

2009

## Geography Newsletter, 1969-2009

University of Northern Iowa. Department of Geography.

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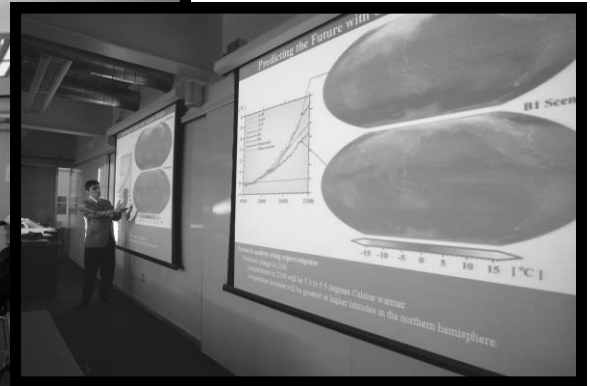
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# UNIVERSITY OF GEOGRAPHY

1969 - 2009



*Alumni Newsletter*

## News From the Head



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Hello again to everyone in the UNI Geography family. It has been a busy year to work and study at UNI. We grew a little this year by adding a new faculty member. You can get to know our newest member, Dr. Andrey Petrov, by reading his bio on page 3. Our students are among the best at UNI and we've had plenty of reason to be proud this year. Our students have worked in prestigious internships, won numerous awards and scholarships, and will move on to great jobs and graduate programs across the country. Our majors continue to grow in number and our classes have never been fuller. This past year we taught nearly 3,000 students, or about one fourth of the UNI student body. World Geography now is the second largest non-required course at UNI, seating about 1,200 students each year. There is no doubt Geography faculty are working hard to keep up with those numbers. We are also continuing to excel in research. Geography is among the most active departments at UNI both in receiving grant money and in the number of faculty and student publications of scholarly research. All of this adds up to demonstrate that Geography is fast becoming a major player in all aspect of the university and is a department with which you can be proud to be associated. It is certainly a privilege for me to get to work every day with such talented and hardworking students and faculty. Keep the alumni updates coming, we love to hear what you are up to these days.

We are at our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a department and this is a cause for some celebration. There have been Geography classes at UNI since its founding in 1876 and Geography actually was first a department in 1894 when UNI was the Iowa State Normal School. Within a couple years, however, Geography was combined with several other programs to become the Department of Science and was later part of the Department of Social Science. It was reborn as its own department in 1969 when the State College of Iowa was reorganized into the University of Northern Iowa.

UNI Geography has made some notable contributions to the advancement of geographic science and education in the United States. Our department is particularly notable in regard to women geographers. The first women hired at UNI, Frances Webster, was a professor of Geography. Professor Alison Aitchinson was the first women ever honored with the NCGE Distinguished Service Award in 1945. More recently, Aitchinson, M. Uttley and E. Smith, who all worked at UNI were recognized by NCGE as among the most prominent women geography educators in US history. Throughout its history, UNI

## *Department's Anniversary*

geography has been fortunate to have outstanding faculty who made a considerable impact in their fields of study, for example, Prof. Basheer Nijim in the geography of the Arab world, Jonathan J. Lu in Biblical geography, and C. Murray Austin in spatial analysis.

In 1969, the Department had four faculty members with most teaching focused on general education instruction. The faculty grew to seven by 1973 and by 2000 the number of full-time faculty had increased to 10. Associated with growth in GISc enrollments and recommendations from the 2006-2007 strategic plan, an additional faculty line was given to the department in Fall 2007. The Department is also a home to several part-time faculty, five Research Associates and about seventy graduate and undergraduate students. Over the years the faculty and students of the department have proudly promoted a global view of issues that face society. We look forward to another 40 years to advance the discipline of geography, interact with students, and make UNI and Iowa a better place.

# Department News and Activities



## Meet our newest faculty member: Dr. Andrey Petrov

Although I am a new faculty member at UNI, it is not the first time the Department welcomed me here. I graduated from UNI (M.A. 2004) and worked here as a Research Associate in 2003-2004. I later moved on to complete my PhD degrees, first at Herzen University in Russia (2006) and then at the University of Toronto (2008). My research concentrates in two areas: spatial analysis/GIS and economic geography. Most of my research is geographically focused on remote areas in the Russian and Canadian Arctic, where I study processes of economic development and spatial

organization of regional economy. I also have interests in land use/land cover change and its socio-economic determinants in non-central regions, including Iowa.

At UNI I am looking forward to further developing our programs in Geographic Information Science (GISc) and Urban and Regional Analysis (URSA). We have extensive plans for expanding our offerings and creating new programs to address regional and national needs in geospatial science and geography professionals.

I am excited to be back in the Department and hope that I can help make the experiences of our current students as wonderful as mine were when I was a UNI student.

## Scholarships

Thanks to generous contributions of departmental alumni and sponsors, Geography students can receive a number of scholarships. In 2009 the Department awarded scholarships to the following individuals

**Janice M. Clark Memorial Scholarship:** Katie Klus

**Edna L. Padovan Geography Education Scholarship:** Allison Gallery, Katie Bunch and Dennis Bowen

Additionally, Geography student **Samantha Koch** received one of the highly prestigious **Alderman Scholarships** from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Congratulations to all of these awardees!

## Lu Endowed Lecture on Biblical Geography

The Department of Geography, along with the Department of Philosophy and World Religions, hosted the second lecture funded by the Dr. Jonathan J. Lu and Sayoko Lu Biblical Geography Endowment. The lecture, given by **Dr. Barry J. Beitzel**, was titled "*The History of Biblical Mapmaking*" and was attended by 200 people. Dr. Beitzel is a professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. His publications include *The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands* (1985) and *Biblica: The Bible Atlas*

## Giving Back

Giving to the department is a great way to help current students as they work toward their degrees. The Department of Geography has a discretionary account within the UNI Foundation which we use to fund special field trips, student travel, guest speakers, our annual student banquet, and many other student-related activities.

The UNI Foundation can also set up special accounts dedicated to particular goals such as scholarships or travel abroad programs. If you are interested in



giving to the Department of Geography, please contact either

Dr. Patrick Pease  
319-273-2772  
patrick.pease@uni.edu

(or) The UNI Foundation  
800-782-9522  
UNI.Foundation@uni.edu  
<http://www.uni-foundation.org/>

# Department News and Activities

In memoriam

*Bonnie Sines*



This year the Geography department lost our colleague, Bonnie Sines. She passed away at her home on November 20, 2008. Bonnie was UNI through-and-through. Born and raised in Waterloo, she received her B.A. in Geography from UNI in 1983 and M.A. in 1998. Her specialty was

Cartography, and she worked as a Cartographer for the Department, preparing maps for a number of UNI faculty's publications, including the textbook "Human Geography" by C. Murray Austin, Rex Honey, and Thomas C. Eagle.

Bonnie served as served as an Adjunct Instructor for the department, a position she held until her passing. She taught a number of courses in the department, but her favorites were 'World Geography', 'Maps and Map Interpretation' and 'Geography of Iowa.'

We will remember Bonnie fondly for her warmth, genuine concern for others, her unwavering helpful spirit, and her quiet & soft-spoken personality. She was a good friend and we are fortunate to have known her.

## **Notes from Tim Strauss & the MTC**

**Tim Strauss:** I am completing my tenth year directing the activities of the Midwest Transportation Consortium (MTC) at UNI. The MTC, funded by the US Department of Transportation, has generated over \$600,000 at UNI and has supported 15 students, including four current graduate students.



I have recently completed a four-year term as chief faculty consultant/chief reader for the Advanced Placement Human Geography program of the College Board. In this program, high school students take college-level classes in Human Geography and take an exam in May for college credit. During my involvement with AP Human Geography the program has grown from 3,000 students to 40,000 participants.

## **Notes from Kay Weller & the Geographic Alliance of Iowa**

**Kay Weller:** Coordinating the Geographic Alliance of Iowa continues to be the focus of much of my time. Last summer we planned a workshop in Southeast Iowa for June. Unfortunately "Mother Nature" was in a bad mood causing much flooding, and forcing us to postpone the event until August. As it turned out we had a great turn out for the workshop and other than very high humidity enjoyed the experience. This summer I will be taking teachers to Russia, Finland and will assist Dr. Oberle with his Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad to Chile. That experience promises to be outstanding but much different from previous ones. Winter in July just does not seem right. While in Chile I am hoping to travel to Peru on my return trip. In addition, I am looking forward to a conference in Texas and visiting my family while I am there.



## **UNI Geographers to Offer a Workshop in Russia**

Drs. Sugumaran and Petrov have been invited to deliver a workshop to faculty, staff and students at the St. Petersburg State University in Russia in May. The workshop will be devoted to new remote sensing and GIS techniques, including processing and use of LIDAR imagery.

# Department Faculty

**Dennis Dahms** spent part of summer 2008 teaching with the University of Missouri's geology fieldcamp in Lander, Wyoming. During their 6-week course of study, Dennis took students on a week-long trip through Yellowstone National Park.

In late July, Dennis and colleagues sampled glacial deposits from two alpine valleys for cosmogenic radionuclide age analysis. This is the first numeric age analysis attempted for the Type Temple Lake moraine. This research is an attempt to more tightly constrain the Quaternary paleoclimatic and paleoecological conditions of the southeastern Wind River Mountains and the greater Yellowstone region.

**Tom Fogarty** is working on several projects. One



concerns formal legislative structures in democracies around the world. Another project is about geopolitical influences on state structures in Russia, where Tom looks at historical evolution of Russian state institutions vis-à-vis geopolitical challenges to the Russian state. Tom will be traveling to Santiago, Chile to present a paper in this regard at the International Political Science Association meeting this summer.

**Dave May** started the 2008-2009 academic year



chairing a search for Fred Fryman's (retirement) replacement, but this search ended because of anticipated budget cuts for next year. The 2008-2009 year also has seen the closure of Sabin Hall for renovation. Even though Geography is no longer housed there, many geographers continued to teach large classes in Sabin Hall. With the closure of Sabin, Dave and others teach in different buildings. This has provided some challenges.

Summer of 2009 should prove productive in terms of research. Dave will be exploring a new Late Paleoindian site in Ash Hollow in the panhandle of Nebraska, a mammoth site in San Diego, and a Clovis (Early Paleoindian) site in the Middle River Valley near Carlisle, Iowa.

**Alex Oberle** has been working on various projects this year relating to GIS/geospatial technologies in both secondary and university level education. Building off of

the success of the 2006 Carver Graduate Institute, Alex co-authored a manuscript that explores the impact of this geospatial technology institute on graduate education and research. Alex is also working with Sugu and Price Lab School teacher Curt Nielsen to analyze the successful pilot study of two GIS-related classes.



Alex had the opportunity to work with two high school science educators in the summer of 2008 as part of the UNI RAISE program, an effort to give science teachers real hands-on research projects that they can take back to their students.

Alex continues to be the liaison for the Geography Club and we arranged two field trips in the past year: Hickory Hills Park in September and the EROS Data Center in Sioux Falls.

**J. Henry Owusu** continued research in the area of



African development. In April 2008, he was invited to Durban, South Africa, to present a paper at the International Workshop on Forest Governance & Decentralization in Africa, organized by Center for International Forestry Research, to distill policies for the United Nations Forum on Forests. The paper is to be published as a chapter in a

forthcoming book, *Governing Africa's Forests in a Globalized World*. In addition to teaching, he continued working on the book, *Africa, Tropical Timber, Turfs and Trade: Geographic Perspectives on Ghana's Timber Industry in the Colonial & Postcolonial Eras*. Also, he spent part of the summer in Ghana to update his research data.

**Ramanathan Sugumaran "Sugu"** received the



College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Outstanding Scholarship Award in 2008. He published five journal articles, 2 book chapters, and made several conference presentations including one in Australia. Sugu is continuing to direct the GeoTREE Center funded by a NASA grant. He is working

on his book on Spatial Decisions Support Systems as well as on a number of other projects, including the West-Nile virus, statewide LiDAR and crop residue analysis using hyperspectral remote sensing.

## Geography Club Trips

In September, the club spent the weekend at Hickory Hills Park which included a fieldtrip by Dr. Dennis Dahms to dig soil pits on Casey's Paha and a ride down to Blainstown to see the demarcation between two landform regions. In April, Geography Club went to the EROS Data Center in Sioux Falls, SD to see the USGS' research activities and depository related to satellite imagery. Highlights included a special visit to the server room and a tour of the underground depository which now includes recently declassified Cold War military imagery. As part of the trip, Dr. Dahms guided us back through glacial moraines that mark various stages of the Des Moines Lobe.

## UNI Student receives IGIC Scholarship

UNI Geography sophomore **Andrew Wille** has received a prestigious Scholarship from the Iowa Geospatial Information Council (IGIC). A handful of awards go every year to the most meritorious students in Iowa universities.

Andrew is currently working in GeoTREE and next year Andrew will continue to work on projects with Dr. Sugumaran.

## Student Awards , 2008

- **Adam Lee** received the UNI Purple and Old Gold Award for Meritorious Scholarship in Geography
- **Phillip Trusheim** received the Annual Academic Certificate of Achievement
- **Jacob Leibbrand** won the NCGE 2008 Award for Excellence of Scholarship
- The Department of Geography Award for Distinguished Service went to **Michael Graham** and **Aaron Moehlis**

## Adam Campbell, senior



When I told people I was going to change my major to Geography my junior year, nearly everyone reacted the same way. They would ask, "What are you going to do with a Geography degree?" After awhile of not being able to provide a good answer, I finally realize what the answer was; I'll be happy. Geography is great

because, no matter what you're interested in, you can pursue it in geography. Nearly everything has some type of spatial significance to it, whether it would be religion, medicine, or good ol' soil. I have always loved learning new things, but never have I loved learning about things being taught in my classes. The faculty here is simply amazing. No matter what your interests are, there is a professor that can share that interest and help you develop yours. I will be graduating this spring with a major in Environmental Geography with the GIS Certificate, and I have been inspired to continue my education by pursuing a M.S. degree focusing on climatology and land processes at the University of Delaware. It is going to be a big change for me, having been born and raised just 20 minutes from UNI, but thanks to the Geography Department at UNI, I am confident I will succeed.

I transferred to UNI during the spring of 2007 from Southeastern Community College in Burlington, Iowa. When I transferred to UNI I had heard about GIS but had very little understanding about it and its wide variety of applications. Water monitoring and management is an area of interest on



## Matt Clover, senior

which I've done some of my research. Some of the topics include analyzing nitrate levels in Black Hawk County from rural wells; supplying Las Vegas with water; and the South to North water diversion project in China. I have also been an intern for GeoTREE the past year which has allowed me to perform research in various fields like the Parkersburg tornado and Spatial Decision Support Systems. I would like to thank all of the professors in the Geography Department for all their help and for giving me an outstanding education. In the future I plan to expand my knowledge in the Environmental/ Civil Engineering field at the University of Iowa, with hopes of one day becoming an Environmental Engineer.





# Alumni News

The Geography Department invites you to write in and tell us what's new. We would love to hear about what you are up to. Please send your alumni news items to:

Dr. Patrick Pease  
Department of Geography  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, IA 50613-0406

[Email: Patrick.Pease@uni.edu]  
[Fax to: 319-273-7103]

## Jess Elder (B.A. 2003, M.A. 2005)

My title is **Producer: Geospatial Media**, and I work for *National Geographic Maps*, headquartered in Washington, D.C. I research and develop new methods of organization and interaction with map-based digital content and direct cartographic workflows in support of publishing maps and geospatially enhanced media for multiple platforms. I've been an invited expert on an expedition-cruise in the Sea of Cortez, helped scientists create geospatial species inventories to establish the degree of biodiversity within several national parks, directed the development of a geospatial digital asset management system targeted to media professionals, and supported the work of several prominent National Geographic Explorers-in-Residence, writers and photographers. I was also an invited speaker at several professional workshops and academic conferences to discuss the use of maps as a foundation for both managing media assets and as a base for interactive storytelling and data visualization. I'm currently managing the production of multimedia data visualizations for several large projects that highlight critical global and urban issues.

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alumni information  
online at  
[www.uni.edu/  
geography/  
alumni\\_contact.ht  
ml](http://www.uni.edu/geography/alumni_contact.html)

## James W. Quinn (B.A. 2000, M.A. 2003)

I am currently based at the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy at *Columbia University* in New York City. My dual title is **Geographer and Senior GIS Analyst** and I work on the Built Environment and Health project. My research focuses on the exploration of changes in the physical, economic, and social environments, and how they affect the development of changes in physical activity and obesity patterns and health risk. I work primarily on a research project examining the association between built and social environment characteristics and physical activity, diet, and body size in three human health samples of NYC-area residents. I am responsible for the acquisition, management, development, and linkage of retrospective and modern spatial databases measuring neighborhood characteristics with individual-level data. My group's research findings have been published in the leading journals in environmental health and health policy. I also support other researchers with health-related projects involving a spatial perspective, and collaborate with other colleagues to enhance and promote the use of spatial analysis in teaching and research at Columbia. This fall I will be teaching GIS to students pursuing their M.A. degree.

## Outstanding Alumnus Award of 2008

The 2008 *Outstanding Geography Alumnus Award* was presented to Jeff Rossate. Jeff holds both bachelor and Masters Degrees in geography from UNI.

He is a Division Administrator at the Iowa Department of Economic Development where he oversees the functions of international trade, foreign direct investment, domestic project management and marketing, business assistance, finance and entrepreneurial development. Jeff periodically returns to his old department and works with Tim Strauss's classes where he shares his experiences and expertise with students. The department is proud to have him as an alumnus and appreciates all that he continues to do for current students.



## **GeoTREE: Iowa home for Applied GIS**

GeoInformatics Training, Research, Education and Extension Center (GeoTREE) is a research and service center funded by NASA at UNI continues to provide services in geosciences and related technologies to universities, and Federal, State, Local and Tribal government agencies in Iowa. Our primary goal is to support multi-disciplinary research, education and outreach services in these areas.

**Education & Extension:** During the past few years, GeoTREE has continued to offer several workshops at no-cost. In 2008 the Center assisted with 3 workshops including Agent-Based Modeling, Public Health, a joint venture with University of Iowa, and LiDAR training. In October, GeoTREE also hosted the Eastern Iowa GIS Day Conference to over 200 registrants and presenters at the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center at UNI.

**Research:** The Center has investigated new methodologies and techniques using NASA applied Science Earth Observation data sources and geosciences technologies. Some of the on-going research areas include the following applications:

- Tornado Damage assessment using GIS and remote sensing data
- Flood mapping using airborne data
- Homeland Security/Disaster Management: Critical infrastructure extraction using hyperspectral remote sensing and LiDAR data
- Energy Efficiency: Detecting heat loss from the urban structure using thermal remote sensing imageries.
- Wind Energy: suitable location for wind turbine placement

The Center has collaborated on and received funding on four grant proposals from NASA, AmericaView, DOT and DNR. Additionally, GeoTREE also submitted five other proposals through IMSEP, NSF, EPA, Iowa DNR and National Geospatial Intelligence Agency.

