From the Chair’s Chair

Greetings from Columbia. We hope to see many of you here at the Department’s Tailgate Celebration of Homecoming on October 27, 2012. Please let Dina know if you can make it (email NicholsDi@missouri.edu).

This academic year will see some significant personnel changes. Already we have welcomed Grant Elliott as a Tenure Track faculty member specializing in physical geography. Both Professor Larry Brown and Dianne Roberts (our Fiscal Officer) will retire next spring. I will finish the last year of my two terms as Department Chair, and a new chair (yet to be nominated) will take over in August. Larry has said he would like to continue to teach some courses for us, but not Regions and Nations I. Larry will be the Graduate Program Coordinator, and a new chair (yet to be nominated) will take over in August.

Larry has said he would like to continue to teach some courses for us, but not Regions and Nations I. The new chair will be a new chair (yet to be nominated) will take over in August. I will finish the last year of my two terms as Department Chair, and a new chair (yet to be nominated) will take over in August. Larry has said he would like to continue to teach some courses for us, but not Regions and Nations I. Larry will be the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Both Professor Larry Brown and Dianne Roberts (our Fiscal Officer) will retire next spring. I will finish the last year of my two terms as Department Chair, and a new chair (yet to be nominated) will take over in August. Larry has said he would like to continue to teach some courses for us, but not Regions and Nations I. Larry will be the Graduate Program Coordinator, and a new chair (yet to be nominated) will take over in August. I will finish the last year of my two terms as Department Chair, and a new chair (yet to be nominated) will take over in August. Larry has said he would like to continue to teach some courses for us, but not Regions and Nations I. Larry will be the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Our undergraduate program continues to grow, and we are excited about the new classes and the new major in Geospatial Intelligence. We will miss Larry’s meticulous and dedicated work as the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Our undergraduate program continues to grow, pushing upward towards the record number of majors we had in the 1990s. At the graduate level, our main objective now is the same one we had in Jesse Wheeler’s years: to offer a superb Master’s Degree in Geography. We have not abandoned our ambition to host doctoral students, however. In fact we are working with Geological Sciences to create a Ph.D. in Geosciences. Students would earn the Ph.D. in Geosciences with a specialization in either Geography or Geology. We are also working with MU’s Informatics Institute to admit graduate students who would earn the M.A. degree in Geography and then continue on to a Ph.D. in Informatics, with a specialization in Geospatial Informatics.

MU is making a push for online courses to complement our traditional classes. While it wouldn’t make sense for us to try to put a Geography major online, we probably will build an online certificate in Geospatial Intelligence: look for that over the next couple of years. There is always concern about the quality of teaching in an online environment. We are confident that our profs, who do great work in the classroom, will be satisfied only if they also do great work online.

With best wishes to you and your loved ones.

Joe

**Vietnam Institute**

The Geography Department and Asian Affairs Center continue to sponsor the Vietnam Institute. Based in Joe Hobbs’ office, the institute serves as the ‘nerve center’ for all Vietnam-related activities on campus (see http://vietnam.missouri.edu). The population of MU’s Vietnamese student population has grown from nearly 80 now. Recent activities include a visit to MU by dignitaries of Vietnam’s extraordinary Cao Dai religion, and Joe Hobbs’ talk on MU’s Vietnam efforts at the Bilateral Roundtable on Science and Technology held at the residence of the Vietnamese Ambassador in Washington D.C.

**GeoTech registration information for the 2013 Summers@Mizzou camp.**

**GEOGRAPHY HOMECOMING TAILGATE**

Saturday October 27 2012
Tiger Terrace, Rain or Shine
(Tiger Terrace is on east side of Memorial Union, between Memorial Union & Steward Hall)
RSVP by October 1 on Facebook (http://www.facebook.com/groups/mizzougeo/or look up “Geography Homecoming Tailgate”), or with Dina Nichols at NicholsDi@missouri.edu, tel. 573-882-8370
⇒ Specific times and events to be announced on the MU Geography Homepage: http://geog.missouri.edu
⇒ Homecoming 101: See all there is to know about MU’s 101st Annual Homecoming at http://www.mizzou.edu/s/1002/index.aspx?id=1002&gid=1&pgid=16

**4th Year of GeoTech Summer Camp adds service learning component**

This year’s GeoTech camp, in cooperation with Missouri 4-H’s Summers@Mizzou program, was quite a success. The 2012 camp run by Dr. Shannon White and graduate student Matt Jacobsen introduced geography and geospatial technology to middle and high school students. In addition to GPS, GIS and remote sensing, traditional map reading, pacing, orienteering and cave explorations are always a hit in this camp.

This year the camp added a service learning component and partnered with the City of Columbia, with the help of MU Geography Department Alumn, Matthew Gerike. The students collected GPS data about the sidewalk and curb ramps based on parameters outlined by the City of Columbia. The kids spent one very hot morning (temperatures reached 104 degrees) of the camp collecting information in teams in the East Campus neighborhood. Over 300 points of data were collected within 2 hours. This information was then brought back to the lab and mapped by the camp participants. The campers presented their data, maps and suggestions for data collection methods to 3 members of the City of Columbia GIS office staff who were impressed by the work of the young geographers. The data will be used by the city to prioritize needs for sidewalk improvements in East Campus.

Next year’s summer camp dates have already been set for July 14-18 and 21-25, 2013. Keep an eye on the Department of Geography Facebook page this Winter for the GeoTech registration information for the 2013 Summers@Mizzou camp.
Students

Jordan Duf: Spent the last five months studying abroad in Bergen, Norway. "Here in Bergen it has been nothing but rain, however my spirits have never been higher. My abroad experience has been one of the greatest learning opportunities I have received. I feel more connected to the world than ever before, and look forward to coming back to my senior year at Mizzou ready to finish strong. Now that my Norway adventure is wrapping up I am thirsty for more abroad experiences."

James P Hummel "My milestones are: my first son Charles was born in December 2011 and I will be married in September 2012 to my fiance Jenna."

Beth Kelly "This summer I will head out to the Sonoran Desert to conduct my thesis fieldwork on the Arizona Trail and then run a trail maintenance crew based out of Tucson. After a couple months in the dry heat, I’m excited to go backpacking in Glacier and take a short bike tour of the Pacific Northwest. I’m looking forward to finishing my thesis by December 2012."

Nathan Easley - "I will be spending the summer in Jacksonville, FL working as a GIS/Enterprise services intern for CSX Transportation."

Ngan Le “2011-2012 is a significant year in my life. My dream has come true because I accomplished my Masters program at MU. After graduating in June, I will go back to my country Vietnam and spend the whole summer with my beloved family and friends. I am so excited to see how many changes have taken place in my hometown, Hochiminh City, as well as other provinces of Vietnam. Travelling is definitely included in my list of things I want to do, even though my summer plan has not been fixed. If the tropical typhoons forget to visit Vietnam this summer, I will fly to ConDao Island, try scuba diving and observe the coral reefs (the subject of my thesis) there.

When September comes, I will go back to work as an instructor in my university. With knowledge and experience gained at MU, I can improve my teaching and encourage my students to study hard so that they too might come to MU. In addition, I will try to publish or present my thesis research to scientists in Vietnam. In the upcoming year, I would like to learn and experience as much as possible before deciding to pursue a Ph.D. degree.

However, I will miss MU and our Department so much! Saying good bye is never easy. MU is always in my heart.

Love you all!” Ngan

Peter Thommasen "I am in Gwangju, South Korea right now conducting a Geography research project arranged through the Undergraduate Research Mentorship Program. I am studying the differences between the academic experiences of Korean and American college-age students with an eye toward what factors cause them to feel stressed."

Faculty

Soren Larsen – The Larsen family is doing well. Jonah is now 10 years old and learning his first guitar licks (‘Smoke on the Water’), Eli is 7 and a budding herpetologist (aquaria with frogs, tadpoles, turtles, a snake if we would let him), and Alex is just over a year old, babbling away in a baby language that only he and my wife Kristi seem to understand. On the professional front, the special issue of the Journal of Cultural Geography that Jay Johnson (University of Kansas) and I co-edited on the topic of indigenous research came out in February and our co-authored Annals piece officially came out in May. I’ve also been writing a book-length memoir of my first ethnographic fieldwork with the Chetessata-Carrier First Nation in northern British Columbia based on my hand-written field notes from the summer of 1998. Still teaching Regions, Economic Geography, sub-Saharan Africa, Geographic Thought and also new this year, a real exciting seminar on the political ecology of the North American West."

Matt Foulkes “The only milestone I have for this year is the birth of my son, Jacob Luke Foulkes, on February 22nd of this year.”

Joseph Hobbs “I’ve had a good next-to-last year as chair. It’s our last year at home together as a family. In the fall Katie will be off to study music at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois (Dianne Roberts’ hometown). It seems like yesterday that Gail and Phil threw a baby shower for Katie. Lily will move on to Rock Bridge High School. Cindy continues teaching Fifth Grade at Russell Elementary. We enjoyed spring break in the Yucatan. Despite all the terrible things you hear about Mexico, it is an enchanting country and the people you’ll meet there are delightful. In August I started writing a new edition of what used to be the Wheeler/Kostbade/Salter world regional geography textbook. I am working on page proofs now and the book will publish in July. I’m really happy about our community in the Department, and grateful for the growth Mike O’Brien has granted us – especially granting us Grant as our newest tenure track hire.”

Prof. Mark H. Palmer This has been a busy year for Palmer. This summer, he will have two peer-reviewed articles published (1) in Cartography and (1) in American Indian Culture and Research Journal. Palmer finally got around to submitting a co-authored paper (with Robert Rundstrom) to the Annals of the Association of American Geographers. The manuscript is currently under review. And, two book chapters will be published this summer and fall. Palmer co-authored one paper with former student Scott Kraushaar to be published this coming summer in Crowdsourcing Geographic Knowledge, edited by D. Sui, M. Goodchild, and S. Elwood, and another chapter entitled “GIS as a Postcolonial Discourse” will be published in Epistemologies of Historical GIS edited by A. Von Luenen. He also has a book on Indigenous story geography in press with SUNY Press. Palmer was flattered to receive a “Writing Intensive Teaching Excellence Award” from the Mizzou Campus Writing Program for his course Native American Geographies 3760 (Fall 2011). Finally, Palmer advised two masters’ students through completion (Scott Kraushaar and Denise McElroy) and signed off on Michelle Bogowith’s thesis that focused on the ENSO cycle.

Grant Elliott “This has been a very memorable semester, highlighted by my acceptance of a tenure-track position here at Mizzou. My family and I are ecstatic to make Columbia our permanent home! From a research standpoint, I presented some collaborative work done with retired Geography professor, Mark Cowell, at the Annual AAG Meeting in New York City. This research deals with the role of the climatic water budget in driving high-elevation forest dynamics in the Rocky Mountains of New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming. I have also been researching the biogeographic manifestations of climate change in these regions of the Rocky Mountains and I have two manuscripts stemming from this work. One was recently published in the journal Physical Geography and another is going to be published in the July issue of Ecology. On the teaching side of things, I was nominated for an Excellence in Education Award and overall, I very much look forward to transitioning into my new role as Assistant Professor.”

Geographic Resources Center

Martin Wills What’s new in the area of the Missouri Spatial Data Information Service Implementation of Image Server and ESRI’s “Geoportal”: Over the last year MSDIS has transitioned to a new method of Geospatial data discovery by implementing “Geoportal” software from ESRI. MSDIS data holdings include GIS datasets, rasters, and Web services. Geoportal is helping MSDIS manage and publish metadata for geospatial resources to let users discover and connect to those resources. The Geoportal Server supports standards-based clearinghouse and metadata discovery applications. Geoportal utilizes ISO (International Standards
**Alumni**

Larry Hall and Diana Hallett. Larry reports that he has switched kayaks (from Perception to Rip Necky) and continues his passion of point hunting on Mid-Missouri’s creeks. Last year he earned the nickname “Helicopter Mom” for dotting on Diana when she broke her leg and picked up Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

Robert Walker, 64, died peacefully in mid-April from pneumonia brought on by a system weakened by cancer.

Friends and co-workers were invited to share stories of Bob on Saturday, April 21, at Cooper’s Landing.

He was born in Chicago to Manda Derezinski Walker and William Walker, who are both deceased. Bob worked for Boone County as lead surveyor.

Bob received his bachelor’s degree in economics from Washington University and a master’s degree in geography from the University of Missouri. He loved travel and learning about other cultures. He served with VISTA in California and Colorado and with the Peace Corps in Mali. In his youth, he traveled through Europe and was blessed by the pope in St. Peter’s Square. He began his surveying career in Australia. He returned to the United States after eight months in Asia and Europe, spending only $2,000 and ending the trip by sleeping on a London sidewalk to reserve a seat on a Freddie Laker flight.

Bob fought off bears in Washington State and survived peritonitis while in India, a copperhead bite in Arkansas and a bloody encounter with a log by the Missouri River.

Senator Kurt Schaefler—My study of geography at MU taught me to recognize and analyze relationships—between different groups of people, between people and their environment, between historical and economic realities. Understanding these relationships helps me tremendously in identifying problems and finding solutions among competing interests, making me a much more effective legislator.

Whether I am working with rural farmers, urban industry, low income advocacy groups, or any other diverse interest, my geography skills help me to literally know where people are coming from.

Kurt is a Missouri Senator from District 19 which includes Columbia and Boone County and chairman of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee. Before serving in the General Assembly, he was deputy director of the Department of Natural Resources; special counsel to the Governor; special counsel to the Department of Agriculture; Assistant Attorney General of Missouri; and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney. His environmental law degrees (1995, 1996) are from the Vermont Law School.

Michael “Scott” Christy My plane is my ticket to unspoiled pristine wilderness. He is a Maule M-6. I fly him on floats, wheels, & wheel skis. I have flown about six times to the Lower 48 on long flying trips. This fall we plan on flying to ‘America’ and as far east as Maine. We have been having an extra cool summer. Our hot days are at best in the high 60s to low 70s. To escape your heat I suggest you visit Alaska.

Ray Danner—2002 My wife Julie and I completed PhDs in Biological Sciences at Virginia Tech (in May and June, respectively) and I was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution (started in July) to study the evolution of bird bill morphology. Julie is also doing a postdoc at the Smithsonian studying genetics of grasshopper sparrows.

Fred Iutzi—2001 My wife Melissa Calvillo and I welcomed our first child, Phillip Roderick Iutzi, on January 23, 2012. And in June I was named Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of the Agricultural Watershed Institute, a nonprofit based in Decatur, IL. (I continue my employment with the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University in Macomb, IL.)

Fred Moore began a 21-year career with StorageTek as the company’s first systems engineer and concluded as Corporate Vice President of Strategic Planning and Marketing. In 1998, Fred founded Horizon Information Strategies in Boulder, Colorado, a data storage industry analyst and consulting firm that specializes in executive briefings, market strategy development, and identifying key and emerging trends for end-users and storage industry suppliers. Fred served as Editor of Storage for Computer Technology Review magazine and produces numerous books, articles, research reports, analysis and webcasts for the storage industry.

He is a 1999 recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award and a 2004 recipient of the Arts and Science Scholar-In-Residence Award at the University of Missouri, Columbia where he received a bachelor’s degree in mathematics and a master’s degree in computer applications in physical geography. A sought-after motivator and frequent keynote speaker at storage and IT events worldwide, Fred completed the Berkeley Executive Program in 1997. He currently serves on a few select boards in the storage networking industry.
Meet some of our graduate students

Dave Knieter: —This past year I moved from St. Louis, where I had been teaching 7th grade Communication Arts, to Columbia, where I instantly fell smitten with the surplus of bike trails that meander in and around the area. My reasons for coming here were not initially related to my personal academic pursuits, but were connected to my recent engagement to Walter, his former instructor at both Missouri and Central Michigan University. Historical Society of Missouri awarded Walter its Distinguished Service Award in 2011. An MU Geography alumnus, William M. Marsh (M.A. 1965), dedicated his most recent textbook Physical Geography: Great Systems and Global Environments (Cambridge University Press, 2013) to Walter, his former instructor at both Missouri and Central Michigan University.

Kit Salter continues to work on a Road Book. He used a partial draft of the 200 page ms for a Life Long Learning Osher class this spring entitled: The Road in America: An Exploration of our American Way of Life. He is also now involved in the writing of short stories. He published one this year in Well Versed (for which he got an Honorable Mention). The story is called “Swimming With Mao.” He has five others that have come out of his effort and the most recent one, “A Blank Page”, has been submitted to The New Yorker. He teaches classes for Osher Life Long Learning and still does some talk circuit work on a variety of subjects. He has now logged 38+ years as an insulin-dependent diabetic and feels damn lucky to still feel so good!

Cathy Salter published her first book, Notes From Breakfast Creek: A Look at The World in 2008 and has had good activity on the talk circuit for writing groups and civic groups interested in her capacity to speak to issues that range from her garden to her foreign travels to her ‘imaginary conversations’ with Thomas Jefferson and Denzel Washington and others. She has begun work on a second book and has recently celebrated 18 years as a weekly columnist in The Columbia Daily Tribune and Boone County Journal.

Aaron Groth—Aaron grew up in Janesville, WI. After studying History and Environmental Studies, Aaron graduated in 2006 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and entered the Peace Corps to serve as an Environmental Volunteer. For two years he worked in the northern Andes of Ayabaca, Piura, near the Ecuadorian border. He partnered with Nature and Culture International and local leaders to conserve the high elevation cloud forest of Cuyas, promoting environmental conservation and facilitating use of the forest as an outdoor lab with local schools. In 2009 he served as a third year Volunteer Coordinator in Lima, working closely with the Environment Program Director and liaising with Peru’s National Park Service. In 2010 he served as a fourth year Regional Coordinator in Ninacaca, Pasco supporting a cluster of Volunteers in an area new for Peace Corps. Aaron supported the Peruvian Park Service in their management of Junin National Reserve, a RAMSAR site, partnering with schools and local leaders. Living at 13,500 feet was cold.

Following his Peace Corps service, Aaron worked as a Community Conservation Coordinator with Upper Amazon Conservancy and their Peruvian sister organization, ProPurús in the southwest Amazon. Aaron led research regarding natural resource use in four indigenous communities on the Purús and Curanja Rivers, near Alto Purús National Park (Peru’s largest). He also trained park guards and led investigative patrols of local rivers to deter illegal extraction of mahogany and poaching.

As a Fellow, Aaron will partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in their education, outreach, and extension activities. His thesis research will focus upon the Purús region.

Lebo Moore—Be there no mistake, some greater force has been coaxing Lebo towards studying Geography (land use/food systems) for years. It just took her a little longer to figure it out. You think she would have guessed it from the wanderlust that sent her to South America as a Peace Corps volunteer, or perhaps a telling sign would have been the time she drove from Ecuador to Argentina selling soft serve ice cream with two friends and two dogs. There may have been early signs of recognition in Zambia where she farmed, but really, not until she had completed her first day of classes at Mizzou (grr) did it really hit home that this is exactly what she has been moving towards all this time. She couldn’t be more ready or excited to take hold of this next adventure.
Aaron Wesley—Ever a computer nerd, I love discovering new ways to apply technological solutions to the spatial problems I encounter. With an interest, shaped primarily by early community service experiences, of identifying and analyzing ‘vulnerable populations’, I have used my talents to help officials at the local, state and national level make better decisions in issues of disaster planning, mitigation and response. I have also been tutoring inner-city youth, fighting wildfires, making wine, running an animal adoption center, and traveling widely around East Asia and the Pacific. When not in Columbia, I can usually be found in St. Louis city, scouring some international grocery store for something bizarre to cook.

**Mizzou Geography Apparel**

Just in time for the Geography Department Tailgate – order a Geography Department t-shirt or hoodie for you and your loved ones. GTU, the student geography honor society, is once again selling the classic Mizzou Geography design, with one slight change this year adding the Department coordinates to the design. We have 2 deadlines this fall. If you place your order by October 5th, you can stop by the Department to pick up your shirts or hoodies for the Homecoming festivities (orders for shipping will arrive after Homecoming). Our second deadline for ordering is just in time to arrive for the winter holidays; get that order in by November 15. We will ship to any location a US Postal office flat rate box can be delivered. Place your order for shirts at [http://geospatial.missouri.edu/gtu/GTUorder2012.pdf](http://geospatial.missouri.edu/gtu/GTUorder2012.pdf)

**Gamma Theta Upsilon update from this year’s Beta Xi Chapter President, Dan Ligibel**

It’s an exciting year for Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU), as Mizzou’s chapter of the International Geographic Honor Society boasts nearly 50 students! Building on the growing 2011-2012 school year, the Beta Xi Chapter in 2012 plans to continue in its service, outreach and social activities.

To recap our stellar 2011 year: We had several guest speakers, first Michael Dulin from the Army Corps of Engineers came and talked about the role GIS played in Joplin’s recovery from the 2011 tornado. Our spring semester guest speaker was Dr. Fred Martz, emeritus professor in Agriculture from MU, who discussed Agricultural Stability during climate change. This year we are planning more guest speakers sponsored by the Chapter to get a professional perspective of geography in the world and a more in depth view of the practicality and role GIS plays in the world. For our fall semester speaker we are working with Dr. Darcy Ogden, from Scripps Institute in California, who will come and discuss her research in computational fluid dynamics to geoscience problems and volcanic hazards.

In addition to guest speakers in 2011 the Chapter also was involved in service projects with the Mid-America GIS Consortium and with Camp Hickory Hill, a camp for children with diabetes. We have already kicked off this year’s service by working with other organizations to conduct a GPS geocaching event for over 60 campers and camp staff at Camp Hickory Hill this July. This Fall we will be reaching out to students at Mizzou during the Arts and Science celebration week on Lowry Mall in September. And we hope to help the Missouri Geographic Alliance with their conference as well as get into local elementary schools during Geography Awareness Week in November. However, it’s not all business with GTU. We are also helping the faculty to set up a Geography Department Tailgate for students, faculty, staff and alumni in celebration of the University’s first homecoming in the South Eastern Conference! Our chapter will be selling shirts again this fall for this event. We are very excited about how far GTU has come since our re-activation and want to continue the growth of our chapter. Thank you for all the support!

**Volunteered Geographic Information Collected at Missouri State Fair**

One of the projects the Geographic Resources Center (GRC) has been involved in the past 3 years has been a statewide effort to examine the availability, access and adoption of Broadband internet technology throughout the State of Missouri. The mapping effort of this American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funded partnership with the State of Missouri. In the past 2 years much of the work has been centered on Strategic Planning in conjunction with the 19 Regional Planning Commissions, or RPC’s, in Missouri. This summer as a part of the research and verification processes related to the mapping of Broadband, the MU Broadband team actively sought Volunteered Geographic Information, or VGI, at the Missouri State Fair. This was the 3rd and most successful year of data collection at the Missouri State Fair.

In order to collect a large amount of information from Missouri residents for the MoBroadbandNow initiative, the Mizzou Broadband Mapping Team decided to visit the Missouri State Fair in Sedalia, Missouri in order to reach a larger number of individuals than might have been met by door-to-door research methodology. The Missouri State Fair attracts an estimated 300,000+ people, therefore this high attendance event provides a venue for wider data collection and broader geographic distribution.

The Broadband Mapping Team could be found in two locations during the 11 day fair. The main data collection through a brief survey was positioned at the Mizzou Central Building organized by the College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (CAFNR). This also provided a great partnership to be forged with Buck’s Ice cream where a free scoop was an incentive for filling out our surveys. The final survey count was over 2100 completed surveys. Even Truman the Tiger stopped by to fill out a survey (see photo). Additionally, the Broadband mapping team collected information about broadband availability through “old fashioned” pin maps which were digitized using GIS daily. This effort took place under a Mizzou Tigers tent outside of the MO-AG Theatre building. The large detailed maps of our state divided into four quadrants drew the attention of many fairgoers where they were then asked to physically place a colored pin on their home location. The map pin colors would vary depending on the presence or lack of broadband availability at the indicated location. The team collected over 1,800 data points throughout the fair. More information about the Missouri Broadband effort can be found at [http://mobroadbandnow.com](http://mobroadbandnow.com) and questions regarding the research can be sent to broadband@missouri.edu.
Bob Boon—So, this last year. I’ve probably only done one actually productive thing, which I’ll save for the end. I have bounced around quite a bit. In October, I attended the Society for American Indians Centennial in Columbus, Ohio, and enjoyed the keynote by Robert Warrior and the performance art of Joy Harjo. December, I attended a symposium called “Excursions—Telling Stories and Journeys” at the University of Glasgow. I hope I can grow up and do some of those kinds of geography. And this was worthwhile in that one of my Columbia College bosses wanted to go along, so she and her son, who had never been out of the country, went along, and we all made it there and back, sampling a good deal of the national beverage (I prefer “peaty” and “smoky”), made a pilgrimage to William Wallace’s place, and searched in vain for Nessy. At Christmas, I fled the ghastly consumer holiday, and spent a week in Panama decompressing before I joined a CC student trip in Costa Rica. The Canal is an impressive statement of—oh, a lot of power issues. I enjoyed rainforests, jungle critters, guaro, walks in “bad” neighborhoods, but was most struck by a day trip to west Panama, an old caldera, where we found indigenous rock art; interesting was the performance situation where small boys would negotiate a fee, lead folks to the site, then “read” the map-story of the rocks, creating a new cultural expression which may or may not have anything to do with the original intentions.

More horrific school, grading, then in May co-led blog going)—Istanbul, Troy, Gallipoli, Athens, Delphi. New city richly rebuilt by one of Alexander’s generals, complete took a lift to the top, bought cheap, 5 lira umbrellas, and stood overlooking what would have been the Temple of Zeus. Four of us suddenly jumped, and the guide instantly brella in place, camera ready—and got static-zapped a his mountain, or go visit his temple in Berlin, but we moved on the cool, swim by the new volcanic island boat ride; I Minoan Bronze age community buried by an extreme eruption, which some say inspired Plato’s tale of Atlantis. I took lots of pictures of mud bricks and broken pots, then drank a local of wine and rode a donkey down the hill. Great day.

Productive? I did do Columbia College’s first totally e-book class this summer. I titled it “Pioneers: Verne, Wells, and Burroughs.” Our mismatched assortment of kindles and nooks and e-readers was some challenge, but Tarzan and the Princess of Mars can make any 100 degree summer better. But the one actual productive thing—I do have a book review of Jerry Moore’s Prehistory of Home forthcoming in Historical Geography #40. It’s inspiring enough that I’m waiting for someone to channel Carl Sauer and teach Archaeology for Geographers...

Missouri Geographic Alliance Celebrates 25th Anniversary with 1-day Geography Conference

The Missouri Geographic Alliance, MGA, is hosted at the University of Missouri and is located in the Department of Geography. As a part of the National Geographic Alliance Network the MGA is an active participant in geographic education and outreach. The Alliance coordinator, Dr. Shannon White, has been working with Alliance volunteers to plan a 25th Anniversary 1-day conference on geography and geography education. This event, will be held at the University of Missouri’s Memorial Union from 9-4pm on September 29, 2012. It includes over 30 presentations by faculty at 6 different institutions of higher education across Missouri and also from K-12 schools and outreach organizations such as the Missouri Botanical Garden. The luncheon keynote is Dr. Colin Gordon of the University of Iowa, who will present “Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the American City.”

Everyone is welcome to attend and registration includes lunch and other materials. More information about the event can be found on the MGA website http://mga.missouri.edu. Registration is located online at: http://mogeography2012.eventbrite.com

Statewide GIS license for Missouri K-12

Spearheaded by the Geospatial Extension Program and the Missouri Geographic Alliance there is now in place for every K-12 educator and student in the state of Missouri access to GIS software for free. Upon arrival to Missouri almost 4 years ago, Dr. White began working with Esri, the industry standard in GIS software, to put into place the ability for all K-12 educational groups (private, public and homeschool educators and any youth serving organizations such as 4-H, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts) to have access to ArcGIS software and extensions. This is a partnership administered out of the MU Geography Department with partnerships with eMints, Missouri Botanical Garden, Missouri GIS Advisory Council, (MGISAC), MSDIS, MOREnet, the State Office of Geospatial Information and both public and private universities across the state. While the software is free to educators there is a match required in effort being put toward education about geospatial technologies. This unfunded project does have a match requirement. However, the match, comparative to the benefits to geography education and the GIS industry in Missouri, is minimal. According to Elizabeth Cooke, Past President of the MGISAC and MU Geography Department Alumni,

“As GIS professionals, we realize that use of GIS software is not about knowing the right button to push or how pretty the map you make it. GIS is an analytical tool that conceptually bridges most other subjects such as geography, mathematics, statistics, logic, and biological sciences, to name a few. The opportunity to reinforce critical thinking and problem solving with the vast array of spatial data and processes available through the ESRI suite of softwares and data will nurture a new generation of professionals in all disciplines. The recent boom of spatially-enabled technologies and globally-integrated societies at a time of shrinking school budgets make the timing of this opportunity especially important.”

Please contact Dr. Shannon White for further information about how to support this endeavor or get GIS started in a Missouri school or youth group near you. More information will be located at: http://gis.missouri.org