



your connection to UNT-Geography

Issue No. 27

Spring 2006

Tami Deaton, Editor



Department News:

*In Memory  
Sean T. Webster*

On November 6, 2005, we lost a valued member of our Geography family. Sean came to UNT in the fall of 1999 and graduated in 2004 with a MS in Applied Geography. After graduating, Sean continued to support UNT Geography by teaching for the department. Last September, Sean accepted a full time faculty position at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, OK doing what he loved best, teaching geography and geology.

The Department had a memorial service where Sean was honored by planting a tree on the Geology Trail in ODELA. Many faculty and friends spoke about their favorite Sean moments, but the common thread of all of the stories was Sean's laugh. He will certainly be missed.

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Dr. Murray Rice Joins Faculty

Murray joined our faculty in the Fall semester coming from the University of Saskatchewan where he was a lecturer. He was also a Senior Partner in a GIS-based market analysis and support services firm. He is currently teaching GEOG 1170 and 4210 and will be introducing a new course, Applied Retail Geography, in the Fall 2006 semester. The Rice's arrived in August along with the full force Texas heat. His wife, Sherri and their almost 2 year old son, Daniel, are all settling into Denton life and recently bought a new home. Welcome to UNT and really, we do have winter here!

## 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Awards Banquet



April 22, 2006  
At 6:00 pm  
In the  
EESAT Atrium

Dr. Kent McGregor  
Keynote Speaker

Invitations arriving in the mail soon!

## Current Research



### Miguel Acevedo

Ole! UNT, Geography

Three UNT faculty, and eight UNT students (including two undergraduate McNair Scholars) visited Universidad de Alicante (UA) in Spain this past summer for research abroad and educational exchange. We had a closing seminar in FontRoja where UNT student participants presented their research results. This seminar was reported as a press dossier in the local newspapers - see <http://www.ua.es/dossierprensa/2005/07/14/12.html> and also in a web portal of Spain and Latin America universities (<http://www.universia.es>).

UNT has now formalized an academic agreement with UA and UNT into a broader academic agreement. Many opportunities are evolving from this visit. During 2005-2006 we are receiving the visit of two UA faculty members and one doctoral student. We are also offering the Spain Field School for the Summer 2006 to be conducted as an organized UNT class mainly aimed for graduate students but also open to undergraduates. Students will get six credit hours. Plans are to include participation of four faculty/staff and 12-15 students. Graduate students will enroll in: Geog 5120. Research in Physical Geography. 3 hours. (*Earth Science*) and Geog 5150 Water Resources Seminar. 3 hours. (*Earth Science*). Undergraduate students will enroll in: 4980.500 and 4980.501. Special Problems. Spain Field School. 3 hours each.

Students will be exposed to international research cooperation (NSF funded) conducting field research, using modeling and simulation to address relevant vegetation dynamics and hydrological processes in one of the biodiversity hotspots of the world. Students will learn how to approach real-life interdisciplinary research problems, how to conduct field research, and how to apply models to the interaction of vegetation dynamics and hydrology. UNT students will explore unique ecosystems, not available nearby Denton, and work with international faculty and graduate students.

## New Alumni: Recent Geography Grads

### B.A./B.S. 2005:

Ernest Allen  
David Bell  
Joseph Grove  
Michel Herrijgers  
Rachel Jean  
Catherine Jordan  
Donovan Shehan  
Heather Turner  
Kelly Weber  
Sarah Birt  
Kristen Chapman  
Joshua Dubek  
Megan Woodworth

Christen Edwards  
David Hainley  
David Holdaway  
Garret Krawchison  
Brandyn Littleton  
Mary Nienkamp  
Matthew Pettee  
Adam Richardson  
Rene Salinas  
Jennifer Schwarz  
Sherrie Sims  
John Tackett

### M.S. AGEO 2005:

Joshua Chalapek  
Sumant Ganapavarapu  
Erica Lee  
Webster Mangham  
Sarah McCall

Peter Osei-Adjei  
Sumanth Reddy  
Julie Vicars  
Ben Witt



### Pinliang Dong

Pinliang is teaching Intermediate GIS and Visual Programming for GIS this spring. He has been working on some GIS application development activities and hyperspectral image analysis for two study areas in California and Texas. Based on his project experience at the Titan Corporation in California and follow-on research, Pinliang presented a paper entitled "Development of a GIS/GPS based emergency response system" at the 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Geoinformatics: Coping with Disasters across Continents (Toronto, Canada, August 17-19, 2005). The paper was recently published in *Geomatica* (Vol. 59, No.4, 2005). He is currently working with three graduate students (thesis option): Nilanjana (Jui) Bhattacharjee - hyperspectral remote sensing for vegetation mapping, Joshua Sales - GIS and bioregional conservation, and Zongpei Tang - GIS and residential location optimization.

### Reid Ferring



Reid Ferring continued his research in the Republic of Georgia this summer, with excavations at the Dmanisi Site. This work was featured in the April 2005 issue of *National Geographic Magazine*, and Reid also appeared last spring in *National Geographic's* film "The Ultimate Survivor". Reid presented papers last year in Paris, France, Tautavel, France, and was designated the Carol Clarke Lecturer in Anthropology for 2005 by Kansas University. In October he returned to Georgia as project co-director for the Georgian Miocene Project, in collaboration with the University of California Berkeley, which will focus on the environments and paleontology of Miocene apes in Georgia. In October, Reid received the Archaeological Geology award from the Geological Society of America, in Salt Lake City.



### Paul Hudak

Paul's recent research topics include water resources in rural Jamaica, developing filter substrates and hydrologic

budgets for constructed wetlands, evaluating sediment pollution from gas well drilling, and designing groundwater-monitoring networks near landfills. He is working with faculty from UCLA on possible health effects of boron in groundwater. Some of his recent projects were featured in *Water Resources Research*, *Environmental Science and Technology*, *Journal of Environmental Science and Health*, and *Environmental Geology*. Recently, Paul completed the third edition of his book, *Principles of Hydrogeology*. Last November, Paul presented some of his research on wetland hydrology at the Applied Geography Conference in Washington, D.C. A month earlier, Paul traveled to Toluca, Mexico to study environmental effects of horticultural practices in the State of Mexico. The trip was part of an ongoing collaboration between students and faculty at UAEM-Toluca and UNT. In the summer, Paul traveled with a group from UNT, led by M. Acevedo, to study vegetation and hydrologic dynamics of a watershed and aquifer near Alicante, Spain. During the trip, UNT signed a formal agreement with the University of Alicante to facilitate continued collaboration among students and faculty at those universities. Paul continues to serve on the editorial advisory board of *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment*, review for several journals, and is a member of two research committees of the American Society of Civil Engineers. Next month, he travels to Washington, D.C. to participate on an advisory panel for the National Science Foundation.

### Don Lyons



Dr Lyons continues his work on linkages between industrial ecology and economic geography, with forthcoming papers in the *Journal of Industrial Ecology* and *Progress in Industrial Ecology*, and an editorial on industrial ecology and regional development in a special issue of the journal *Regional Studies*. This April he is traveling to Hong Kong to present the results of his work at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Sustainable Development Research Conference. He has also redesigned his undergraduate economic geography course to reflect these new interests and hopes to offer a graduate level version of the work in the near future. Dr. Lyons also published a History

of the Geography Department at UNT, which is now available on the Department's website. Later this year, he will lead the 4<sup>th</sup> biannual British Isles Field School with Dr. Williams.



### Kent McGregor

Kent has been working with the NOAA's so called "Reanalysis Model". NOAA took all the surface weather observations, balloon observations and satellite data beginning in 1948 and reprocessed them using this elaborate computer program called the Reanalysis Model. The result is an internally consistent data set that covers the entire globe. It has daily values for the last nearly 60 years. He is looking at the way in which El Nino and La Nina events in the Pacific impact precipitation in Texas. The Reanalysis data provides a way to look at how winds and moisture transport change during these events. Kent also used the reanalysis data to follow the hurricanes as they impacted the U.S. last fall.

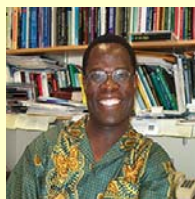


### Lisa Nagaoka

Lisa spent the summer of 2005 doing research in Auckland, New Zealand with Steve and Ben Fullerton, an undergraduate student. The year will be busy with many trips to conferences and siblings' weddings planned this year. She submitted her tenure portfolio in fall and is anxiously awaiting the final decision, which should come in May. Maybe by then, we will have some significant rain, which will thwart the efforts of one of her dogs, Kiyoji, to be the first organism to reach the earth's mantle, and save the backyard from becoming a moonscape.

### Joseph Oppong

Joseph has been very busy this year. He had a very successful Ghana summer study abroad trip with 10 students, a refreshing experience. After this, he organized the International Medical Geography Symposium, held in Fort Worth, July 5-9. In total the conference had 165 participants from 12 countries, including the USA



(89), Canada (25), UK (21), France (7), New Zealand (7), Germany (5), Norway (3), Australia (3), Switzerland (2) and one each from Ireland, Italy, Korea, and Spain. The conference was a major success. By far the most popular social activity was the baseball game between the Texas Rangers and Toronto Blue Jays at Amerquest Stadium. Sporting bandanas and cowboy hats, 80 participants enjoyed a spectacular game of American baseball.

The threat of an avian flu epidemic has kept Joseph very busy lately. He has done numerous television interviews, as well as newspaper and radio interviews on the topic. He also presented a public lecture at UNT on the Coming H5N1 Pandemic: Should I Worry? In addition, he joined only 40 people nationwide who were invited to attend a national think tank in San Francisco on pandemic planning for the threat of H5N1 Avian influenza. His latest book, *Africa South of the Sahara*, has just been published. It includes several photos students took during the Ghana summer study abroad.

### Murray Rice

Murray joined the UNT Geography faculty in August 2005, coming to Denton from a marketing geography consulting practice in Saskatoon, Canada. Murray taught the undergraduate "Culture, Environment and Society" and the graduate "Research Design and Geographic Applications" courses in Fall 2005. He will be teaching a new "Applied Retail Geography" course in Fall 2006. On the research side, Murray is continuing his long-term investigation into North America's evolving economy, with a focus on the shifting location of corporate headquarters and other elite, information-based business activities. Recent papers include publications in the *Canadian Geographer* (2005), the *Great Lakes Geographer* (2005), and the *Canadian Journal of Regional Science* (2004). Since coming to UNT, Murray has been working with Don Lyons on an analysis of change in the headquarters location patterns of the fastest-growing businesses in the US and Canada. This collaborative research resulted in a *SWAAG* presentation in Fall 2005 and is leading to several journal submissions in Spring 2006 and a presentation



at the *Canadian Association of Geographers* 2006 annual meeting. Murray has also secured a UNT Research Initiation Grant to begin an investigation into the geography of corporate boards of directors in Summer 2006. Lastly, but most importantly, Murray's amazing secret talent that has completely avoided detection at UNT until now: ear wiggling (his own ears, not yours).



### Harry Williams

Dr. Williams received a National Science Foundation grant to study storm surge deposits of Hurricane Rita in southwest Louisiana. He spent about a week in the field in November and plans to conduct more fieldwork in the spring of 2007. Harry developed a new track for the Master of Applied Geography degree - Applied Geomorphology, which emphasizes geomorphological processes that are of societal significance, including hazards such as flooding, expansive soils, landslides and coastal erosion. He is teaching the British Isles Field School again this summer with Dr. Lyons. In addition to Plymouth, Cork, Galway and Edinburgh, this year's trip visits a new location - Bangor in north Wales, in sight of the spectacular Snowdonia mountain range.

## Alumni News

We would like to hear what you are up to, where you are, how's the family, your new promotion, etc. Just send us your information to [deaton@unt.edu](mailto:deaton@unt.edu).

Here are a few people we heard from this year:

**Irena (Brestenska) Unterstein:** It's a girl! The Unterstein's welcomed Elliyah Renee on Dec. 15, 2005 at one minute after midnight. Elliyah weighed 7 pounds, 15 ounces, and was 20  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches long.

**Will Healy:** Dropped us a note saying he made it out to Seattle. "I am still trying to get a feel for the place. The constant overcast sky will take some getting used to but at least it's gorgeous here when it's sunny. If you find yourself in the Pacific Northwest, feel free to drop me a line."

**Stefan Hildebrand '02:** "I am going into my sixth year with DFW Airport as their Senior GIS Analyst. Hope all is well with you and the faculty."

**Carrie Lee '97:** Carrie and her husband Bob recently moved from Plano to Washington, DC. "What an experience it has been to live here. We are currently in an apartment in downtown DC, but have just purchased a house in Arlington, Virginia. I am still in the planning field, obtaining a position as Planner II for Fairfax County, Virginia, Department of Planning and Zoning-Zoning and Evaluation Division. The focus of my position is to function as Staff Coordinator for applicants through the zoning and development review process for development, which also requires attendance at county Planning Commission meetings and county Board of Supervisor meetings (those wonderful night meetings that sometimes go on and on—ah, such is the life of a planner!) Bob is still with FDIC working in the downtown DC office, which is the headquarters for FDIC. It has been quite an experience to be able to access all the wonderful sites in Washington, DC at our doorstep—the memorials, the museums, public transportation (yeah!). We miss all of you in Texas and the ability to attend the geography department annual spring banquet, but I am with you in spirit and still proudly say I studied at University of North Texas in its esteemed Geography Department. I notice Paul Hudak is now chair of the department, and I'm sure with his leadership that the department will continue to flourish and excel."

**Barbara Miller '00:** After graduation accepted a position with Arkansas State Parks as a park interpreter for Parkin Archeological State Park where she worked until October 2003. During 2002/2003, Forrest L. Wood Crowley's Ridge Nature Center, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, was in the planning stages in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Ms. Miller sought and accepted a position of Information and Education Coordinator at the nature center in the fall of 2003 where she is currently employed. The nature center is a state of the art facility complete with a multi-sensory presentation explaining how Crowley's Ridge, a unique landform, was formed and settled. Crowley's Ridge is unique in its role in cultural and climatic geographical differences with the flat Mississippi Delta that adjoins it

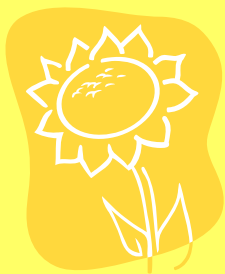
(www.crowleysridge.org). The Ridge has wildlife and plant life found in no other areas of Arkansas.

As Information and Education Coordinator, Ms. Miller is responsible for developing and presenting educational programs for pre-schoolers through senior citizens. Additionally, she holds teacher workshops for Project WET, WILD and PLT, is responsible for media releases and publicity, creates the Ridge Report, the nature center newsletter, and wrote the Educator Handbook, a guidebook for teachers to optimize field trips to the center. In the first year of operation, over 65,000 visitors enjoyed programs developed and presented by staff.

Recent achievements include serving as Secretary on the Board of Directors for Arkansas Environmental Education Association. She was selected as one of seven Outstanding Project Learning Tree, Project WET and Project WILD Facilitators of 2005 from across the state of Arkansas.

Ms. Miller is an active member of the Jonesboro community having graduated from the Jonesboro Leadership Class of 2005 offered by the Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce where she serves on the Environment Committee. She is a member in good standing of the Master Gardeners of Craighead County. Some of her other interests and activities are swimming, hiking, reading, and training and enjoying her two active dogs.

**Mark your calendars!  
Spring Awards Banquet**



**April 22nd at 6:00 pm  
in EESAT Atrium**

**Friends of Geography  
Scholarship**

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

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

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation: \$10      \$25      \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Make checks payable to FOG Scholarship.  
Enclose this slip with donation.

**Geography Flashback...**

**Driving Arthur Getis to the Airport: The  
Power of Observation and Olde Time Geog**

By Kent McGregor

I drove our guest speaker, Arthur Getis, to the DFW airport one Saturday morning. It was a day like any other except Arthur Getis was my passenger and he was observing everything in sight, even the minutest detail. He noticed the truck ahead had a small water or gasoline leak dribbling down from the engine and pointed it out. It took me a bit of time just to see the same leak. Later, at a particularly confusing intersection, he knew I could not make the turn I was about to make well before I did. All this brought back some memories from my graduate education.

I think it was the famous geographer, Carl Sauer, who said the best way to judge how successful a geography student was going to be in the future was to observe them in the field. Which students were engaged with the environment and which students were out for a Sunday stroll in the park? Who was aware of their surroundings and continually analyzing/probing the environment for the relationships it might reveal to the keen observer, but not the casual passerby. Arthur Getis didn't just pass through a place, he observed everything there and nothing escaped his notice. This is olde time geography -- alert, involved, sharp eyed, knowledgeable. Now days, our ways of gaining knowledge seem increasingly constrained. For example, someone told me, "If it's not on the Internet, it doesn't exist," and I hear that a Google search is the answer to every question. Faced with such attitudes, no wonder information is seldom gathered in the field.