

Department of Geography & Planning *Newsletter*



Volume 9: Winter 2013

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Message from the Chair

We started this fall with two new people in the department—Jason Knight and Jorge Bajo. Jason Knight was hired to fill the tenure-track position in sustainable urban planning. Jason has his master's in urban planning and PhD in geography from the University at Buffalo. He has worked in both the public and private sectors in the Buffalo area and has a number of recent presentations and publications. Jason is teaching planning courses, as well as urban

geography. Jorge Bajo is currently in a one-year lecturer position. He is finishing his PhD in geography at UB with a specialization in GIS. Jorge is teaching a variety of courses this year, including hydrology, soils, and GIS, to fill the gap left by Kim Irvine and Tao Tang, who are both on sabbatical leaves. Both Jorge and Jason are welcome additions to the department and I sincerely hope they enjoy their time here.

In other news, the department hosted the Middle States Division of the Association of American Geographers (MSDAAG) annual meeting here on campus this fall. The conference was held in the newly-renovated Campbell Student Union on October 18th and 19th. Eighty-six attendees came from all over the Division, which includes New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware, to give a total of 46 paper and nine poster presentations. Mark Severson, Dean of the School of Natural and Social Sciences, welcomed everyone to the conference

during dinner on Friday night and AAG President Julie Winkler gave the keynote address at lunch on Saturday. Many people in the department helped with the conference, including 12 student volunteers, and I am very grateful for the support. Next year's MSDAAG annual meeting will be held at York College in Pennsylvania. If you are interested in learning more about the Division, please visit the website at www.msaag.org.



Jason Knight (first on left) and Jorge Bajo (4th from left) with Camille Holmgren, Benji the Bengal, Kelly Frothingham, and Mary Perrelli at the Fall Equinox Pumpkin Drop

Department News



Stephen Vermette speaking with Amy Bartlett ('04 and '09) about her poster. (above) Current Geography major Tim Tate (middle) participating in the MSDAAG Geography Bowl. (below)



The department unveiled a new logo this fall. The skyline graphic was originally designed for the College's Year of the City campaign by Andrew Henesey, who is now a graduate of the design program at Buffalo State. Andrew revised the logo to include the department name and we think the logo conveys a lot about geography, planning, and the intersection of human-environment interactions. We are pleased to be able to breathe new life into an excellent logo!



Our department website got a new look over the summer. The College started using new web design software and Vida Vanchan, our

department webmaster, worked with College Relations to convert the old webpages to the new, updated format. The new website has an improved design and is more user-friendly. We hope that you'll continue to stay connected to the department using the new website.



Geography Awareness Week

The department celebrated Geography Awareness Week (Nov 18 – 22) with a variety of special events. Dr. Camille Holmgren organized the annual photo contest around the theme “Exploring Multicultural Buffalo”.



GAW luncheon with posters presentations from Dr. Vida Vanchan's Geography of Asia course

The GAW luncheon is an integral part of the celebration. This year the luncheon was catered by [the Westside Bazaar](#) featuring foods and crafts from Laos, Peru, Yemen (Ethiopian), Burma, Rwanda, and South Sudan. Students taking “Geography of Asia” with Dr. Vida Vanchan prepared posters describing the various countries in Asia. Students, faculty, and staff experienced delicious foods from some of our new immigrant neighbors.



As part of Geography Awareness Week, the Geography and Planning Department hosted a community roundtable panel on November 19. Panelists included:

Barrett Gordon and Zaw Win from the WASH Project at Westside Value Laundromat, a local outlet that offers a range of opportunities and community services for Buffalo's refugee communities, including those from Burma, Thailand, and Nepal.

Ba Zan Lin, environmental justice outreach coordinator for the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, will discuss recent efforts to educate local immigrants of the potential dangers of subsistence fishing in our local waterways.

Paul D'Orlando, Senior Contract Monitor, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, will discuss how the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant program has assisted various populations in Erie County through its low income housing loan and first time homebuyer programs.

Faculty News

Kim Irvine was invited to stay at National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore, for a second year and therefore is on a leave of absence until July, 2014. In addition to teaching new undergraduate classes in Coastal and Ocean Systems, Ecosystem Dynamics, and Geographical Methods and Fieldwork (a field course in Thailand for 25 students doing their senior thesis) and a grad class in Urban Environmental Planning and Management, he also offered an in-service field-based workshop on Hydrologic Processes, Hazards and Management for Junior College teachers and was invited by Singapore's Ministry of Education to be a member of the curriculum revision committee for the country's Junior College Geography.

He continued a number of existing projects, including a partnership (with United Educational Consultants Co. Ltd. (Dr. Nik Mische and Ms. P. Pichadul), Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), and volunteers) in community development, water, and sanitation assistance for Huai Pla Kong, a



Sampling a drinking water well in Huai Pla Kong village.

Installation of a sewer flow meter, Rach Gia City, Vietnam.



remote Karen Hilltribe village on the Thai/Burma border. A needs survey was completed in December, drinking water quality testing is ongoing, ceramic drinking water filters have been donated and introduced to families in the village, a one day health clinic was delivered and a second is planned. Students from the Wastewater Design class he co-teaches at AIT completed design work for an improved drinking water and sanitation system, and future efforts include soils testing, assessment of agricultural practices and deforestation, and piloting a U.V. system for water treatment.

Dr. Irvine's stormwater modeling project for Rach Gia City, Vietnam, in collaboration with the Southern Institute for Water Resources Research (Vietnam), is continuing, with a successful field campaign to collect water quality and flow data completed in May and a second campaign planned for November.

The WAMSEAS (WATER Monitoring for South East Asian Schools) project also continued, with several of the Thai secondary schools successfully submitting their year 1 reports to the Ministry of Education. A number of

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training workshops, coordinated by Commonwealth Secondary School, were run for primary and secondary teachers in Singapore. Commonwealth has implemented WAMSEAS to assess the constructed wetland on its campus. The Fatima Centre in Bangkok also joined the team this year. The Fatima residence school for disadvantaged girls included the water testing as part of their constructed wetland experiential learning project and not only did the Thai Ministry of Education, Department of Non-Formal Education pass the girls' project, they also invited some of the girls to the Ministry office to formally present their results.



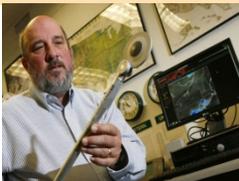
Experiential learning at Fatima Centre.

Dr. Irvine began a new project, in collaboration with Dr. Lloyd Chua, Environmental Engineering, NTU, and Mr. Martin Fung, Environmental Science, Republic Polytechnic, that examines the efficiency of a raingarden/detention pond treatment train in managing stormwater runoff quantity and quality for Admiralty Park, Singapore.

Students installing a YSI datasonde to monitor water quality in the Admiralty Park detention pond. (below)



Faculty News



Stephen Vermette, spent time this past year reworking the 'Weather Event'

exhibition – a meteorologists interpretation of Charles Burchfield's watercolors – originally exhibited at the Burchfield Penney Art Center. He received the 2013 Burchfield Penney Art Center's 'Esprit de Corps Award' for 'Weather Event'. An expanded version of 'Weather Event' (co-curated by Tullis Johnson of the Burchfield Penny Art Center) is currently exhibiting at the New York State Museum, in Albany, NY.

Two field experience courses were offered over the past year – The Bahamas Field Experience course (GEG 345) and Cavern Studies (GEG 120). Karen Wehn (Departmental Adjunct) assisted with both courses. In addition, two 1-credit weather-related courses were organized. The first was titled 'Hazardous Weather Emergency Planning' and was taught by James Zymanek (Amherst Dept. of Emergency Services). The second was titled 'Weather and the Expert Witness' and was taught by Christine Chiriboga (a lawyer). My appreciation to both instructors and to Dean Severson for

assisting in the funding of these courses..

Two water quality related projects took place this summer. One was funded by EPA to monitor the near-shore environment of lake Erie using buoys and an Automated Underwater Vehicle (AUV). This project was assisted by Mary Perrelli and eight students. The second was working with NOAA, National Geographic, and the New York Geographic Alliance to train teachers on water sampling in the Susquehanna watershed.



Ryan and Kevin operated the AUV through the summer.



Stephen receiving an award related to Weather Event, with departmental colleagues along side.

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Bahamas Field Experience



Cavern Studies



Sara Mochrie, project manager at Ecology and Environment, giving a presentation in GLC 600 Great Lakes Seminar

Kelly Frothingham

spent the summer working with three students on a Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper -

collected data in 348 reaches on twelve streams in Niagara and Erie counties. The results from this project will be used to help prioritize opportunities for conservation and restoration of aquatic and riparian habitats. This work is contributing to a larger Niagara River Habitat Conservation Strategy effort that Dr. Frothingham has been involved with as a technical advisory committee member since June 2011.

Dr. Frothingham is also serving as program coordinator for two new interdisciplinary master's programs in Great Lakes Ecosystem Science (GLES). Both GLES programs (master

of arts and master of science) provide graduates with a broad understanding of the physical, chemical, biological, and social factors that constitute the Great Lakes ecosystems. The MA is a traditional thesis-based program that prepares students for advanced research, professional employment, or study at the Ph.D. level. The MS combines coursework in environmental science with business communication and project management classes and an internship experience. The MS program prepares graduates for leadership roles as they address a wide range of problems and



funded research project. The Stream Visual Assessment Protocol (SVAP) was used to document the current conditions of streams in the Niagara River Greenway. The SVAP was developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to qualitatively assess the physical, biological, and chemical conditions within stream reaches. The team

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issues related to the management of resources within the Great Lakes and surrounding watersheds. Students enrolled in both GLES programs must take at least one GIS course and there are many geography graduate courses that serve as electives. A seminar course, GLC 600 *Great Lakes Seminar*, is also required in the program and Dr. Frothingham is coordinating that course this fall and spring. GLC 600 is a venue for invited speakers representing various groups within the Great Lakes basin, including government agencies, academia, industry, and public interest groups, to give presentations on Great Lakes environmental science and management topics. Speakers in GLC 600 this fall have been from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, UB, Ecology and Environment, Buffalo State, and Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper.

Tao Tang was awarded a one year sabbatical leave during the 2013- 2014 academic year. He taught GIS and remote sensing courses at the Chinese Culture University, Taiwan, Republic of China as a visiting professor in the fall of 2013.



During this visit, he was invited to conduct a keynote speech at the Conference of the Association of Mapping and Cartography, Republic of China. His speech is entitled "Beyond mapping, building the digital spatial infrastructure both in 2D and 3D at the New York State, USA – experience and problems". The speech was very warmly received.



The SVAP field crew—Jerry Krajna, Katie Bauer, and Megan Klein (l-r)

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In the summer of 2013, Dr. Tang was invited to lecture at “the First Sino-US Workshop of GIS Applications in Public Health”, which is sponsored by the Beijing Normal University, China and the CPGIS (Association of Chinese Professionals in GIS). His topic is “GIS spatial analysis of human exposure to environmental pollutions - two examples: impacts of air particulate pollution on local population in Beijing, China, and the old industrial sites on lung and colon cancers in the State of New York”. The workshop materials were published on China’s Center for Disease Control (CDC) website: http://www.chinacdc.cn/zxd/201307/t20130704_82244.htm



Faculty News



Wende Mix has been working with Mary Perrelli developing and testing mobile field data collection

techniques. She presented the results of their study at the NYGEOCON 13 in Saratoga Springs. The research involved developing mobile data collection apps which were tested by students in GEG 325 Maps and Mapmaking using GIS. Students were trained on the use of these apps on smartphones and tablets. In addition, students were trained to use handheld GPS for field data collection. Mary and Wende are collecting data from their 3rd and 4th classes this Fall and J-term. Additionally, Dr. Mix developed an app to collect streetlight information for the City of Buffalo and tested this app by comparing the results from data collected in the Elmwood Village to data collected by a consultant to the City. Also, Dr. Mix used a mobile app to collect storm drain locations in Wheatfield, NY to compare with the County storm drain locations gathered using GPS.

Dr. Mix has also been working with campus police on developing a complete campus database with spatial coordinates for each

interior location. She had students in her GEG 425 class learn how to georeference CAD data for many of the buildings on campus. In July, she also reviewed the Countywide police address database for potential issues with respect to attaching spatial coordinates to their records.

Dr. Mix partnered with the Town of Cheektowaga on a tree inventory grant and is currently partnering with the Town of Tonawanda on their tree inventory grant.

The PLN 412 class this Fall worked with the Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve and Environmental Education Center to develop a web site and interactive mapping application for their “A Day in the Life of the Buffalo River” program which “is designed to celebrate the Buffalo River system and educate participants on the uniqueness of our local water resources.”

Dr. Mix continued work on a grant from the Center for Development of Human Services on the role of inadequate housing in recurring child maltreatment. She also continued to chair the Parking and Transportation Committee for the College.



Vida Vanchan

continued to work on several international research projects including the project

supported by the Research Foundation with Dr. Stephen Vermette to enhance geography and earth science curricular and education in Cambodia. In December of 2012, she provided additional kits and training workshops to teachers and pre-service teachers at the National Institute of Cambodia. These workshops focused on exploring geography and earth science kits and pedagogy. She also continued to serve as lead international liaison and principal investigator of a funding proposal aimed to provide assistance to the National Institute of Social Affairs (NISA) in Cambodia. This effort involves faculty and staff from the Geography and Planning Department, Center for Health and Social Research (CHSR), Social Work, Sociology, Computer Information Systems, Institutional Research, and the Center for the Development of Human Services (CDHS); faculty from California State University at Long Beach; and faculty and

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Group photo with students, faculty, and dean, Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia



Training workshop for teachers at the National Institute of Education, Cambodia .



Invited Lecture at Krong Tepnimith High School

staff at NISA and Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation.

In Cambodia, Dr. Vanchan assisted Dr. Kim Irvine with his Water Monitoring for Southeast Asian Schools (WAMSEAS) program by meeting with principals and key staff at the city and rural high schools. This project aimed to establish the program in the country.



Training workshop for Pre-Service teachers at the National Institute of Education, Cambodia



Meeting with principal and teachers at Baktouk High School to provide additional teaching materials for geography and earth science kits

Dr. Vanchan gave invited lectures at the Faculty of Land Management and Land Administration of the Royal University of Agriculture; and Hun Sen Krong Tepnimith High School on the politics of development, sustainable development, and geography of United States and Japan.

In the U.S, Dr. Vanchan served as chair, co-organizer, and discussant at national conferences. She also successfully organized the Second Annual Southeast Asia Week at Buffalo State in March of 2013 featuring presentations about Indonesia, Malaysia, and Cambodia.

Faculty News



Camille Holmgren

has spent the past year continuing her research into the ice-age history of vegetation and climate in western North America. She published a new paper entitled

“Enterolactone and Other Lignan Metabolites as Taxon-Specific Markers in Modern and Ancient Woodrat Middens” in the journal *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung C* along with coauthors at Stanford University and Oregon State.

Dr. Holmgren also gave talks at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting in Los Angeles and at the University at Buffalo as part of the Ecosystem Restoration through Interdisciplinary Exchange (ERIE) seminar.

Over the past year, Dr. Holmgren taught courses in Biogeography, Global Change, and World Natural Environments. She has also been busy serving as Chair Pro Tem and organizer of the 2013 Geography Awareness Week Photo Contest. She and Mary Perrelli also organized the first Geography and Planning team for the spring 2012 Bengal 5K Scholarship run



Dr. Camille Holmgren and a short-faced bear at the San Diego Natural History Museum

Veryan Vermette Having greatly enjoyed a visit to South Korea three summers ago, I was delighted to return there in June. The trip was splendid. I was, however, disconcerted by the rapidly increased level of Westernization in Seoul. People (especially young women) were publicly smoking. Young men were no longer carrying their girlfriends’ purses and packages. American ‘chain’ coffee cafés had

(Right) Creating a ‘wish pile’ at the Buddhist temple in the ancient capital of the Korean Joseon Dynasty



replaced family-run tea houses. And Western tourists were in abundance.

The rapid cultural change was tangibly evident in clothing styles. Three years ago, women aged 16 to 106 were wearing feminine dresses with high heels. Men of all ages were wearing suit pants, button-down collared shirts (often with ties and suit coats), and leather dress shoes. Now, the younger set has gone to brand-name oversize ‘slogan’ t-shirts, basketball-style or cut-off shorts, American jeans, and expensive athletic shoes. ‘Goth’ and ‘retro’ styles have made an appearance along with ‘unnatural’ hair colors and severely short styles.

Faculty News

Men and women middle aged and up are now 'sporting' high end hiking gear and spend their social time hiking the surrounding mountains with friends, lamenting having been caught between two generations expecting their care-giving: their elderly parents (as is traditional), and their offspring (a reversal of tradition). And those same offspring do not expect to carry the burden of caring for their own soon-to-be-elderly parents. A worrisome conundrum for the middle-aged Korean. The times they are a-changin'!



Jason Knight

PhD, AICP, is an assistant professor in the Department of Geography and Planning at SUNY Buffalo State.

His current research focuses on land use policy related to the management of vacant and abandoned properties, including demolition and land bank programs. Additionally, his work examines the spatial evolution of shrinkage and urban decline as it spills out of America's central cities and

into the suburbs. Within this spatial evolution, he focuses on local and regional governance and the challenges presented by local land use authority and competing local interests.

His research interests are guided by his extensive experience as a professional land use planner in the Buffalo-Niagara region of upstate New York. This included his role as a major decision-maker in the creation and initial operation of the Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation, a multi-jurisdictional land bank formed to combat the pervasive vacancy and abandonment problem resulting from decades of depopulation, economic contraction, and suburbanization. Additionally, he is member of the Land Use and Development Working Group for the One Region Forward Sustainable Communities plan, a two-county regional sustainable development plan funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development that includes key regional stakeholders, including Erie County, Niagara County, the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council, and the University at Buffalo's Regional Institute.

Student News

WeatherBUFF Radio

Shannon Graves and Celena Hunt host 'WeatherBUFF' a weekly weather talk show on WBNY-91.3 FM radio (campus radio). The show runs from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. each Monday. The station has recently been upgraded to 1000-watts and now can be heard across Buffalo. They continued the tradition first aired first last spring by Katie Boxler, Bridgette Brzezniak, Samantha Thomas, and Christopher Sica. Each student was involved with the Meteorology and Climatology Program.



Shannon and Celena (Fall '13).



Katie, Bridgette, Samantha Thomas, and Christopher Sica (Spring '13).

Forward On Climate



On February 17, 2013 Christine Spencer, Samantha Thomas, and Melissa Bender joined the 50,000+ attendees at the Forward On Climate rally in Washington, D.C. It was the largest U.S. environmental rally in history! It was a 26-hour trip with only 6 ½ hours in DC.

Everyone gathered at the Washington Monument before marching to the White House! They wrote that *"We were part of a movement that will help change the WORLD!"*. Funding for the students was provided through the Arthur G. Gielow Meteorology & Climatology Fund.

Meteorology Club

The Meteorology club met regularly this past semester. Aside from eating pizza and talking about the weather they organized the Equinox Pumpkin Drop. It was a huge success. They toured the weather exhibit at the Buffalo Museum of Science and spent time critiquing movies such as 'Absolute Zero' where they learned from the movie that "Science is always right" (a post-movie briefing was needed) and "Sharknadoes" which taught them absolutely nothing. Funding provided by the students and by the Arthur G. Gielow Meteorology & Climatology Fund.



A visit from Benji!



After the dropc



Christine in the wind simulator and Nick having a go with the green screen at the Buffalo Museum of Science.

Student Awards The 2013 student award winners were:

Katheryne T. Whittemore Award for outstanding Geography and Planning major – Mike Borrelli

Western NY American Planning Association Award – Santiago Navarro

National Council for Geographic Education Award in Geography – Amanda Pratt

National Council for Geographic Education Award in Planning – Jeffrey Penzes

David Bullough Memorial Award – Fred Bloom

Chair's Discretionary Award – Luke Work and Sarah Caputi

Please visit our [web site](#) for more information.

Ted McInerney Wins Award

Ted is a 2006 graduate of our program. After a stint in the Quad Cities as a weekend meteorologist, he joined WIAT-TV (Birmingham, Alabama) in 2011. During his time in Alabama he has faced some of the most powerful forms of nature. Ted played a vital role before, during and after the April 27, 2011 historic tornado outbreak. He was on the air the weekend

Samantha Joins the Weather Team at KGWN-TV (Cheyenne, Wyoming)



Samantha Thomas graduated in May 2013 with her Degree in Geography (Meteorology & Climatology Concentration). After graduation she worked as a consulting meteorologist for Channel 12 (Long Island). During the summer she was offered two on-air positions, one in Maine and the other in Wyoming. She accepted the Wyoming position at KGWN-TV in Cheyenne. By mid-August she was working as the weekend meteorologist. She reported on the Colorado flooding in mid-September (station covers northern Colorado). Samantha has recently been promoted to the morning meteorologist position. Our best wishes go out to you and your new career.



beforehand cautioning viewers to be prepared for a terrible day. Ted and his teammates won an Associated Press Award and an Edward R Murrow award for their coverage. Ted also braced Hurricane Isaac in August 2012 in Gulf Shores, Alabama where he did live reports for Central Alabama. Keep up the good work.



Mailing label

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