

The department was founded in 1903

The map library is a regional depository for the U.S.G.S. and D.M.A. and includes over 1,700 monographs, 270,000 maps and 75,000 aerial photographs

The Alabama Maps website has over 46,000 maps from around the world and 14,442 air photos available.

<http://alabamamaps.ua.edu>

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Department of Geography Newsletter

VOLUME 7, SPRING 2011

FROM THE CHAIR:

The Department of Geography is pleased to announce the appointment by Dean Robert Olin of Dr. Douglas J. Sherman as chair. At the time of his appointment, Professor Sherman was the David Bullock Harris Professor of Geosciences after having served as Head of the Department of Geography at Texas A&M for 9 years. Professor Sherman received the B.A. from California State University, Sonoma, M.S. degree from Rutgers University and the Ph.D. from the University of Toronto. His research interests include coastal geomorphology, environmental management and natural hazards. Professor Sherman is the recipient of numerous grants and contract awards and is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a Fulbright Senior Scholar. His extensive publication record includes books, edited journal, and articles in refereed journals. The department is pleased to welcome Dr. Sherman as the chair who will provide the leadership that will make for a successful future. Welcome!

With the appointment of Dr. Douglass Sherman as chair of the department, we want to thank the search committee led by Dr. Joe Weber for the time and effort the committee devoted to making this a successful search. The Department interviewed two candidates for the search. Faculty and students look forward to working with Dr. Sherman as the department moves toward a PhD pro-

gram.

To make the Department the best it can be, the department is starting to act on recommendations of the Eight-Year Program Review. In the past the chair of the department was responsible for graduate admission and recruitment. In response to the Review Committee, a departmental committee led by Dr. Justin Hart now has this responsibility. The Review Committee also recommended changes in the advising pro-



Dr. Bobby Wilson,
Interim Chair

ess. To better facilitate undergraduate advising, Ms Mary Wallace-Pitts now chairs the Geography undergraduate advising committee and Dr. Jason Senkbeil chairs the undergraduate advising for the Environmental Science program. The goal of both committees is to find ways of sharing advising load with members of the faculty. Dr. Seth Appiah-Opoku has been given the responsibility of coordinating program assess-

ments and outcomes, and Dr Lisa Davis is the coordinator of Graduate Teaching Assistants. The Director of Graduate Studies is now the responsibility of Dr. Joe Weber.

The department is pleased to announce that Ms Brittany Holmes, a Geography Major, was selected to receive the Dean's Merit Award. The award is for \$6,000 per year add-on to other type of financial support.

Dr. David Brommer was named eTech Mentor for the 2010-2011 academic year. The eTech Mentors program recognizes faculty doing creative work with technological initiatives within the College.

This year's outstanding undergraduate award in Geography went to Barrett Gutter. The outstanding undergraduate Environmental Science award goes to Heather Black. Megan Buchanan is the recipient of the outstanding graduate research assistant award and Rebekah Pine of the outstanding graduate student award. And the outstanding graduate teaching assistant award is awarded to Ian Comstock. We congratulate these undergraduates and graduates for their outstanding work and contribution to the Department of Geography.

This year the Department had a record number of graduate students to participate in regional and national confer-

(Continued on page 12)



Dr. Seth Appiah
Opoku



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tion of the Journal of Society and Natural Resources. In addition, I presented papers at both the Association of American Geographers (AAG) and Southeastern Division of AAG annual meetings held last year. The latter was co-authored with my former student, Crystal Taylor, who is now a Ph.D. candidate in planning at the Florida State University, Tallahassee. Another co-authored paper with a University of Alabama doctoral student in engineering was presented at the 1st International Postgraduate Research Conference on the Built Environment held in Accra, Ghana, 3-4 June 2010.

In the classroom, I continued to teach the Principles of Planning, Regional Planning and Analysis, Environmental Management, Geography of Africa, and the Field Studies in Africa course. A field studies trip to Ghana last summer included 10 students from this university and one each from the University of Vermont, Southern Methodist University, and the Alabama A&M respectively.

Within the department, I chaired the tenure and promotion committee. I served as the internship and program assessment coordinator. I also served on the colloquium and a number of master's comprehensive examination committees. Outside the department, I continued

teaching and service activities. My pregnant (daughter and newest field assistant Sofia Colette born on January 28, 2011!!!), I also spent the past year teaching, doing departmental service, and collecting field data. My teaching efforts in the past academic year included GY/GEO 363 Geomorphology in both the fall and spring semesters, GY 102 Earth Surface Processes in the fall, and GY 101 Atmospheric Processes in the spring, which is not part of my usual rotation, but I taught it to cover sabbatical leave for another faculty member.

Departmental service activities certainly kept me busy during the past year and included serving as chair of the newly formed Curriculum Committee, Graduate Admissions and Recruitment Committee, the Colloquium Committee, advising Environmental Science majors, and serving as the Graduate Teaching Assistant Coordinator, which includes overseeing all lab sections of GY 101 and 102. In addition, I also served on the Honors Committee for the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers.

As for research activities, fieldwork was my main way of keeping fit during my pregnancy as I spent the summer and fall collecting field data for two projects I am currently working on – one with undergraduate students Alana Rogers and Stormi Barrett and the other with Dan Royall of UNC-Greensboro. Dan and I



Dr. Lisa
Davis

Faculty's Faculties

have been researching the formation of a particular channel deposit called "in-channel benches" that appear to be associated with flow variability



Dr. Jason C. Senkbeil

created by alternating drought and wet cycles. We think this research is very promising and will shed some light on direct impacts of climate variability on geomorphic processes and function in rivers, which has important implications for maintaining aquatic ecology and river management in the future. The other project keeping me busy examines the potential for in-channel river deposits, such as in-channel benches, to store particulate organic carbon (POC), which is an important food source for aquatic ecosystems, as well as a component of the terrestrial carbon cycle. Stormi, Alana, and I spent the past year collecting samples and analyzing them in the lab for POC content, which showed that in-channel deposits contain sizable stores of POC despite being inundated and re-worked by flows frequently. Based on this work, I am working with two new masters thesis students to further examine POC in channel and floodplain environments – Kelley Coker and Bryce Zimmermann. In the past year I presented research at several conferences, including the Annual Meetings of the Association of American Geographers and the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers and the Greater Atlanta Geomorphology and Hydrology Conference. Finally, I had two co-authored articles (one with Dan Royall and my masters student Dusty Kimbrow and the other with Scott Lecce and Allan James) published in 2010 in a special fluvial edition of the *Southeastern Geographer*, which I also co-edited with Scott and AJ.

Jason C. Senkbeil

Teaching:

On the graduate side, I made a few modifications to Quantitative Methods (GY 523), and it continues to be a required element of our graduate program. The Quant class is averaging 15 students each fall and I hope to make more improvements in the coming

years. The goal is for our graduate students to become familiar and comfortable with a variety of quantitative techniques that they may encounter in various subfields of Geography as they prepare to write a thesis. As students have become more acquainted with quantitative research, our department has seen an increase in the numbers of graduate student presentations and participation at regional and national conferences. I also introduced a new mixed grad/undergrad class, Applied Climatology, where we are integrating lecture, data assignments, and outdoor labs centered on a theme of human bioclimatology. Lab topics include, urban heat island, physiology and climate, and air quality. The usual 180 person GY 101 section occupies my other teaching time.

Students:

I am currently advising 4 Master's students with 1-2 new students arriving this fall 2011. Ian Comstock presented research at AAG, the Honors competition of SEDAAG, and the Applied Geography Conference. He recently successfully defended his thesis, "A Classification Scheme for Landfalling Tropical Cyclones Based on Precipitation Variables Derived from GIS and Ground Radar Analysis." Ian will be entering a Ph.D. program in the fall and we wish him continued success. Laura Radford presented research at SEDAAG and the Applied Geography Conference. At the AGC, Laura won the student poster competition. This June she was invited to present her thesis, "Questioning the Cone of Uncertainty: Proposing Alternative Hurricane Warning Graphics" at the First Conference on Weather Warnings and Communication in Oklahoma City. She hopes to defend her thesis this summer. First year student Meganne Rockman is making steady progress on her preliminary thesis work and is getting close to a title. She is researching spatial variation in hurricane evacuation route selection in Pensacola. Cory Rhodes is also making steady progress on preliminary thesis work. She is researching



"Anybody who believes that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach flunked geography."

Robert Byrne

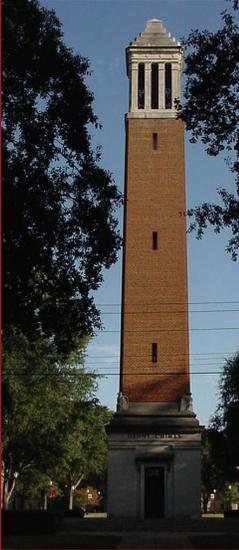
"God created war so that Americans would learn geography."

Mark Twain

"Geography is just physics slowed down, with a couple of trees stuck in it."

Terry Pratchett





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Dr. Michael
Steinberg



of hurricane hazard perception and the physical observation of meteorological characteristics during the storm. 2010 was a very active year with 19 named storms; however, none made landfall in the U.S. There was less than a 5% chance of no U.S. landfalls in such an active season. In addition to hurricane hazards, I am currently conducting ongoing research on two topics; southeastern drought and winter storms in the southeast. External grant efforts were once again unsuccessful, but the experience of rejection is invaluable. Perhaps the coming year will be a different story.

Service:

I participated in service to the department, university, and discipline. At the departmental level, I continued to direct the Environmental Science Program. The Es program currently has 55 students and it is steadily growing. I was a member of the Chair Search Committee and the newly formed Curriculum Committee. I also served on numerous comprehensive and thesis committees. In University service, I served on the College Academy to Improve Student Success (CAISS). Once again I assisted Dr. Brommer in game-day weather forecasting for the athletic depart-

America. I also had two articles published on bird conservation topics, and gave a couple of presentations at meetings. I also served as guest editor for a special issue of the *Geographical Review*, focused on birds and geography, that was published in 2010. My next big writing project will focus on the conservation of rare western native trout species. I have also been busy with my teaching duties which are split between Geography and the New College. I have taught two new courses this past year, global environmental change and birds and birding.

Joe Weber

It has been a busy year, with lots of changes. GIS course enrollments in the department remain high, and participation in the GIS certificate program is still growing. I finally got a chance to revise the GIS certificate program brochure (which you can see at the department website), so no more pictures of former students working with antiquated computers. A new GIS for Emergency Management course is being taught this year, and I hope that we will be able to continue teaching this as well as expand our GIS offerings next year. At the last AAG meeting I finished my two-year term as chair of the Transportation Geography Specialty Group. It was a good experience and certainly kept me in contact with the latest research and people working the field, but I am looking forward to going to this year's AAG

Faculty's Faculties



Dr. Joe Webber

meeting in Seattle without having to prepare for the board meeting. I'm still working on several papers about highways, including several that look at changes to the Interstate Highway System over time. The system was designed back in the 1950s, and it has had to be continually updated to keep up with population shifts and the growth of new cities. It is an antique that still shapes our cities and our daily travel behavior. I continue to keep looking for old roads, especially abandoned freeways, and I'm amazed how many there are out there and how they've become a part of the cultural landscape. This winter I visited my old home of Death Valley and almost got snowed in by a winter storm that brought snow down to a very low 2000 feet above sea level. That's only the third time I can ever recall that much snow in the valley, and it was nice to come back to a slightly warmer Alabama.

Hobson Bryan

I taught two environmental policy seminars: "Environment and Society" in the fall and "Social Impact Assessment" in the spring. The former focuses on the underpinnings of how groups and societies recognize, define, and attempt to solve environmental issues, and the latter addresses the philosophy and process of environmental impact assessment translated into human implications.

Over the past year I have been laying the groundwork for sabbatical leave in the fall. The research is on the nature and extent of loss of public access to common property resources, with particular focus on case studies and the role of diminishing natural resources (i.e., public availability of

recreational fishing and hunting) in the face of increasing demand. I enjoy the applied and interdisciplinary nature of these topics, as well as the variety of backgrounds of students who are exposed to my teaching and research. I look forward to teaching "Environmental Decision Making"—with its focus on the ethics and philosophies underlying environmental policy—in the spring of 2012.

Finally, I plan to step away from a role I have played for the past eight years as faculty advisor to the University of Alabama's Bass Fishing Team, since I will be in travel status a good part of the fall semester. I enjoyed immensely the fellowship and accomplishments of team members and will miss their friendship and support.

Justin Hart

I am completing my second year back at the Capstone. This year has been extremely busy, but very rewarding. During the spring 2011 semester, four of my graduate students will be defending theses (or already have). All of their projects fall into the fields of forest stand dynamics, forest ecosystem ecology, or ecological plant geography. Jacob Richards documented the role of canopy gaps on forest succession and development in mature, mesic oak stands in the Sipsey Wilderness Area of Alabama. Rebekah Pine also worked in the Sipsey Wilderness to document pat-



**Dr.
Hobson
Bryan**

Professor David C. Weaver

Endowed Support Fund

The University of Alabama Board of Trustees passed a resolution on September 14, 2007, reading in part as follows:

WHEREAS, Jan S. Weaver of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, has contributed \$10,000 to The Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama to honor the memory of her late husband, David C. Weaver, and to promote the education of students studying geography in the College of Arts and Sciences at The University of Alabama; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Weaver desires that this gift be accepted and maintained by The University of Alabama as a permanent fund to be named The David C. Weaver Endowed Support Fund in the College of Arts and Sciences....Endowment earnings shall be used to support students, preferably graduate students, in the Department of Geography who are deemed by the faculty and Chair of the Department to be academically superior and deserving of such support.

The goal of the Department of Geography is to raise funds above the \$20,000 level, which will enable the awarding of graduate student scholarships in Dr. Weaver's name. Please make donations directly to the Department or through the University's Capital Campaign program (designating the gift for the Department of Geography David C. Weaver Endowed Support Fund). Make checks payable to: The University of Alabama.

Department of Geography
University of Alabama
P.O. Box 870322



Dr. Justin Hart



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Dr. Vicki Tinnon



ents and their productivity (e.g. an producing multiple manuscripts and making presentations at professional meetings) has been outstanding. Next year my lab will be in a bit of a rebuilding phase, but I am welcoming some promising new students and we should be able to build on the solid foundation established by my outgoing students. I could not be more proud of their individual and collective accomplishments.

Over the past two years I introduced three new courses to the curriculum (GY409/509 Environmental Reconstruction, GY493/593 Plant Geography, and GY492 Eastern Forest Communities). Environmental Reconstruction is an applied class in restoration ecology that requires students to collect and analyze data and prepare a technical report suitable for submission to a government agency. Plant Geography covers basic plant ecology and distribution patterns, generally at a macro-ecology scale and includes an overnight field trip to visit unique plant communities. Eastern Forest Communities is a field-based course offered during the interim session where students spend most of the three-week period outside.

On a personal note, my wife Sara (who also holds a MS from the department) gave birth to our sec-

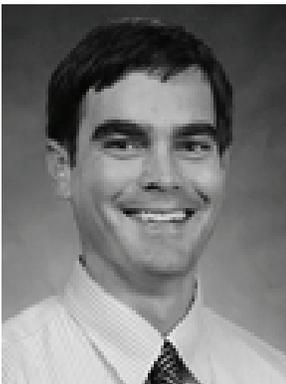
ond child, a beautiful baby girl. I was able to attend many of the sporting events. It was exciting to be in Tuscaloosa for the football season. I did make it to the Capital One Bowl with my dad – we had a great time and enjoyed the warm weather. I am now looking forward to some baseball and softball.

I taught a field course this past summer with Dr. Joseph Weixelman at Wayne State College. The course, the History and Geography of the Southwest, involved a two-week field component that provided students the opportunity to experience the landscapes and culture of this unique region. We actually visited Manhattan, Kansas (K-State) on our way to the Santa Fe Trail and we followed the route all the way to New Mexico. One of the interesting days involved a visit to the Cochiti Pueblo where we got to witness the Corn Dance and were invited to have dinner at the War Chief's house. The students really enjoyed their time at the Grand Canyon and Sunset Crater. Though I had been to a number of places in the region, I had never visited Goosenecks – I finally made it there!

David Brommer

There have been many exciting changes in my personal and professional life over the past year! In addition to getting married in the summer of 2009, Christina and I also became parents! Amelia Brommer was born in June of 2010. I am learning all sorts of new and interesting things, including how to func-

Faculty's Faculties



Dr. David Brommer

tion on very little sleep! Academically, I have continued my work in assessing the internal characteristics of precipitation events and in understanding meteorological hazards and the impacts they have on personal decisions of protecting life and property. I am also still working with UA Athletics assisting them with forecasting during athletic events. They still give me sideline access, to make sure all is right with the weather on the field! I have a new area of research looking at the microclimate of Bryant-Denny Stadium. I am developing a system that will predict if and when excessive heat conditions occur inside the stadium. The early results have been written about in the Birmingham News and the Tuscaloosa News, in addition to the research presentations and the manuscript Barrett Gutter (a senior in Geography) is completing for the Journal of Science and Health at the University of Alabama. Wes Wyatt, meteorologist at WBRC in Birmingham, completed his Master's degree over the summer. His research evaluated the impact of surface cover type on precipitation in the Tuscaloosa area. He did great work and has been extremely successful in his transition from WVUA in Tuscaloosa to WBRC. With all the changes over the past year, I am really looking forward to the continued opportunities here in the Department and all of the great students we have. It is a great time to be at UA and in Geography!

Luoheng Han

I am in my third year as Associate Dean for Natural Sciences and Math in the College of Arts and Sciences. Some of my responsibilities also include research, graduate programs, international matters, and space and facility issues. I still teach one remote sens-



Dr. Luoheng Han

ing course each semester (Remote Sensing I in fall and II in spring), and is presently advising three Master's, and also serving to two Ph.D. and one Master's committees.

Mary Wallace-Pitts

This has been another very busy year for me - my third year as a full-time instructor in the Department and my second year as the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

During the coming year I will teach Earth Surface Processes and Natural Hazards again. The hazards class continues to be very rewarding and the inclusion of guest speakers and the addition of field trips have added a new dimension which has helped students appreciate the practical application of knowledge gained. We have visited Tuscaloosa's Emergency Management Agency and students are currently taking the Community Emergency Response Training class with Billy Green, Deputy Director, Tuscaloosa EMA. Next semester I hope to bring a group to the State EMA headquarters in Clanton.

Advising continues to be a challenge - ensuring that students select the courses best suited to their interests and career goals, and are progressing towards their degree is of course my main focus. However, providing information related to student jobs, internships and volunteer opportunities is an ongoing and integral part of the advising process. My goal is to increase the number of our

students actively involved in community and volunteer groups, and local and state government organizations.

I have continued as a member of the Editorial Board for *Environmental Geosciences*, and enjoy staying current with international research. However, my personal research interests this year have been focused on water quality issues within the

Craig's Trivia

Corner

Name the real or fictional place setting for the following books/movies:

1. To Kill a Mocking Bird
2. The Great Gatsby
3. The Exorcist
4. Jaws
5. The Blind Side
6. Dirty Harry
7. Karate Kid (1984)
8. The Hangover
9. Ferris Bueller's Day Off
10. The Goonies



Mary Wallace-Pitts

- 1) Maycomb, AL
- 2) Long Island, NY
- 3) Georgetown, DC
- 4) Montauk, NY
- 5) Memphis, TN
- 6) San Francisco, CA
- 7) San Reseda, CA
- 8) Las Vegas, NV
- 9) Chicago, IL
- 10) Astoria, OR

Answers:

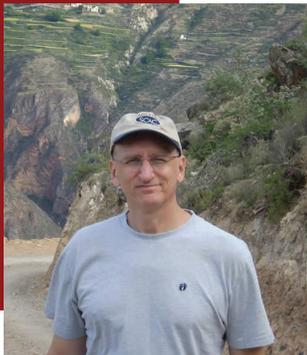
Faculty's Faculties...concluded



Dr. Jeffery Richetto



DEPARTMENT
OF
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Dr. David
Shankman

State. To this end I have contracted with CAWACO to coordinate the implementation of an ADEM grant for the North River Watershed Management Plan. This grant will be administered over the next three years and includes partnerships with GSA, US Fish and Wildlife Service, ADEM, City of Berry, City of Tuscaloosa, Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District, Alabama Forestry Commission, Tuscaloosa Health Department, UA Natural History Museum, and CAWACO RC &D Council.

On a more personal note - my family continues to thrive and we are all staying busy. Last summer the children made their eleventh trip to Ireland and England. Travel plans for this year include venturing west and taking in some of our great National Parks!

Jeffery Richetto

This year marks my thirty-first year at the Capstone. I continue to focus my teaching and research interests in the areas of urban and economic geography. Current projects include historical preservation and company towns (with Gene Ford), GIS modeling of urban crime (with Rachel Smith), and GIS modeling of urban land use change (with Robert Ealy). Being a member of various University committees has allowed me the opportunity to participate in and witness the enormous change that has profoundly altered the University over the past eight years, ranging from remapping the design of campus both functionally and architecturally to increasing student enrollment nearly sixty percent, constructing new academic buildings and hiring additional faculty even during these austere times. Often, I will reminisce of how this department has evolved over the years starting with five faculty, chaired by Neal Lineback followed by David Weaver, to what it has become today, on the verge of proposing a PhD program. Needless, to say, it has been an eventful journey. I

continue to participate in the national AP Human Geography program (as QL) that convenes annually at the University of Cincinnati, bringing together over 200 university and high school instructors for test evaluation and test development. Finally, just celebrating my 38th year of being married to my wife with three children and six grand children with one on the way—life is very good!

David Shankman

This is my 24th year in the department and I am assuming at this point in my academic career I have more years behind me than ahead. Regardless, I am looking forward to growth in both our undergraduate and graduate programs and Dr. Doug Sherman becoming our new Chair. During the past year I had a sabbatical leave. I continued my research in China's Poyang Lake region that deals with flood management and flood risk assessment. I expanded my work in China and now have projects in the Yellow River basin in northern China that address reforestation efforts to slow desertification. I am pleased to have collaborators at the Beijing Forestry University and the Jiangxi Normal University. I also continue my work in riparian forests in the southeastern U.S. One of our graduate students, Matthew Harper, is working with me on a related project that addresses historical reconstruction of bottomland forests in the Mississippi River drainage. I am delighted that Dr. Jason Senkbeil was appointed the new Environmental Science Program Director, a position I held for 14 years. I am happy to work with him as a member of the ES Advisory Committee.



Placenames Research Center Activities

By Director Linda Watson

After several years of unprecedented growth, the Placename staff spent the majority of last year, working on and completing projects for the US Geological Survey. At present, progress is underway for a total of four funded research projects for the US Geological Survey. A major goal of these projects is to update and edit the Geographic Names Information Systems (GNIS) database. Last year, we completed two large GNIS related projects: one for the State of New York and the other for areas within a fifty mile buffer from the Gulf of Mexico and Pacific Ocean and the US - Canadian and US - Mexico borders.

We are in the process of completing four multi-year projects by the end of fiscal year 2011, including the states of Texas, Kansas, Arizona, and Alaska. Needless to say, we stay extremely busy. Most of these projects require not only the collection of new name data, but also the validation and verification of information currently in the GNIS database. The database contains over 2 million point features collected from cartographic and textual materials over the last forty years. The Placenames center is the first contractor in the



Placenames Resource Center Staff

nation given the task of verifying and validating legacy GNIS data spanning the entire forty year time period. Last year, the GNIS database was conflated with another federally produced point theme containing critical administrative structures. This enhanced data layer is in support of the USGS' National Map product.

This year will mark my twentieth year as a project supervisor for USGS funded research. In that time, the Center has grown to include four fulltime professionals and three graduate research assistants.

Our professional Placenames staff include: Audrey Miller, Charles Long and Scott Miller. Audrey and Charles have already earned their Master's Degree in Geography, and Scott is almost finished with his. Our graduate research assistants this year are Kate Miller, Lihui Zhao, and Qinyue "Arlene" Pan. All three ladies are defending their theses this year and plan to graduate either this Spring or in August. Last summer, the Center had a very joyous addition. Geography's youngest toponymist (or so we hope), Ellie Quinn Miller, was born to Scott and Kate Miller.

The Map Library

By Director Tom Kallsen

The University of Alabama Map Library's raison d'être is to support the University's mission of teaching, research and service. The Map Library continues to be a major contributor of material to the Alabama Maps website, most recently to the World War 2 Pacific Section. Library staff are also involved in the Geographic Names Information System research project for Alaska. We have become involved with the Alabama Museum of Natural History, contributing to their recent Cuba exhibit and in providing material for their educational programs. The Map Library Graduate Assistant, Rachel McCurdy, has been helping out with Museum Monday, a science series for 8 to 10 year olds.

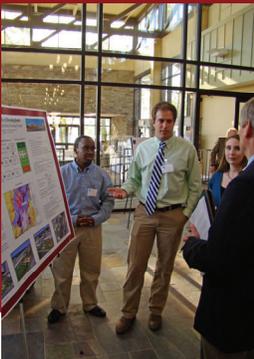
Items of Interest

- Rebekah Pine and Megan Buchanan each won Environmental Scholarships from Legacy, Inc. for \$2,000
- Megan Buchanan was selected for the UA Graduate School's Student Spotlight for February 2011 marking the first time a MS student has received this recognition
- Megan Buchanan served as the Student Representative to the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers (SEDAAG) for the 2010-2011 term
- Megan Buchanan and Ian Comstock gave paper presentations at SEDAAG in Birmingham, Alabama last fall and Rebekah Pine and Laura Radford made poster presentations at the meeting
- Rebekah Pine gave an invited colloquium presentation to the Department of Biology at Birmingham Southern College in February
- Megan Buchanan, Ian Comstock, Matt Harper, Rebekah Pine, Laura Radford, and Jacob Richards will all be presenting research at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers in Seattle, Washington this April
- Laura Radford (MS student) won 1st place in the student poster competition at the 33rd Annual Applied Geography Conference in Fort Worth, Texas



DEPARTMENT
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NEWSLETTER

Andrew, Kevin, and Rachel
show off their prize poster
that they created along
with Ben



Club Geography

Club geography has had an exciting year focusing on geography awareness, education, and service. Community experts gave invited talks focusing on two major topics: freshwater importance and the BP gulf oil spill. These talks have actively engaged our majors, minors, and students outside the department by showing the vast array of opportunities available in geography. For the first year, we participated in Geography Awareness Week. For this event we co-sponsored with the Natural History Museum to create

a freshwater testing and informational station during homecoming weekend during the fall semester. Service projects we have been involved in have included a clean-up day on Hurricane Creek as well as adopting a mile of Hurricane Creek. It has been an exciting year for both building members and expanding the events and services Club Geography participates in. We are optimistic about further growth and the opportunities and events we will be involved in upcoming years.

Cartographic Research Lab

Gaggles of projects have found a perch upon the mapping rockery of the University. Our young chicks lose their down to the likes of the University Press and Transportation Services. Rural water system mapping darkens the skies as once did the passenger pigeon. Alas, one is extinct and the other is nearly so. Flocks of young academics clamor for posters to be printed. The owls of genealogical research hoot as they purvey our online collection of historical maps. The clutch of projects is endless, but never an albatross to swallow.

The Lab is a buzz with swarms of political redistricting work. The hives of politicians are actively protecting their constituent honey. We will smoke them back to demographic reality with the sting of mov-

ing district boundaries. The queen bee, Kelly Koenig, waxes that the politico's are mire drones on the wings of her mouse. We pollinate the State with the nectar of political equality, hoping it will eventually flower.

Your author extends best wishes to all his friends, who have doubtless learned to fly. I have tried to accelerate my slow decline with the purchase of a motorcycle. I have entered the state retirement system's DROP (Denied Reasonable Opportunity to Procreate) program. If you are feeling tired and stressed, do not hesitate to call. I can make you feel better.

Grad Students Place in Poster Competition

In Eufaula, AL this March Kevin Howard, Ben Lundberg, Rachel Smith, Zach Tyler, and Andrew Vinson, sponsored by Dr. Seth, competed at the annual meeting of the American Planning Association: Alabama Chapter in the Chapter's first poster competition. Their poster was a presenta-

tion called *Crossroads of Birmingham*. The poster was a presentation of their submitted idea for the Prize2theFuture contest that was for the undeveloped area of Railroad Park in Birmingham. For the ALAAPA competition they received honorable mention for their poster.

Field Trip (GY 465/565: Regional Planning and Analysis

By Eric Yankson

On Thursday, October 28, 2010, students in the GY 465/565 class at the Department of Geography of the University of Alabama went on a field trip to the West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC), which comprises of Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens and Tuscaloosa counties. The trip was aimed at giving students in the class a practical feel of what regional planning involves.

At WARC, various officials took turns to explain the activities of the various units of the commission. The WARC is one of twelve regional planning commissions in the state of Alabama. It administers programs for the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Delta Regional Authority. The WARC consists of four units: Community and Economic Development; Transportation Planning; Area Agency on Aging; and Accounting. The Community and Economic Development unit prepares the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and updates it every year. It establishes the goals and objectives for economic development which normally encompass community wide projects. Members of this unit are involved in grant applications. As regards transportation planning, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Tuscaloosa County and the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) for Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar and Pickens counties determine eligible projects for planning. These projects which involve collaborative efforts by the WARC, the Alabama Department of Transportation and local governments include both the annual Work Program and the long range plan. The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is the largest agency and comprises of 20 employees. It provides various services to the aged. These include the Alabama Cares Program, ElderConnect,

Home and Community Based Waiver Programs, the State Health Insurance Program, Senior Rx, Senior Activity Centers, Senior Aides Program, MediSmart, Long Term Care Ombudsman Program and supportive services. The Accounting unit prepares and manages the accounts of the commission.

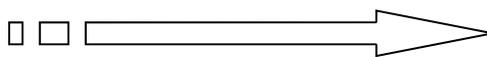
After the presentation, students were given the opportunity to ask questions. Questions asked mostly touched on the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) of the commission as well as the role of the Area Agency on Aging. According to the officials, the RLF is available to small businesses and ranges from \$10,000-\$250,000. The fund keeps on making loans as long as the money that has already been loaned gets paid back. Most projects are geared towards high risk loans. The officials intimated that that the activities of the Area Agency on Aging are central to the activities of the commission due to the rapidly aging population in the West Alabama area.

The course instructor, Professor Seth Appiah-Opoku sought to find out from the commission the skills they normally require from prospective employees (especially new planning graduates). Members of the commission said the ability to read and interpret information, writing, GIS knowledge and expertise, remote sensing and computer skills were crucial. In addition, versatility, open-mindedness, flexibility and good public speaking skills were identified as important attributes. Professor Appiah-Opoku thanked the members of the commission for sharing their knowledge with his students. During the informal interaction that followed the vote of thanks, there was a unanimous consensus that the trip had been a wonderful learning experience.



Times, They are a Changing

Campus continues to grow and change, even in our backyard. This past year the Malone-Hood Plaza was completed in front of the newly renovated Foster Auditorium



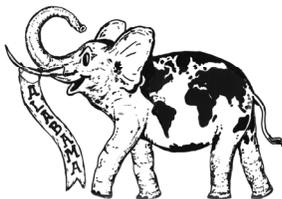


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Geographical Velcro

With adhesive powers far beyond their weight, Leigh Ann and Elizabeth continue to hold the department together.



Department of Geography
University of Alabama

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ences. The Department congratulates the following graduate students for their participation: Craig M. Tuberville, Alabama Academy of Science; Bryce Zimmermann, Greater Atlanta Geomorphology and Hydrology Research Conference; Jacob Richards, Alabama Academy of Science and Association of American Geographers (AAG); Zach Andrew and Kevin Rachel, Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association; Rebekah Pine, Greater Atlanta Hydrology and Geomorphology Conference and Southeastern Division, Association of American Geographers (SEDAAG); Courtney N. Thompson, Applied Geography Conference; Megan Buchanan, SEDAAG and AAG; Laura Radford, Applied Geography Conference, SEDAAG and Conference on Weather Warnings and Communication.

I want to thank the Department for its support during my tenure as interim chair. I particularly want to provide special thanks to the office staff for its support.

Bobby M. Wilson

**Will this guy look good in
Crimson and White?**



**The Geography Department
would like to welcome Dr.
Douglass Sherman as our new
chair.**