different culture with a different history. The size of my country and number of people are far smaller. For me, everything was different, not better or worse, just different.

I saw a different layout of urban areas, different styles, forms, and materials of buildings. We do not have such tall

buildings in my country. Your streets and roads have more lanes. And you have more roads. I got an impression that you have unlimited resources and unlimited space, which allows you to realize all kinds of ideas on it. I have not seen anywhere in Europe such widely spread cities as here in Texas. I have never seen so many automobiles! All day and night your highways are full of them. It's not the case in Europe. Your towns and cities are well planned; though I missed the narrow streets, with old houses, small shops, cafes, and offices on the ground floor as we have them in most cities and towns of my country. I felt completely lonely and strange walking in the middle of the day on the main streets of Austin. There were no other people walking, only cars passing by.

SH: You took Professor Carter's Regional and Urban Planning course this summer. Were there any topics discussed in class that could be beneficial to planners or local governments in Lithuania?

JP: The class was fantastic! I was very impressed by Professor Carter. I learned a lot in this class. I think that Lithuanian (even European) planning practices are different from yours, and at the same time very similar. Because our areas (especially urban) have a historic heritage—the same land has been planned and used by different people in different ways and in different times—all these conditions have to be respected by today's planners. We don't have so many resources to implement most of the ideas of our planners as your country has. Without any doubt, our planners have a lot to learn from yours.

SH: On the flip side, do you believe Lithuania's cultural values could add anything to improve planning and life for central Texans?

JP: I would suggest your federal, state, and local policy makers try to decrease the role of the automobile in the society, thereby creating conditions for development of better public transportation systems.

There should not be so many neglected houses in older (even city center) residential areas. You should promote revitalization of your inner cities (for example, San Marcos).

Your planners could give more attention to replanning, renewing, of old areas instead of focusing on empty land.

I would like to see a greater mix of residential and commercial zones. In the center of our cities there are all types of shops, (cafes, restaurants, bank offices, hairdressers, pharmacies, etc.) at street level. The upper levels are apartments and offices. It is very popular to live in such houses. I would like to see your main shopping places in the city centers; not somewhere far away from the city where one can get there only by his or her car. Our city centers are alive day and night.

I didn't like those big billboards near highways. They are everywhere. They distract driver's attention from the road. They cover the landscape. They make your highways and suburbs look like slot machines.

Our planners have to follow stricter planning standards. For a certain number of inhabitants of an area, certain public amenities (i.e. schools, grocery shop, medical care center, public transportation, etc.) have to be provided. I saw several new towns in Texas that have no schools, kindergartens or grocery stores. I think such objects of public use must be included in the plans.

SH: You participated in San Marcos' governmental process. Could you reflect on what you observed of our local government? Were there any strengths or weaknesses that you could comment about?

JP: I was impressed most by the activism of your community members. There were over 50 persons in the council meeting and most of them expressed their opinions on the issue that was discussed. This public participation is a great issue in our communities. People are not active in the local decision making process. For 50 years of Soviet regime, we could not express our opinions openly. All participation processes have been destroyed. Now we are slowly learning how to be active citizens, take part in decision-making, and be more active in community life.

The fact that the council was holding its meeting in front of all interested citizens made a strong impression on me. All

*Continued on page 15*

# Department News



*continued from page 13*

## Grants & Contracts

The International Institute for Sustainable Water Resources awarded Ben Zhan \$25,000 for his work on Water Quality Modeling in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and Dr. Estaville also received a \$10,000 grant from the Water Institute to support the production of the "Texas Water Atlas." The Freeman Ranch provided funding to Brock Brown for a Texas Native Plant Resource Center and to Dr. Earl for a Spatial Variation of Precipitation and Streamflow study.

Research Enhancement Program grants totaling \$40,000 were awarded to Yongmei Lu for GIS based Traffic Analysis, Sharolyn Anderson and Michael Solem for the Effectiveness of Teaching Geographic Education Information Systems at a Distance, Mark Horner for Nonwork Travel and Transport, and Joanna Curran for Sediment Transport through the Guadalupe River.

To put it in a nutshell, the department has been extremely fortunate to have so many exceptional individuals willing to put hard work into researching, writing, and obtaining these grants, contracts, and gifts. Without their efforts, there would be a shortage of student support, software and computer equipment, and research materials within the department. These Texas Geography faculty persons are, in fact, "Sharing the Spirit of Geography" in a real "bottom line" kind of way with our students, other faculty members, and staff!!

*continued from page 14*

## Visiting Student

necessary reference material was prepared and available for everybody.

It was the first time I observed everybody honoring the flag of the country just before the beginning of the council meeting. It made us more serious, concentrated, and respectful. We unfortunately don't have such tradition.

SH: Could you compare and contrast classroom standards of students and instructors of our schools?

JP: The protocol of students at Texas State and in my home country differs, in my

country students come to class on time, everyone says hello when entering the classroom, we don't let the door slam when entering and leaving, and instructors start classes with greetings. This was not the case at your school. We have a big problem with cell phones. Cell phone rings interrupt almost every class. It disturbs everybody in class.

SH: I realize you were busy day and night. Did you have time to miss home? What was it that you missed?

JP: I was lucky to meet several wonderful people at Texas State. Thanks to them I saw many great places in San Marcos, Austin, San Antonio, and Nuevo Laredo. I had an opportunity to see how local people work, rest, how they spend their leisure time, and how they live. I am very grateful to my friends and the Texas State Geography San Marcos faculty for many unforgettable moments and experiences. I brought the most positive impressions from Texas! I spent only four weeks away from home. However, as with every person, I too had moments when I was yearning for my family, my house, my friends, my language, my favorite café, and my favorite food (black bread and milk products). It was kind of hard to realize that my family was going to sleep when I was having lunch.

*continued from page 12*

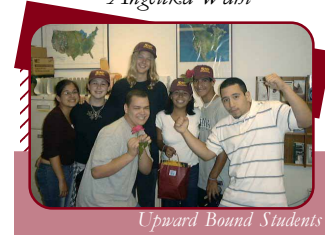
## Evans Beautification

a wide range of organizations and individuals, which made the project possible. Texas State Geography, University Grounds Operations, University Facilities, private businesses, student organizations, and individual collaboration transformed a poorly kept, weedy landscape into a model of a Central Texas ecosystem. A spirit of community gave the garden life, and our university is richer for it. Texas State Geography thanks all contributors and invites everyone to come by and wander through the garden in peace.



## Texas State Geography Hosts Upward Bound Students

*Angelika Wabl*



*Upward Bound Students*

The Department of Geography had the pleasure of hosting Upward Bound Students for the fourth consecutive year this past summer! The students who participated in the summer program were energetic, talented, and motivated individuals, who brought enthusiasm to the department in July 2003. The Upward Bound (UB) Program of Texas State is a federally funded program through the Department of Education. The program services 60 students in a tri-county area (including Hays, Caldwell and Guadalupe) from 9th to 12th grade, targeting low-income and/or first generation students. These students receive services such as workshops in helping them prepare for college, touring various colleges and universities, assistance with completion of their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), admission applications, SAT/ACT registration tests, TASP tests, scholarship applications, etc. The Upward Bound Program has been around for more than 30 years.



Check out our  
award-winning  
Web site today!  
[www.geo.txstate.edu](http://www.geo.txstate.edu)

## Research Centers

### Grosvenor Center Project Incorporates Geography into the Teaching of U.S. History

David J. Rutherford

A three-year Grosvenor Center project culminated last spring with the publication of two monographs that present an innovative curriculum framework for studying the American past. The Grosvenor Center developed this framework for a high school U.S. History course in which each historical period is supplemented and enriched by the inclusion of relevant geography. A grant from the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation funded this joint History and Geography project. It was conducted to address the problem of geography becoming progressively more marginalized in the nation's high schools, because an increasing number of state curriculum frameworks have eliminated geography as a stand-alone subject and already overcrowded curricula have subsumed into history courses. Although almost any history teacher recognizes that "you can't teach good history without geography," in practice, teaching geography within a history course tends to produce little more than simplistic map learning.

Phase 1 of the project involved the commissioning of four research papers, written by noted scholars in both the disciplines of history and geography. These papers developed both the conceptual and theoretical basis needed to bring together the teaching of the two subjects.

Phase 2 of the project involved drawing from the research-based papers to produce a high school U.S. history curriculum framework that offers teachers the opportunity to teach a traditional American history course that is enriched by a consistent injection of the geographical aspects that interacts with important people, events, and ideas. The elements of the framework serve as suggestions for lessons that are rich in content drawn from both disciplines.

The first of the two monographs produced through this project is a comprehensive report on how history and geography can be taught together – and why this strategy is a good thing to do. This monograph, *Time and Space Convergence: A Joint U.S. History-Geography*, contains the full curriculum framework, and is available on-line at the Grosvenor Center Web site: <http://www.geo.swt.edu/grosvenor/text/USHistGeog.pdf>. Published as the second monograph, *The Best of Both Worlds: Blending History and Geography in the K-12 Curriculum*, 'contains only a brief introduction to the project, along with the curriculum framework. This latter monograph has been disseminated widely across the United States in an effort to influence change in the curriculum documents that various states use to drive their school curricula.

Please direct questions or comments about this project to David Rutherford, Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education, at [dr1002@txstate.edu](mailto:dr1002@txstate.edu) or 512-245-1823.

### TAGE's Field and Stream 2003 Brings Students and Teachers to Texas State

Waverly Ray

Forty-four high school students and their teachers came from across the state to Texas State in mid-July to participate in the Texas Alliance for Geographic Education's (TAGE) program "2003 Field & Stream: Using Public Lands as a Laboratory." Funded through a Grosvenor Grant from the National Geographic Society, the two-week, in-residence program gave participants the opportunity to study Texas water resources and sustainability concerns outside the traditional classroom setting.

Program activities included trips to Canyon Dam, Pedernales Falls State Park, McKinney Roughs Environmental Education Center, Natural Bridges Caverns, Wonder World Cave, and the Texas Rivers Center to collect data and investigate Texas' many water resource issues.

Classroom activities included lectures from Texas State faculty, GIS and GPS training, watershed mapping, an "Ask the Expert" session with water resource professionals, and an information session about different careers in geography and environmental science. During outdoor activities, students and teachers waded in the waters of the San Marcos River to measure streamflow, evaluate water quality, and study biogeography by cataloging the presence of macro-invertebrates (water insects), and netting fish and frogs. Participants learned about the formation of the Balcones Escarpment, and became certified volunteer Texas Watch Water Quality Monitors.

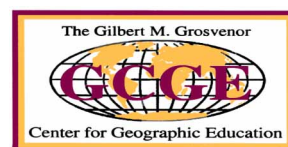
TAGE designed the program to help students understand the importance of geography and environmental science in evaluating real-world problems, while giving teachers an opportunity to explore new ways of bringing hands-on learning into the classroom. Students worked in groups to explore solutions to important water problems, while teachers prepared lesson plans based on information acquired during the program. Participant responses showed that 2003 Field & Stream was a great success. It created an enthusiasm for water resources teaching and learning that the teachers and students could take back to their respective schools. TAGE plans to replicate the program next summer and continue its goal of improving geographic education in Texas through quality professional development and education outreach.

### *Oceans for Life:* Linking Oceanography with Geography

Brian Cooper

The National Geographic Society, in collaboration with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) and a group of geographers, geography teachers, and marine/environmental science teachers, has produced a scope and sequence document, *Oceans for Life*, which links key ocean issues with the six essential elements presented in *Geography for Life: the National Geography Standards 1994*. *Oceans for Life* is organized in a matrix form, and links concepts and skills related to the study of oceans to the essential elements at three grade levels: K-4, 5-8, and 9-12.

*Oceans for Life* is an invaluable resource for teachers to utilize in helping students comprehend how and why all life on earth arises from, and remains dependent on, oceans. To obtain a complimentary copy of *Oceans for Life*, contact Sheri Wahl via e-mail at: [sw21@txstate.edu](mailto:sw21@txstate.edu) or phone: 512-245-3827 at the Texas Alliance for Geographic Education.





# Research Centers

## Texas GIScience Center

The Texas Center for Geographic Information Science (TxGISci) in the Texas State Department of Geography is a research, education, and outreach entity that specializes in geographic information science and technology. The vision of the center is to improve human life and the natural environment through advancing human knowledge in GIScience and applying that knowledge to address pressing issues in the real world.

**“Striving toward original research in GIScience, resulting in significant scientific and social benefits. . .”**

The Center’s mission includes conducting original research in GIScience that will result in significant scientific and social benefits; educating and training highly skilled professionals and scholars in GIScience and its application areas; and serving Texas, The United States, and the world through the advancement and utilization of GIScience and related technologies. The center strives to achieve the following set of goals.

1. To establish a research community of GIScience in the Department of Geography and the Texas State campus that will foster team work and collaboration among researchers, educators, and students who are interested in GIScience and its applications;
2. To develop a set of viable research areas in GIScience that will attract sustained research funding from local, state, national, and international funding agencies;
3. To improve scholarly research in GIScience at Texas State and bring the program to national and international recognition;
4. To serve the education and training needs in GIScience, its related technologies and applications in the state of Texas;
5. To foster national and international corporations among researchers, educators, and practitioners in GIScience and technology.

To learn more about TxGISci, please visit us on the Web at:  
<http://www.geo.txstate.edu/TxGISci/index.htm>.

## Lovell Center Happenings

The James and Marilyn Lovell Center for Environmental Geography and Hazards Research has a new director. The Center Scholars selected Dr. Richard Dixon to become the new Director of the Lovell Center. Dr. Dixon replaces Dr. David Butler, who will remain a Center Scholar. Dr. Joanna Curran and Dr. Denise Blanchard-Boehm will serve as Associate Directors of the Center.

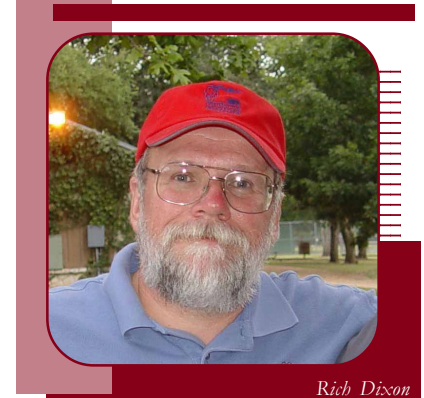
Last spring the Center sponsored the fifth annual Lovell Lecture. Sarah Andrews, geologist and internationally known author of mysteries with an environmental theme, spent the day interacting with Center Scholars before delivering her inspiring lecture to a packed house in the Alkek Teaching Theater that evening.

The summer was a busy time for the Center as many Center Scholars headed to their field sites for a summer of productive research. National Parks continue to be a favorite area for research with ongoing projects in Big Bend, Glacier, Yellowstone, and Big Horn Battlefield National parks. Travel was also on the agenda as scholars combined sight-seeing with presentations at conferences at West Point, Albuquerque, and points in between.

In September, the Center co-sponsored a major regional meeting on the flood hazard in Central Texas, bringing together professionals from the public and private sector along with local politicians and academic researchers. One of the products from the conference will be a special issue of the prestigious journal *Physical Geography* featuring papers from the conference. This special volume will be guest edited by Dixon and Butler.

With the change in directors comes the opportunity to reflect on our past and anticipate our future accomplishments. I want to thank David Butler for his many years of service as the first director of the Lovell Center. David guided the Center through numerous firsts and helped to establish the Lovell Distinguished Lecture Series, which is now recognized as one of the premier events on campus. David also set the tone for the scholarship that has become a hallmark of the Center. He leaves behind an outstanding legacy for all future directors to emulate and advance.

As we move forward, we shall be guided by our vision statement through which we strive to be “... a center of excellence in research and scholarship in Environmental Geography including Hazards.” We will continue to build strong research collaborations among Center scholars, both faculty and student, and we will continue to present the results of our research in a variety of forums. Change is always exciting. We invite you to stay involved in the activities of the Lovell Center by attending our annual lecture, and visiting the Web pages of our Center and Center Scholars. Feel free to contact me at [rd11@txstate.edu](mailto:rd11@txstate.edu) to discuss the Center and its work.



Rich Dixon

**Interested in learning more  
 about the Research Centers  
 associated with  
 Texas State Geography ?  
 Visit us on the Web at  
[www.geo.txstate.edu](http://www.geo.txstate.edu).**



# Research Centers

## Rain or Shine: Teachers Explore Texas Environments

*Amanda Ross*

For two weeks this summer, students in the Teaching Environmental Sciences (TES) course braved the heat and occasional rain to explore the Central Texas environment. The ten-day course emphasizes the importance of understanding the air, water, and waste issues that affect our community's environmental and economic health. TES is a tuition-paid, 3 credit-hour graduate course developed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) in cooperation with 18 universities throughout the state. In addition, teachers receive 45 hours of Texas Environmental Education Advisory Committee (TEEAC) professional development credit. Teachers are provided with educational materials from a variety of sources, along with materials that support the TAAS (Texas Assessment of Academic Skills) and TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills). Richard Earl teaches the course with assistance from Cinde Thomas-Jimenez, the master teacher for the course.

The TES course is designed to provide balanced information and to promote partnerships among teachers, government agencies, businesses, and community organizations. In this way, TES hopes to prepare students to take their place as informed citizens committed to environmental protection through the use of critical thinking in environmental decision-making and career choice opportunities. While the course involves classroom presentations, the majority of the two weeks is spent exploring the local community through field trips. This year's course toured the San Marcos Wastewater Treatment Plant, where participants learned that the City of San Marcos plant exceeds standards for wastewater treatment plant discharge. At the Freeman Ranch, Meg Garrett (M.A.G., 2003) took students on an orienteering course. Thankfully, no one got lost!

Another focus of TES is the requirements placed on industries to meet environmental standards. Structural Metals Inc. allowed students to witness a business that produces products made completely from recycled steel. International Power Hays Energy invited students to learn about the process of generating energy while meeting air standard requirements. Malcolm Beck of Gardenville welcomed the TES participants to explore the intricate process involved in composting. Selah Bamberger Ranch Preserve introduced students to ranchland management including exotic species from Africa, tree surveys, and restoration projects.

Thanks to the expertise of Robert Larsen and the people at Texas Disposal Systems (TDS), we not only had a spectacular final field experience, but gained a great deal of knowledge about landfills and waste management. TDS incorporates many innovative practices and unusual (by industry standards) techniques in managing their facility that make it very successful.

From compacting to composting, going on safari, to hosting nonprofit galas, there is no other course like Teaching Environmental Sciences! The course will be offered again July 7- 18, 2004. For more information, contact Richard Earl at [re02@txstate.edu](mailto:re02@txstate.edu) or visit the TES Web site at <http://www.tnrcc.state.tx.us/exec/oppr/pubeduc/teach.html>.

## Thinking About Getting Involved ?

*Jason Pinchback*

Texas is known for its diverse culture and population, but Texans share deep concern for the health and safety of their state's rivers. Although most Texans are concerned and supportive of protecting and conserving rivers and reservoirs, for the most part people lack basic knowledge about our waterways and are unaware that many of their routine actions may have adverse effects on rivers and watersheds. Texas Watch has developed many of its program activities regarding watershed education and water quality modeling in response to this lack of awareness.

The Texas Watch program is moving into its fifth year at Texas State Geography and remains very busy! In fact, last summer was the busiest ever in Texas Watch's history. Our staff hosted twelve trainings near home and in far-reaching places like Edinburg, Alpine, Amarillo,

and Del Rio. We also held educational workshops in over fourteen cities from Laredo to Rockport and Houston to Denton. Additionally, we are working to provide resources, equipment, and expertise to the under-served Texans within the Rio Grande Basin. There are over forty newly trained teachers who live in numerous towns and cities ranging from El Paso to Brownsville.

Through Texas Watch's activities, thousands of Texans have become aware that we are all part of a larger water system, interconnected to rivers through watersheds, and that people's individual and collective actions have profound effects on the health of surface waters. To see our water quality monitoring data or to talk with staff members at Texas Watch, please visit [www.texaswatch.geo.txstate.edu](http://www.texaswatch.geo.txstate.edu) or call us at (877) 506-1401.

## Upcoming Events

February 28, 2004

### "United By the River"

### Protecting the Rio Grande: Our Key to Prosperity and Health

**Who:** Individuals/Teachers/Business/Industry/Government

**When:** Saturday, February 28, 2004

**Time:** 9:00am-3:00pm

**Where:** The City of Laredo Public Works

**Location:** 5512 Thomas Avenue, Laredo, TX

**Agenda:** [www.texaswatch.geo.txstate.edu](http://www.texaswatch.geo.txstate.edu)

**RSVP:** Contact Terry Wendland

1-877-506-1401 or [tw05@txstate.edu](mailto:tw05@txstate.edu)



# Internship News

## Geography Internship Students Gain Career-Building Experience

Mark Carter

A supervised internship experience prior to graduation provides students with an excellent opportunity to investigate career possibilities, begin networking with working professionals, and get a jump-start on their future! In spring 2003, our Geography Internship students gained real-world, career-building experience while providing valuable assistance to their sponsoring organizations as highlighted below. In many cases, these interns were able to secure full-time employment with the firms or agencies with which they interned.

Working with the City of San Marcos Greenhouse Nature Center, Allison Thompson used her interpretive geography skills to create a "Wildscape Interpretive Guide." The guide helped center visitors to enjoy fully their experience at the Nature Center, which includes an impressive collection of native plant species arranged for accessible viewing and study. In part, as a result of this internship experience, Allison was hired as a program specialist at the nationally recognized Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center immediately after graduation with her master's degree.



Christi Kidwell

Christi Kidwell helped the City of Round Rock, Texas use a GIS to inventory and locate municipal infrastructure such as water distribution and storm water collection systems working alongside Texas State Geography alumnus Richard Reedy. Julie Grifo helped builder KB Homes, San Antonio manage and coordinate its new GIS database that provides KB Home with a valuable tool for land acquisition research. Julie also worked on just about anything else she could find to do including assisting with engineering and even accounting tasks.

Upon completing her internship, Julie continued to work for KB Home while waiting for a top-secret security clearance to allow her to begin working for the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA) as a GIS / Remote Sensing Analyst. Julie states: "This internship was the best thing I could have done for my future. Not only did it open the door for a new career, but it taught me so much . . ."

Other students put their skills to valuable use with a variety of government



Zachary Walther

agencies and private employers. Eric Scotti and Zachary Walther spent much of their internship literally underwater working at Texas State's Aquarena Center assisting with the scientific diving program by harvesting excessive plant growth around the San Marcos Springs and participating in environmental research projects in Spring Lake using SCUBA gear. David Ault interned with Land Answers, a land planning consulting firm. David learned about planning for land use and land use changes in the private sector. David so impressed the firm's management that he was offered a full-time position with Land Answers! James Wade interned with Storm Water Research Group, a firm specializing in certifying the location of property relative to a nearby floodplain. Stacy Henze helped provide a unique learning opportunity to visiting school children at Aquarena Center by leading tours, facilitating activities, and giving informational lectures as part of Aquarena Center's environmental education program.

Amy Sanders interned with Murphy's World (GIS and GeoEnvironmental Solutions). Sean Murphy, company vice-president and Texas State Geography

Alumnus, had this to say about Amy: "She assisted in the development and implementation of the Aransas GIS project using her keen eye for detail and cartographic skills for exceptional base map design and geo-data development. Amy's customer service skills, GIS experience, her ability to learn GIS programming language quickly, and work with others in a constantly changing environment are valuable assets that will serve her well in future endeavors. Amy is a shining example of what the high standards of the Texas State Geography Department is producing as future Geographers." Amy continues her work with Murphy's World as a regular employee after her May 2003 graduation! Congratulations Amy!

Graduate student Tom Wassenich focused his internship on learning about the legal aspects of Texas water rights working with the Henry and Levin Law Firm offices in Austin. Andrew Belschner, Jason Mallette, and Kyle Pierson assisted the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) with several projects related to transportation planning for the Austin Metro Area. Andrew worked with CAMPO Planner and Texas State Geography alumna Nalda Zepeda. Kirk McKee worked with Texas State Geography Ph.D. student Greg Klaus at the International Power-Hays Energy Plant learning about the environmental regulatory compliance process while also learning how a natural-gas

Continued on page 24



Greg Klaus



# Student Organizations

## Graduate Student Forum

*Emily Gonzales*

As another exciting year began in the Geography Department, the Graduate Student Forum geared up for an active and engaged year! Our plans and events promised to keep the organization focused and moving forward.

The Grad Forum would like to reiterate and stress the openness of our group. The Grad Forum strives to enhance the educational experience for graduate students in the department by maintaining an inclusive atmosphere in which all graduate students are welcome to express their ideas and participate in organizational activities.

Our first meeting of the year was quite a success. Approximately fifty students attended and participated as we discussed upcoming events and ideas for the new academic year. Grad Forum members Bernie Marion and Jessica Mefford will be our respective Ph.D. and Master's student representatives to the department's faculty meetings and as well as voting members on the Graduate Committee. Emily Gonzales will contribute as our newsletter columnist, and Sarah Cummings and Waverly Ray have volunteered to represent the Grad Forum on the Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration Committee. The Grad Forum thanks each of you!

An interesting idea discussed at the meeting, involved adding an international component to the graduate student handbooks to meet the needs of our growing international student population. The addition would serve to inform international students of processes and requirements (i.e. visas) that are not required of U.S. citizens. Overall, the Graduate Student Forum launched another successful year, and we would love for all graduate students to be a part of it!

All graduate students are invited to attend Grad Forum meetings on the first Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in ELA 311.

## NAEP Promotes Volunteerism and Environmental Stewardship

*Amanda Gabrielson*

The National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP) envisions promoting innovative change and cooperative growth toward an ecologically sustainable campus and community while increasing environmental awareness and participation through productive public service. We are a fellowship of students and faculty that are dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the spirit of volunteerism in order to achieve this goal, a lofty and somewhat overwhelming vision statement. In simpler terms, we really have fun doing our small part to change the world for the better.

Last year the members of NAEP were incredibly

productive and participated in a variety of activities promoting environmental consciousness and stewardship, both on and off campus. I would like to commend all of our predecessors in the NAEP for working so tirelessly to help draft and pass the University Environmental Service Fee, first as a student referendum on campus and subsequently as state law in the Texas Legislature. The law adds a one dollar fee per semester to a student's tuition to be used for environmental purposes on campus. While the fee is a small expense to the individuals paying it, the sum will hopefully enable the university to take bigger steps toward improving the quality of the environment on and around campus. However, before the fee can be implemented in the spring, the legislation must once again be approved through a student referendum. NAEP will be campaigning to ensure that the referendum passes.



NAEP members



NAEP members

*Continued on page 21*

## GTU Provides Opportunities for Students

*Mikaila Bell*

As the Geography Department moves into a new era at Texas State University-San Marcos, Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU), Kappa Upsilon (KU) chapter, celebrates its ongoing role of providing fun field trips, interesting speakers, and service opportunities to all who love geography. GTU is the international geography honor society and service fraternity, and Kappa Upsilon's tradition of excellence will continue this year.

GTU members and participants access a meaningful part of the collegiate experience that is not necessarily found in the classroom. Service opportunities facilitate active student participation in the geography community and guest speakers familiarize students with the amazing diversity of geographic research. Extracurricular field trips, like visits to a newly flood-carved canyon and the Bamberger Ranch eco-restoration project, broaden students' horizons and bring real-world applications of geography to light.

The KU chapter has an exciting year ahead. Working with other Texas State Geography student organizations and the Associated Student Government, GTU has introduced the "Lady Bird Johnson Eco-restoration Project at Texas State." This project will implement a campus-wide program of native plant community restoration, which was inspired by the Evans Liberal Arts Beautification Project—another geography student initiative. The project is dedicated to a great contributor to our nation's beautification programs, Lady Bird Johnson. Also, we will compete for GTU Chapter of the Year, 2004, a distinguished honor that we intend to pursue in earnest and with great energy.

Whether you are a student, alumnus, faculty member, or staff member, GTU welcomes your participation in the exciting year ahead. GTU meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month during the spring and fall semesters, at 5:00 p.m. in the Evans Liberal Arts Building, room 311. All geographers welcome.

# Student Organizations

continued from page 20

## NAEP Promotes Volunteerism

In addition to working on the Environmental Service Fee, we also plan to do a number of other things. For Earth Day in April, we will continue our tradition of going to local elementary schools to give environmental education presentations. Last year the students and teachers at Crockett Elementary received us warmly. We hope this coming year's event will be just as much fun. Finally, we plan on having the usual round of informative speakers, field trips, and river cleanups, and we will also help out at the Geography Department 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration.

Membership in NAEP is open to students of all majors and backgrounds, as well as to faculty, staff, and members of the San Marcos community interested in helping us achieve our goal of creating a more sustainable world by starting with Texas State and the city of San Marcos. We meet the first and third Tuesdays of every month in the Evans Liberal Arts Building, room 311. We encourage all who are interested to come to the meetings and share your spirit and ideas with us. Our officers for the 2003-2002 academic year are Noah Hopkins (noah@txstate.edu) and Ryan McGillicuddy (mcg@txstate.edu), Presidents; Wes Bickam (west@txstate.edu), Kaysie Gaffner (kg47008@txstate.edu), and Kirt Schoppe (kschop@aol.com), Vice Presidents; Aja Guerra (ag1111@txstate.edu) & Stephanie Ma (stephami@hotmail.com), Treasurers; Bonnie Evridge (bonnieevridge@yahoo.com), Andy Ellis (ae1027@txstate.edu), and Robert Landry (rl1039@txstate.edu), Secretaries; Mark Carter (mc12@txstate.edu), Faculty Advisor.

Check out our  
award-winning  
Web site today!  
[www.geo.txstate.edu](http://www.geo.txstate.edu)

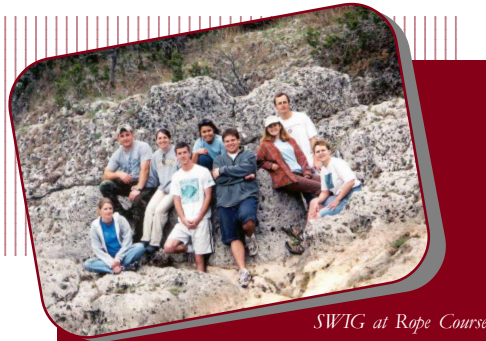
## SWIG: Past, Present and Future

*Amanda Gabrielson*

The beginning of the fall 2003 semester marked another exciting year for Supporting Women in Geography (SWIG). Although the name suggests an all women's organization, it is open to everyone...yes, including men. SWIG not only promotes the role of women in geography, but also promotes diversity in the intellectual, professional, and personal role of geography. Texas State SWIG organization is nationally known for its outstanding service to the community, social activities, and academic and professional workshops.

Last fall, SWIG hosted a camp out at University Camp, which brought together professors and SWIG members from different universities to sit around the cabin's fireplace and share experiences and advice about being a female in historically male dominated workplaces. Dean Ann Marie Ellis of Texas State's College of Liberal Arts held a captive audience while sharing her experiences in life and how they culminated in a successful career. Everyone really enjoyed the event and the discussions proved to be very valuable in preparing for SWIG's participation in a panel discussion at the Association of American Geographer's (AAG) meeting in New Orleans last spring.

SWIG had a very visible profile at the annual conference. The Texas State SWIG organization was the leading contributor to a panel discussion held at the conference and was recognized as a successful and dynamic model for SWIG organizations throughout the country. Other SWIG events included a grant workshop that discussed locating grant sources and the process of grant writing, and an internship roundup that allowed students to share the experiences, job duties, and locations of different internships in which they worked. SWIG also provided opportunities for members to interact through a leadership ropes course, which emphasized teamwork and trust. This event was followed later in the year by "happy-hour" socials to unwind and enjoy each other's company.



*SWIG at Rope Course*

SWIG plans to be just as active with exciting events this year. Slated events for 2003-2004 include volunteering for the Austin Youth River Watch's 10<sup>th</sup> Year Celebration and participating in World Monitoring Day, a global water quality campaign, which will take place at Barton Creek Habitat Preserve. SWIG members will help staff parts of the day-long event, enjoy educational booths, good food, and live music while networking with environmental professionals from around the state. SWIG will also work

with local Girl Scout troops on possible badge activities and will work with at-risk students to explain the importance of education and the benefits of geography. SWIG will likewise have social events and "happy-hours" throughout the year, some of which will be meeting with members from University of Texas' SWIG organization to share ideas and advice.

Last year, SWIG contributed to the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Texas State Geography Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration (AR&SC) by sponsoring the Capoeira group that provided colorful entertainment for all those attending. This year's AR&SC will be an even larger celebration, and SWIG will be there to volunteer and support our internationally recognized geography department.

SWIG looks forward to another exciting and SWIG-tastic year! Come and join the fun, meet great people, and take advantage of all the educational and professional resources we have lined up for the year. Meetings take place on the second Monday of every month at 5:00 p.m. in ELA 311. Dues are \$5.00/student and \$10.00/faculty and staff for the year. If you have any questions feel free to contact Amanda Gabrielson, President, (AmandaG@txstate.edu), Elizabeth Whitaker, Secretary, or faculty advisors, Fred Shelley (fs03@txstate.edu) and Deborah Bryan (db33@txstate.edu). Hope to see you soon!

## Student News

### With Great Sadness, the Department Mourns the Passing of Two of its Own

*Fred Shelley*

Karen Starnes Brettschneider  
(M.A.Geo., 1998)

Karen Denise Starnes was born in Fort Hood, Texas on May 21, 1973, the daughter of Doyle and Judy Starnes. In 1991, Karen graduated from River Oaks High School in Monroe, Louisiana as valedictorian of her class and later earned a bachelor's degree at Texas Christian University.

After a year of graduate school at the University of Arizona, Karen entered the Master of Applied Geography (M.A.Geo.) program at Southwest Texas State University in the fall of 1996. As a graduate student, Karen was an integral part of the life of the department. She was an outstanding laboratory teaching assistant in Physical Geography. Her love of animals and the environment were evident to everyone who met her, and she was loved and respected by all of her fellow students as well as the faculty. She was friendly, outgoing, compassionate, caring, and thoughtful. Karen wrote her directed research project under the supervision of Dr. Craig Colten and graduated with her M.A.Geo. degree in May, 1998. While in the M.A.Geo. program, Karen met her future husband, Brian Brettschneider (B.S. 1995, M.A.Geo. 1997). Karen and Brian were married at the First Methodist Church in San Marcos during the summer of 1998.

After their marriage, Karen and Brian moved to Houston where Karen accepted employment as Quality Assurance Manager with the Houston-Galveston Area Council, working in environmental planning and database management. She played a key role in the development of the Houston-Galveston Regional Water Quality Clearinghouse. She also coordinated the regional Texas Clean Rivers Program. In her work with the council, Karen worked closely with the Department's Texas Watch program, giving presentations to Texas Watch regional meetings and encouraging volunteers whenever possible. Karen was an active volunteer with the Homeless and Orphaned Pets Endeavor (HOPE), a Houston-area organization devoted to the rescue and provision of temporary care for homeless and abandoned animals.

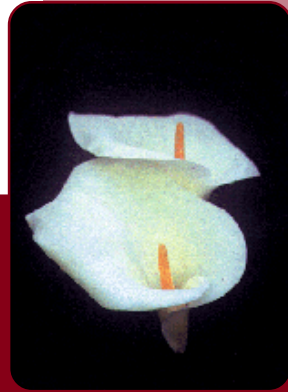
Following a long and courageous battle with cancer, Karen passed away in Houston on July 26, 2003. Members of the department participated in the Komen Austin Race for the Cure on Sunday, November 1, 2003 to honor Karen's memory as well as support others who suffer from, or are survivors of, Breast Cancer. For more information visit [www.komenaustin.org](http://www.komenaustin.org). Our thoughts and prayers go out to Brian and his family.

Steven McCulloch (B.A., 1995)

Steven McCulloch was born in Japan on December 3, 1958, the son of Sam and Anita McCulloch. He was raised in Austin and graduated from Crockett High School in 1977. Steven received his B.A. degree in Geography in 1995. After taking several graduate classes, he decided to pursue a teaching career and earned a teaching certificate in 2001. He taught in the San Marcos and Geronimo school districts.

Steven was especially active in the Non-Traditional Student Organization (NTSO) on campus. He served NTSO in several capacities, including service as its President. His leadership was instrumental in making NTSO an important campus-wide organization.

Texas State Geography will remember Stephen and his accomplishments.



*In Remembrance*

### The Planet Drum Foundation in Ecuador

*Brian Tienert*

Editor's Note: Brian Tienert earned his M.S. degree from Texas State Geography in 2002 and assumed his current position with the Planet Drum Foundation in Ecuador in January 2003. Here he shares his experiences in Ecuador with members and friends of the department.

I am the Field Project Manager for a nonprofit environmental foundation, the Planet Drum Foundation, based in San Francisco, California. I am the Foundation's only paid employee in Ecuador, and I manage the projects, the budget, and volunteers. You can get more info about the organization and read about a few of our adventures at [www.planetdrum.org](http://www.planetdrum.org).

I live and work in the city of Bahia de Caraquez. Bahia, a town of about 30,000 people, is located on the Pacific coast, just south of the equator about 120 miles north of Guayaquil. In 1998 the El Niño phenomenon affected the whole coast of Ecuador. Bahia was the most severely affected by the torrential rains and mud slides, leaving the town isolated and without basic services and food supplies. Shortly after El Niño, the town was struck by a 7.2 magnitude earthquake. Many buildings fell to the ground, and almost all structures were severely damaged.

During the reconstruction, local residents, with the support of foreign NGO (Planet Drum is one of these), aimed their efforts toward more sustainable development. As a result, in 1999 Bahia was declared an ecocity. The declaration meant a conscious decision by the municipality and local residents to support and consolidate the process of sustainable development on a long-term basis. Since the declaration, many new projects have been created and reinforced by initiatives in environmental education. The main projects taking place in Bahia that are directed by Planet Drum include:

\*A reforestation project on all the hillsides of Bahia. The goal is to reforest an 18-kilometer-long strip of land that comes up the Rio Chone and then heads south down the coast.

*Continued on page 24*



# Student News

## New Ph.D. Students and Master's GA's

*Fred M. Shelley & Allison Glass*

This fall we welcomed a large, diverse, and wonderful group of new Ph.D. and Master's graduate assistants!!

There are 10 new Ph.D. assistants. Fenda Akiwumi, who holds a Master's degree from University College London, joins us after several years of teaching at Hill College in Hillsboro, Texas. She is interested in water policy and administration and environmental management in developing countries. Fenda and her husband have two sons, aged 14 and 12. She enjoys writing, music, dancing, and gardening.

Melissa Gray is a native of Appleton, Wisconsin. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and completed her M.A.G. degree in the Department in 2002. Her research interests include environmental leadership and sustainability. She enjoys traveling, running, spelunking, and photography.

Xeoqin He joins us from China, where she received an M.S. degree from the South China Sea Institute of Oceanography in 2001. She is interested in environmental geography and hazards. She enjoys traveling but misses her husband and child in China!

Jeff Isom joins the Ph.D. program on a full-time basis after two years as a part-time Ph.D. student. Originally from Quitman, Texas, he is focusing on meteorology and climate change. Jeff holds master's degrees from Mississippi State University and Embry-Riddle Technical University. He recently retired from the U.S. Air Force after a twenty year career. He lives in San Antonio with his wife Mitzie and son Chris, 14. He enjoys computing and traveling.

Bernadette Marion holds a bachelor's degree from Trinity University in urban studies and an M.S. from the Department. Her research interests include sustainability, especially in an urban context, and urban environmental geography. She is an active participant in Capoeira, which is a form of Brazilian martial arts.

Mark Rockeymoore is a native of Paducah, Texas. He holds a master's degree in Geography from Indiana University. He is interested in geographic education, environmental geography, and historical geography. He lives in San Marcos with his

wife Angela and their daughters Zora, 4, and Alysha, 1. He enjoys writing fiction, graphic design, yoga, volleyball, basketball, and playing the saxophone.

Carol Sawyer is from Dallas, Texas and holds a bachelor's degree from Montana State University and an M.S. from our Department. She is interested in mountain environments, natural hazards, landscape change, geomorphology and Yellowstone National Park. Her significant other lives in Montana. She enjoys reading, driving, and hiking.

Emariana Taylor is originally from Houston and holds a M.A.G. degree from the Department. Prior to beginning graduate work, she had a seven-year career as a contract archaeologist on the East Coast. She is currently working as a Webmaster and editor of this newsletter. Her research interests include biogeography, dealing specifically with the maternity colonies of Mexican Free-tailed bats in the Texas Hill Country. She lives in New Braunfels with her Rhodesian Ridgeback, Qualla, and enjoys traveling and graphic presentation.

David Viertel was born and brought up in Austin and holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the Department. He is interested in urban environments, digital terrain modeling, remote sensing, and urban morphometrics. He enjoys reading, traveling, writing, and disc golf.

Sixteen new Master's students also joined the Department's payroll as graduate assistants in fall 2003. Rachel Bailey is a native of Hudson, New Hampshire and a 2003 graduate of Keene State College. Her major research focus is geographic education. She works this year for the Texas Alliance for Geographic Education.

Rachel Benke, who works on the Texas Water Atlas project, is originally from The Woodlands, Texas and earned her bachelor's degree at Baylor University in 2002. She is interested in education and its materials in the classroom. She has a 10-month-old puppy, Jake, and enjoys movies, dancing, traveling, and hanging out with friends.

Gwendolyn Brunet is a new assistant with the Texas Watch program. She earned a B.S. in the Department in 1996. Her

interests include globalization, sustainable development, and political geography. She lives in Austin with her husband Peter, daughter Annika, dog Ace, and cat Harley. She enjoys travel, furniture restoration, and rock climbing.

Alexis Buckley is a native of Boston, Massachusetts. She earned a B.A. at the University of Massachusetts-Boston in 2002. She is working on Dr. Michael Solem's NSF grant. Her interests include environmental resource management, sustainable development, cartography, and GIS.

Sarah Cummings is originally from Midland, Texas and earned her bachelor's degree at SWT in 2002. Her research interests include geographic education and Latin America.

Ryan Hunter has also joined the Texas Watch program. Ryan is a native of Houston and earned a B.S. in Radio-TV-Film at the University of Texas at Austin in 1999. He is interested in land/area development and regional and urban planning. He has a three-year-old black lab, Petra. He plays banjo and dobro with his band, the Onion Creek Crawdaddies, and also enjoys camping and music.

Jake Kubena, the assistant to "Doc" Augustin, is a native of Buda, Texas and earned his bachelor's degree at SWT in 2003. He is interested in water resources and Latin America. He enjoys rock climbing, trivia, and reading.

Michael Long was born in Portland, Oregon and moved to Texas at the age of 17. He earned his bachelor's degree at SWT in 2003. He is interested in GIS in the urban environment. He has played the drums for 14 years and also enjoys computers and music.

Edris Montalvo, a native of Port Lavaca, Texas earned his bachelor's degree at SWT with a double major in political science and English in 2003. He is interested in cultural and ethnic geography and Latin America. He enjoys fishing, literature, writing, playing the guitar, and sports.

Jay Parsons, an assistant for Texas Watch, is a native of Midland, Texas and a 1995 graduate of Texas A&M University.

*Continued on page 24*

# Student News

*continued from page 23*

## New Students

His research interests include visualization, water flow modeling, remote sensing, and GIS. He enjoys windsurfing and hiking.

Komal Patel grew up in Corpus Christi and holds a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Her primary research interest is in remote sensing.

Waverly Ray is from Virginia and holds a bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech University. She is working on Dr. Michael Solem's NSF grant and for the Grosvenor Center. She is interested in geographic education and enjoys traveling and massage therapy.

Abigail Squires is from McAllen, Texas. She graduated from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 2003. Her interests include political geography and GIS.

Jeff Sun is originally from Casper, Wyoming and earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Wyoming in 2001. His interests include GIS and water resources. He enjoys basketball, weightlifting, golf, and watching sports.

Nikki Williams, a native of Poughkeepsie, New York, earned her bachelor's degree in Geography at SWT in 2003. Her research interests include GIS, remote sensing, and epidemiology. She enjoys hiking, swimming, and rock and fossil collecting.



**Nostalgic for SWT Gear?  
Check out our selection  
of items on the Web at:  
[http://  
www.geo.txstate.edu/  
Geo\\_gear/  
gearcatalog.html](http://www.geo.txstate.edu/Geo_gear/gearcatalog.html)**

*continued from page 19*

## Internship Students

fired power plant operates. Josh Bagley got started on his future career as a land developer by interning with Sun Valle LTD assisting with the layout, creation, and marketing of a ranchette subdivision in San Antonio. Bailey Duncan assisted with the protection of the federally protected endangered species found in the San Marcos River working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff headquartered in San Marcos.

Patrick Young helped the Texas General Land Office (GLO) prepare a new Coastal Resources Atlas for the State of Texas as well as provided assistance with conceptual planning for a GLO-sponsored Interactive Map Internet Web Site. Interning with the Texas Water Development Board, Heather Forrest worked as a research specialist updating the groundwater conservation district database for the groundwater modeling section of this Texas State Agency. Mike Long interned at News 8 Austin with Texas State Geography Alumnus and News 8 Austin Chief Meteorologist Scott Prinsen. Mike learned about TV weather forecasting using state-of-the-art computer mapping software including weather-radar images.



*Jay Parsons*

The Texas Natural Resource Information Service (TNRIS) employed Jay Parsons to work with the agency's large library of remotely sensed images as well as GIS applications. Jeremy Dew sharpened his CAD and GIS software skills locating and documenting oil-field lease locations for the consulting firm of Thomas Schleier and Associates in Seguin, Texas. Brian Moore received hands-on experience conducting environmental assessments and a permanent job in the environmental consulting business with a Houston, Texas firm, The Murillo Company. Good work Brian!

Attention Alumni! Do you have a potential opportunity for a Geography student intern?

The Texas State Geography Internship Program requires students to work a minimum of 150 hours per semester and maintain a daily work-log. Interns are also required to submit an internship assessment report in order to receive college credit for their efforts. Internship sponsors assist interns with a required job description, provide guidance to students during their internship, and complete an evaluation form at the end of the internship period. Potential internship sponsors should submit a request for Intern(s) that includes: 1) description of duties and responsibilities, 2) skills and knowledge requirements, 3) student learning opportunities, 4) physical location of internship, 5) financial compensation information, 6) contact name(s), phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. If you have a potential internship opportunity please contact: Kenny Jones, Internship Coordinator, Department of Geography, Texas State University-San Marcos (512) 245-0322 or [kenny.j@txstate.edu](mailto:kenny.j@txstate.edu).

*continued from page 22*

## Planet Drum

\*Reforestation in María Auxiliadora, a neighborhood that was completely devastated by the El Niño phenomenon, and where twenty people lost their lives. This area has been reforested and named "Forest in the Midst of the Ruins." There is a walking trail through the park that emphasizes native trees and vegetation.

\*"Fanca Produce," a project that aims to recycle all organic waste from households, create compost and cultivate fruit trees that are later planted in their area.

Planet Drum also teaches hands-on field-based ecology classes in a local elementary school and keeps a greenhouse in which all the plants for their projects are grown.

I hope to return to Central Texas after a year or two here. The experience has been very good so far. The work is challenging but very rewarding. I was thrilled to be lucky enough to receive a position in a management role. I think it speaks highly of the value of obtaining a master's degree in Geography at Texas State!

## Scholarships and Awards

### Texas State Alumna Linda Hammon Awarded Austin High School Teacher of the Year

*Jessica Mefford*

“You must be the change you wish to see in the World”  
—Gandhi



*Linda Hammon*

For the past seventeen years, Linda Hammon has encouraged her students to follow her mission statement and be that change. Hammon is a two-time Texas State Geography alumna. She received both a Bachelor of Science (1973) and Master of Applied Geography with a specialty in Secondary Education (1993). She was recognized with the Department’s Outstanding Alumni Award in 1999. She now teaches at W. Charles Akins High School in Austin, Texas. She has also taught at Canyon High School in New Braunfels, Texas.

Throughout her career as a 9<sup>th</sup> grade geography teacher, Hammon has been recognized for her interactive teaching methods and innovative classroom projects. Last spring, she was one of two educators chosen to travel to Japan and work with students on problem solving techniques in geography. Since then, she has been able to bring her experiences from Japan and around the world to her students. Among her awards and honors is the National Council for Geographic Education/CRAM awards for exemplary classroom teaching (1995 and 1997). In 1997 she was selected as one of ten educators in the United States to participate in Project Marco Polo, during which time she and a student toured Portugal, Morocco, Greece, and the Mediterranean aboard a U.S. Navy/ National Geographic Society oceanic research vessel.

After talking with Hammon, I soon realized why she is such a highly recognized educator in the Austin ISD and the K-12 geographic education field. Her instruction techniques are project oriented and often involve hands-on exercises. Students in her classes can expect to participate in a range of activities, from planning a road through Africa to toting around garbage bags for a week.

Hammon devotes a unit of study to the continent of Africa, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa. She feels this area is traditionally under represented in the geography classroom. During this unit, each student produces a binder on the area, reporting on a number of factors including land use, climate, political, and environmental issues. At the end of the unit, they plan a highway through the region. The students learn about Africa while also developing critical thinking skills. Hammon presents geography as a bridge between the sciences and social studies, emphasizing this bridge with topics such as, climate, population, and urbanization. Texas State-San Marcos Geography salutes Linda Hammon for her teaching excellence and congratulates her on her selection as the Austin Independent School District’s Educator of the Year. We look forward to the next generation of geographers emerging from her classroom!

### Texas State Geography Recognizes Contest Winners



*Jennifer Smith*



*Matt Bovitt*

The Department of Geography would like to thank everyone who participated in our department logo contest. We had some wonderfully creative submissions to chose from and it was a difficult decision. By popular vote the ideas of two submissions were combined to create our new department logo. We would like to congratulate Jennifer Smith and Matt Bovitt as the winners of the contest!



New Department of Geography Logo



# Across the United States

## Glacier National Field Season, 2003

*David R. Butler*

Glacier National Park, Montana (GNP) is a United Nations-designated World Heritage Site and, along with its Canadian neighbor Waterton Lakes National Park in Alberta, it is a U.N.-designated International Biosphere Reserve. The park is home to many endangered and threatened species, particularly in the sensitive upper subalpine forest and alpine tundra ecosystems. Climatic change is causing boundary changes in the locations of these ecosystems and may cause irreparable loss of habitat for some species while creating new habitat for others. Of particular interest is the current conifer invasion of the adjacent alpine tundra, where loss of tundra habitat could mean the loss of endangered species in the area.

Researchers from the Texas State Geography have a long-standing interest in research in Glacier National Park, and several spent time during the summer of 2003 undertaking various research projects in the park. In July, Dr. David Butler continued his U.S. Geological Survey-sponsored research on geomorphic processes and soils at alpine treeline in GNP. Doctoral student Lynn Resler completed her dissertation

fieldwork on the role and importance of micro-topography in facilitating conifer invasion of the alpine tundra (Photo 1). Doctoral student Dawna Cerney initiated her dissertation fieldwork in adjacent Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta, which combines with GNP to form the International Peace Park. She is examining the lower treeline/grassland ecotone where the mountains give

way to the prairie (Photo 2). Dr. Butler also examined potential field sites with collaborators Dr. Steve Walsh (University of North Carolina) and Dr. George Malanson (University of Iowa) on a project funded by a National Science Foundation Small Grant for Exploratory Research (Photo 3). This project examines the role of snow-avalanche paths as sources of carbon in alpine ecosystems.

Widespread forest fires (Photo 4) in GNP hindered fieldwork at times but should make for some interesting "before and after" studies in years to come! For example, during a November trip to GNP, Butler and Resler examined areas burned during summer 2003 and

collected photographs of the effects of the burns. These photographs will serve as baseline data for studies that examine the nature of biogeographic responses (especially plant succession) to the fires, as well as for studies of geomorphic changes wrought by the fires. There typically are pulses of increased sedimentation in adjacent stream systems after such major fires because of the reduced groundcover vegetation that otherwise helps in holding sediment in place.



*Lynn Resler*



*lower treeline/grassland ecotone*



*Butler, Malanson & Walsh*

## Big Bend: A Texas Wonder

*Jonathan Herbert*

This spring two groups from the Department of Geography took separate trips to Big Bend National Park in West Texas. Jim Petersen led both groups. The first group, which went to Big Bend in March, included students in the Regional Field Studies class. The second trip was held in May in conjunction with the Grosvenor Center's International GeoNexus conference.

On both trips, the focus was not only on Big Bend National Park but the Big Bend region as a whole. Participants were able to stop and stay at various towns and cities, including Del Rio, Langtry, Marathon, and Terlingua. They saw everything from ghost towns and historic hotels to Judge Roy Bean's saloon and courthouse, which at one time was known as "the law west of the Pecos."



*Big Bend*

In the park, participants covered a wide area, traveled through many different environments and saw many of Big Bend's physical features: its dry badlands, the 1500 foot high cliffs of the Rio Grande canyons, volcanic and igneous landscapes, batholiths, dykes and mountains, waterfalls, and the green, wooded Chisos basin. The groups also experienced everything from desert heat to thunderstorms and flash floods.

I had a great time on both trips. Driving one of the vans, I made many new friends and saw and gained insight into some of the lesser known, but most dramatic, parts of the state. I also gained valuable insight into my dissertation research on the effects of global circulation patterns on climatic change in Big Bend.



*Forest fires*

# Around the World

## Exploring International and Intercultural Views of Landscapes

*E. J. Hanford*

David Stea of the Texas State Geography Department has teamed with David Mark of SUNY-Buffalo to develop some creative, exciting research! Mark has worked with Yindjibarndi language and landscape relationships in Northwestern Australia, comparing them with Anglo-American usage in Buffalo. During Mark's visit to the Texas State campus last spring, he and Stea considered what words and meanings are associated with landforms, how these conceptualizations differ between language families, and how are those meanings conveyed when using modern technology, such as geographic information systems (GIS).

The Yindjibarndi language is very different from modern English, and the languages of Native Americans represent another vastly different means of organizing conceptual thinking. In order to examine these questions, Stea and Mark began investigating Navajo and Hopi language and landscape relationships in Arizona and New Mexico. Stea and Mark spent part of July in peregrinations

throughout the Navajo and Hopi Nations. Their travels took them to Tuba City in the Navajo Reservation, to Hotevilla and Shipaulovi in the Hopi Reservation, and to nearby cities such as Flagstaff, Window Rock, and Gallup. They also visited the historic Toadlena Trading Post and Two Grey Hills Weaving Museum near Newcomb, New Mexico, along with sacred sites such as Ship Rock, Wupatki, Walnut Canyon and Sunset Crater. Their more than 600 digitized photographs will provide photo-documentation of landscapes and stimulus material to draw upon during the research.

Collaboration with colleagues at Northern Arizona University (NAU) Geography Department in Flagstaff and joint travels throughout the Four Corners region helped to focus the questions on two distinct cultural groups, the Navajo and Hopi.

These two Nations occupy very similar landscapes (the Hopi Nation is surrounded by the Navajo), but have very different cultures and languages. Words associated with landforms ("toponyms") can be compared with English equivalents and distribution of names for landscape frames—how should these be interpreted, particularly when technologically shared by different nations and cultures.

Stea notes, for example, that "the lava field is the blood of the monster slain by the twin sons of Changing Woman, Cabezon Peak is the head...etc., which really is a geographical text that ties together all the features of the landscape important to the Navajo and the Hopi. The cultural context is important to computer modeling because computer models must be described linguistically at some point; hence, the need to understand

*Continued on page 28*

**"...The cultural context is important to computer modeling because computer models must be described linguistically at some point; hence, the need to understand linguistic differences when dealing cross-culturally."**

## Yucatan: The Land of the Maya

*Byron "Doc" Augustin*

Because international flights require a counter check-in two hours before departure, it was a pretty crusty looking group of geographers that arrived at San Antonio International Airport at 5:30 a.m. on June 7, 2003. Some of the group had not even bothered to go to bed, and all thirty-two of us were ready to head south. The group consisted of 30 Geography Study Abroad students, my wife Rebecca, and their fearless leader, "Doc."

We departed on schedule, got caught in a storm in Houston, and barely made our connecting flight to Cancun. Two hours later we walked out of the Cancun airport and into 90 degree heat and clamoring beer vendors. The bus trip across the boringly flat landscape gave a large percentage of the group a chance to catch a few badly needed winks. We arrived in Valladolid at 2:30 p.m. and checked into the Hotel El Meson del Marques. The hotel was our, "home away from home" for the next twelve days.

Early the next morning (Saturday), we marched off on our one-mile hike to the Preparatoria de Valladolid where classes would be held from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon each day. The classes were taught in a large teaching theater without air conditioning. School in the tropics is not for sissies. In the afternoons we "studied" around the hotel pool, consumed libations, or went on local field trips.

Some of the favorite field trips were excursions to the Maya ruins of Ek Balam and Chichen Itza, a swim in a hidden cenote, a bull fight with midgets, and a local semi-pro baseball game. In addition, the group had a wonderful afternoon with Antonio "El Negro" Aguilar, one of Mexico's ten best baseball players of all time. We concluded our stay in Valladolid with a grand fiesta at the Hacienda San Miguel, a restored rancho currently promoting ecotourism.

Then, we were "on the road again," deep into the jungle to the classic Maya city of Uxmal. Here we stayed in the quiet sanctuary of the Hacienda Uxmal with its luxurious gardens, sixty-foot high royal palms, and brilliant bougainvillea. At the Uxmal ruins we walked the paths of the ancient Maya and marveled at the exquisite rock carvings and elaborate architectural design of a civilization that reached its peak over a thousand years ago. A side trip took us on the Ruta Puuc to Kabah, Labna, Tikul, and Mani. At Mani we visited the site where the Spanish priest, Diego de Landa, burned the Maya books and destroyed most of the written history of this advanced civilization.

In Merida we fell in love with the old colonial ambience that is present everywhere. The narrow cobblestone streets, the zocalo with its majestic cathedral, and the government buildings complete.

*Continued on page 28*

## Around the World

*continued from page 27*

### Views of Landscapes

linguistic differences when dealing cross-culturally.” Since most “miscommunication comes from the misuse or misunderstanding of language,” we need to interpret the issues and questions of inter-cultural and international use of GIS.

Stea, Mark, and Rick Watson of the University of New Mexico, prepared and submitted an international grant application to the Geography and Regional Science program of the National Science Foundation for 2004. Funding for the Texas State Geography Department’s role will be approximately half of the more than \$400,000 requested for the research and will include support for a Geography doctoral student. Bilingual students will interview elders to explore cultural stories of creation as a social context for discerning the names of features and their meaning.

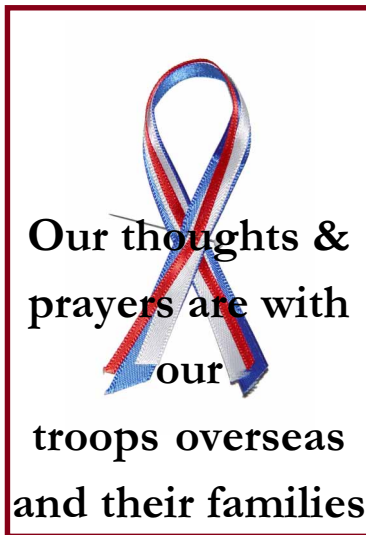


*David Mark,  
Carmelita Topaha & David Stea*

This truly international and inter-cultural research team will also include: Homana Pawicki—a Hopi, Stea’s former research assistant at UCLA, and now a graduate student in geography at NAU; Andrew Turk - Australian anthropologist; Nathan Selestewa—geography graduate student at NAU and consultant; and Carmelita Topaha (pictured with Stea and Mark)—a Navajo anthropologist, archaeologist and weaver.

Free e-mail address  
available FOR LIFE!

Contact us at  
[www.geo.txstate.edu](http://www.geo.txstate.edu) and  
find out how!



*continued from page 27*

### Yucatan:

#### Land of the Maya

In Puerto Morelos we snorkeled on the second largest barrier reef in the world. The reef is protected within the Mexican National Park system and contains beautiful coral and fish life. Plus, the local restaurant, Pelicanos, has the best fried shrimp on the Caribbean shoreline. Although we stayed in Cancun two nights, we felt it was a “totally gringo city,” and observed that it was not a place to experience the true culture of Mexico.

Our last four days were spent on Isla Mujeres, a small island that gives new meaning to “tropical paradise.” Our rooms were on a cliff overlooking the ocean and the sound of the waves lulled us to sleep each night. We were treated to a wonderful climatic experience when we were caught on the ocean as Tropical Storm Bill moved through the area. Our small boats were tossed about by the waves conjuring up an image of the “perfect storm” for those who were less experienced at ocean fishing. Still, we caught barracuda, yellow-tail snapper, and bonita and had a wonderful barbequed fish feast on the beach. We also visited an old pirate’s lodging, an endangered turtle farm, Maya ruins and some gorgeous beaches before we called it a trip and headed home. Rebecca and I both felt that we had had the opportunity to travel with a truly unique and wonderful group of students who left us with a host of pleasant memories.

### Students Attending Professional Meetings

#### Annual Conference of Royal Geographical Society

London, England  
September 2003

David Rutherford

#### National Council for Geographic Education- (NCGE)

Salt Lake City, Utah  
October 2003

Ellen Foster

Cathy Springer

#### Southwestern Division of the Association of American Geographers- (SWAAG)

Stillwater, Oklahoma  
October 2003

Mikaila Bell

Dawna Cerney

Jonathan Herbert

Lynn Resler

Eric Samson

Derek Wu

#### Applied Geography Conference

Colorado Springs, Colorado  
November 2003

Rachel Benke

Bernadette Marion

John Meaker

Jessica Mefford

Darlene Occena-Gutierrez

Carol Sawyer

David Viertel

#### Transportation Research Board

Washington, D.C.  
January 2004

Xuwei Chen

John Meaker



## Alumni Bits

**John Bradford** (B.S., 1998) has entered the Master of Science program in Land Development/Construction Management at Texas A&M University.

**Frank Brazile** (M.A.G., 1995) completed his Ph.D. at the University of Zurich in 2000, focusing on cartographic generalization and related computation/processing. He then entered industry as a software engineer. He currently works as a software architect for Patni Computer Systems in Boston.

**Trent Botkin** (B.S., 2002) is in his second and final year pursuing a master's degree in Applied Geography from New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. He writes, "Currently, I'm working for a conservation-oriented ranch and performing an analysis on a degraded ephemeral stream and designing a riparian rehabilitation plan. Mountains, deserts, and chile are good for the soul."

**Buck Buchanan** (M.A.G., 1999) is Chair of the Geosciences Department at Cy-Fair College in Houston.

**Aaron Buck** (M.A.G., 2003) is teaching English in Quito, Ecuador.

**Paul Cauduro** (B.S., 1984) is the Government Relations Director for the Home Builders Association of Greater Dallas (the Dallas affiliate of the National Association of Home Builders). He and his wife Michelle welcomed their first child, Evan August Cauduro, last year.

**Scott Childress** (B.S., 2002) and his wife, Christina, were married in May and live in Houston. Scott is working for PennWell MAPSearch creating GIS databases and maps for the electric and petroleum industry. He writes, "We recently had the New York Times call us for our electric and power data after the blackout had occurred."

**Kenneth Davis** (B.S., 2001) works in photogrammetry with SAM, Inc. in Austin. He recently completed a GIS project for the National Park Service's Glacier Monitoring program by mapping six glaciers in the Northern Cascades and Mount Rainier

ranges. He writes, "My son, Sam, and I continue to enjoy our home in Wimberley. We often snorkel in local rivers, creeks, springs and regularly visit Matagorda Bay to sail. Over the summer, we visited all the major historical sites of the Texas Revolution and soon plan to complete a Powerpoint slide show of the whole affair. Free-diving has become my latest passion having been down to 30 feet for over one minute on one breath. Sundials have returned as a subject of my personal research, and I've just worked out the design of horizontal and vertical dials for installation at any location and scale through the use of the US Naval Observatory's Web site and Excel and AutoCAD softwares."

**Brian Dopp** (M.A.G., 2001) continues as President of Phoenix Disaster Services in San Antonio. His company has been upgraded to a limited liability company.

**Maria Durcanska** (M.A.G., 1997) and her husband, Peter, are proud parents of Ivana Paige Durcanska, born February 5, 2003 in Dallas. She joins big sister Katarina (Katka), aged 2.

**Daniel Federici** (B.S., 1999) is a teacher of Earth Science and Class Advisor at Newton High School in Newton, New Jersey. He recently purchased a house in Newton that was built in 1860 and was a stopover point on the Underground Railroad.

**Chad Hall** (M.A.G., 1997) continues as Central U.S. Regional Manager for the Mapping and GIS Division, Trimble Navigation Limited.

**John Kaminski** (B.S., 1986) is Planning Director for the City of Victoria, Texas. He was honored in August by the Central Texas Section, American Planning Association as its 2003 Planner of the Year.

**Michal Kohout** (M.A.G., 1996) is completing his Ph.D. in Geography at Clark University and has accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Geography at California State University—San Bernardino.

**Marc LeFebvre** (M.A.G., 2002) continues as Coordinator for the Flying WILD program with the Council on Environmental Education in Houston. He enjoys canoeing and birding with his wife Thea and children Leo and Cypress.

**Miranda Lewitsky** (M.S., 2002) has returned to Austin after living for six months in Brazil. She is teaching five-year-olds at a Montessori school in Austin.

**Julie Lugaro** (M.A.G., 1999) is Easement Coordinator for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

**Michelle Maness** (M.A.G., 2003) spent this Fall with the National Geographic Society's Education Foundation. There she worked with Geography Action, which sponsors the National Geography Bee and Geography Awareness Week. In January 2004, she began service with the Peace Corps in Guatemala.



*Lt. Julie Henry*

**Julie Henry** (M.S., 1999)

On June 19, 2003, Lt. Julie Henry, USAF, received the Joint Service Achievement Medal.

# Alumni Bits

**Jo Beth Oestreich** (M.A.G., 1991) taught two classes in fall 2003 in Curriculum and Instruction at Texas State University.

**Linda Prosperie** (M.A.G., 1998; Ph.D., 2002) is a research associate at the University of Texas Center for Space Research. She provides mapping support for the Governor's Division of Emergency Management and has contributed to the recovery of the space shuttle Columbia, Liberty Shield, and hurricane preparedness, response and recovery.

**Michelle Pulich** (M.A.G., 2001) and Alexander Stewart were married on May 31 in Wimberley. In June, Michelle began a full-time position with the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club in Phoenix, Arizona.

**Gabriela Ramirez** (M.A.G., 2002) is a Transportation Planner for the Houston-Galveston Area Council.

**Diana Stevens** (B.S., 1995) is Team Leader for the Pollution Control Division, Galveston County Health District.


**Brian Teinert** (M.S., 2002) is a Field Manager stationed in Ecuador for the Planet Drum Foundation in Bahia de Caraquez, Ecuador (see a more detailed account of his activities on page 22).

**Jimmy Tyree** (B.S., 1996; M.A.G., 2001) is an Environmental Planner for the Texas Department of Transportation. He is responsible for coordinating environmental planning activities and NEPA document reviews and serves as the state community impacts specialist and the legislative liaison for the Environmental Affairs Division. In June, he participated in a round table discussion on sharing GIS data between resource agencies at Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

**Todd Votteler** (Ph.D., 2000) and Sharmon Sullivan were married in June in New Orleans, Louisiana. Todd is the director of natural resources for the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority. He is also the executive director of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) land and water trust.

**Jeff Wilson** (M.S. 2002) is working on his Ph.D. in Geography at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. He is also Head of Consulting Services for MetaWealth, which is a firm focused on building a sustainable global economy.

**Sam Woods** (B.S. 1991; M.A.G. 1997) received his AICP certification this year. He is still the Transportation Planning Director of the Lubbock Metropolitan Planning Organization in Lubbock, Texas.



*Jamie Dayne Sackett*

*Joe Sackett holding Jamie*

**Jesse Fox Sackett** (M.S., 2002)  
& **Joe Sackett** (M.S. XX)

On July 21, 2003, Jesse and Joe Sackett gave birth to baby girl, Jamie Dayne Sackett, born July 21, 2003 in Zurich, Switzerland. Jamie was 20 inches long and weighed 7 pounds, 5 ounces.

**Dean Rother** (M.A.G., 1999) is a GIS Analyst for J. F. Thompson, Inc. in Houston, TX.

*continued from page 1*

## Geo Annex

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Bob Larsen is the principal investigator of these projects that are bringing as much as \$3 million per year into the department. Larsen supervises four full-time staff and more than 40 undergraduate and graduate student assistants. The Geography Annex's equipment infrastructure is cutting edge and has direct fiber-optics communications with the TCEQ in Austin. In spring 2004 the department will host an open house for its new Geography Annex.

*continued from page 12*

## Texas State

We strongly urged the leaders of Texas to approve the name change of our institution to Texas State University. Because they have done so, we can assure them that even more remarkable accomplishments will come from our Geography Department and from the other fine departments and programs across campus that will make Texas State a university that is known internationally for its truly outstanding academic programs, thereby serving well the people of Texas in many more notable ways. I hope Geography students and alumni will likewise celebrate our new national image as Texas State University-San Marcos!

*GeoNews* is a semiannual publication of the Department of Geography at Texas State University

**Emariana Taylor**  
Editor



I would like to thank Dr. Fred Shelley for all of his help in preparing this edition of *GeoNews*.

For a free subscription to *GeoNews*, please contact:  
Department of Geography  
Texas State University  
San Marcos, TX 78666-4616  
Phone: 512-245-2170 - Fax: 512-245-8353  
E-mail: [geography@txstate.edu](mailto:geography@txstate.edu)  
[www.geo.txstate.edu](http://www.geo.txstate.edu)

Texas State University-San Marcos, a member of the Texas State University System, is an equal opportunity institution.







Ready for Some Fun?

**The 10th Annual**

*Texas State Geography*

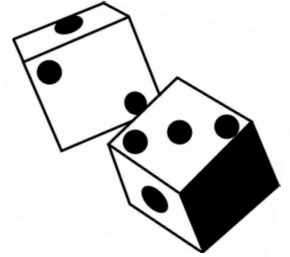
*Alumni Reunion and Student Celebration*

***Celebrates our***

***2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Casino Night***

***(black jack and craps)***

***on Friday, April 23, 2004***



***Participate and win some cool prizes!***

*Historic Fish Hatchery Office in Sewell Park*

*(right behind San Marcos Chamber of Commerce and Parks & Recreation Department)*

*7:00 pm Hospitality Room opens*

*7:30 pm Action begins*

*\$50 donation to the Texas State Department of Geography Scholarship Fund covers the entry, and refreshments in the hospitality room*

***Do you want to come watch and not play?***

*\$10 gets you an evening of fun includes hospitality room snacks and beverages.*

***You must be 21 or older to enter the building and/or play!***

*For more information, contact: Angelika Wahl, [angelika@txstate.edu](mailto:angelika@txstate.edu)*

***Deadline to sign up to play: Friday, April 16, 2004***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to:

play? (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_

I am 21 or older \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

watch (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to "Texas State Geography" and mark it "Casino Night"