

# Panther Geographer

Fall / Winter 2006, Volume 3, Issue 1

<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Geography/>

## Sustainable Urban Environments

Over the last three decades, geographers, planners, and urban researchers have been paying significantly more attention to methods designed to foster sustainable development and improve the quality of life in urban regions. Numerous issues related to the urban environment have come to the fore, including urban sprawl, brownfield redevelopment, inner-city economic revitalization, main-streets planning, urban parks and open space management, social equity, and urban ecology. The 2006 summer term at UW Milwaukee offered the study of sustainable development by means of a unique opportunity for graduate and undergraduate students to carry out both in-class study in Milwaukee, as well as on-site field visits in Vancouver, British Columbia. The 3-credit course *Sustainable Urban Environments*, taught by **Christopher De Sousa**, Associate Professor, examined measures undertaken by public, private, and non-profit institutions to improve the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of a city outside of the United States. Vancouver, Canada, often called the most beautiful city in Canada, is at the forefront of urban and environmental planning. Thus the city offered itself as the ideal location for field-based activities to be carried out at various public, private, and non-profit institutions, allowing students to learn about the range of policy, program and management initiatives developed and implemented in Vancouver. Course assignments provided an opportunity for students to explore areas of particular interest, as well.

The class was composed of 19 UWM graduate and undergraduate students from geography, planning, and urban studies, in addition to an undergraduate geography student from Madison and a graduate student from California. The first part of the course took place in Milwaukee and comprised 3 mornings of class in which students briefly explored the evolution of the urban environmental crisis and the emergence of the sustainable city. Overall course requirements included developing a research proposal

idea, writing a research paper on a current issue related to urban environmental planning and management, in addition to preparing a journal reflecting first hand information which would be gathered throughout the trip on daily life, business, popular culture, food, and many other aspects of Vancouver. A main function of the journal was to highlight and analyze how the actual experience of being in Vancouver compared to the student's expectations.



*Class lecture in a "green" back alley in Vancouver's Mole Hill Neighborhood*

On June 10<sup>th</sup> the students arrived at the University of British Columbia dormitories, their new residence for the next seven days. Throughout the upcoming week meetings, sessions, lectures, and tours were carried out by city officials and planners, university faculty and representatives, and Professor De Sousa. The events took place throughout different parts of Vancouver. These included a presentation by city staff at Vancouver City Hall dealing with the sustainability and climate program, urban planning, community development and social planning; a session with the UBC Sustainability Office and tour of the UBC green buildings; a meeting with the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Organizing Committee covering the aspect of planning for a sustainable Olympics; a presentation by the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority; a session on managing urban parks including a tour of Stanley Park; urban agriculture site tours and walking tours of various neighborhoods. Highlights of the week comprised meeting with Larry Beasley, Director of Current Planning for the City

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Sustainable Urban Environments (cont'd)

of Vancouver, and Dr. Bill Rees, creator of the *ecological footprint analysis*. Both are faculty at the University of British Columbia School of Community and Regional Planning. The activities



*Class members walk along Coal Harbor*

also included group dinners with a variety of the week's representatives, and there was some free time as well. For transportation needs, the group made use of Vancouver's extensive public transit services.

Undergraduate geography major **Rebecca Andersen** shares her positive experience of the course as follows: "By sitting in class and learning about urban sustain-

ability you can only picture so much in your head. By getting out and actually seeing it in person however, is a whole different thing and the trip to Vancouver did just that for me. It was very inspirational in that it made me see how 'ideas' are being played out in different parts of the world. I appreciate Vancouver's efforts for becoming a sustainable environment." Moreover bonds of friendship were made among the course participants, many appreciating the collaboration among the various types of majors, each with their own views and background on sustainability. The chance to experience first hand an urban environment putting into practice methods for sustainable development is excellent preparation and training for UWM's future professionals and scholars in this field. May we all share the enthusiasm and practice of Rebecca's "take-home message" from this hands-on learning: "Sustainability should become a worldwide epidemic."

## Geography Welcome Back Picnic

The annual Geography Welcome Back Picnic is always a pleasant event, and this year's outing was no exception. The picnic was held on September 24<sup>th</sup>, a Sunday this year which was a change from the traditional Saturday date. This proved to be a very fortuitous prior decision, as Sunday morning dawned bright, sunny, and beautiful, and in complete contrast to its two preceding dreary, wet, and chilly days. Held at Lake Park, nestled amidst trees just beginning to take on autumn hues, more than 50 graduate students, faculty, staff, and family members were able to spend a few relaxing hours feasting and socializing.

The culinary offerings at the Geography picnic are a

treat one looks forward to in advance, and the "potluck" presented this year was a spread sure to please everyone. Ethnic diversity among the members of the Geography Department results in a wonderful variety of dishes being provided. To mention simply a few of these highlights, picnic goers enjoyed makizushi, Chinese beef, tomato salad with mozzarella cheese, Chinese noodles, and tea eggs. Another treat at this picnic is that gardeners within the department often share the fruits of their labor. It is no surprise that delicious organic tomatoes once again topped the list!



*Greg keeps an eye on the grill*

The task of the grill master is always important at this event. Rama Mohapatra, Greg Rybarczyk, and Brian Thayer skillfully and patiently grilled the numerous burgers and brats generously provided by the department faculty. And of course what would a



## Welcome Back Picnic (cont'd)



Star, Rong, Lu and Jenny catch up on news

picnic be without a vast assortment of scrumptious desserts. This year's picnic selections offered many good choices including cake and cheesecake, brownies and cookies, and of course fruit and in particular apples.

The annual picnic provides a pleasant and relaxing opportunity for new graduate students to meet faculty, staff, and students. It is a nice chance as well for others to catch up on summer happenings and news for the upcoming semester.

### Harold Mayer Distinguished Lecture Series 2006-2007

#### Friday, Nov. 10th

Dr. James Duncan & Dr. Nancy Duncan  
(University of Cambridge)

"Colonizing Nature:

The Production of an Environmental  
Disaster in 19th Century Ceylon"

#### Friday, March 2nd

Dr. Robert Lake (Rutgers University)  
Title - TBA

## Geography Faculty News

**Dr. Chris De Sousa** has published a couple of papers this fall, including: "Unearthing the benefits of brownfield to green space projects: An examination of project use and quality of life impacts" in *Local Environment*, and "Urban brownfields redevelopment in Canada: the role of local government" in *The Canadian Geographer*. He is also collaborating on a brownfields project with **Changshan Wu** (Geography) and a sustainable development project in Romania with **Tim Ehlinger** (Biological Sciences), **Virginia Carleson** (Planning), **Tracy Heatherington** (Anthropology), and several private and public sector partners.

**Dr. Rina Ghose** was selected for one of the UWM Foundation/Graduate School Research Awards for demonstrating excellence in research. The Committee of Distinguished Professors selected five scholars across all departments in the university for this prestigious award. The award includes \$1500 and a plaque in recognition of the achievements of the award recipient. The award ceremony was held on October 10, 2006. Additionally Professor Ghose gave a research presentation titled "Complexities in Public Participation GIS in the urban revitalization context" at the Department of Geography at the University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign.

**Dr. Judith Kenny** participated in a session titled "Documentary Film and Historical Geography" at the Institute for British Geographer's annual conference in late August 2006. Her paper was titled " 'The City,' 1939: Building for Tomorrow."

**Dr. Mark D. Schwartz** helped draft the report, "Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast," released by the Union of Concerned Scientists and a group of independent scientists from across the U.S. The report predicts longer, hotter summers for the Northeast, less snow, more drought conditions, and an earlier onset of spring in the coming years unless carbon dioxide emissions are reduced by 3 percent a year.

## New Faculty Profiles

**Dr. Anna Mansson McGinty** is an Assistant Professor with a joint faculty position in Women's Studies. She has been at UWM for three years teaching for the Department of Anthropology and the Center for Women's Studies and joined our department this fall. She received her Ph.D. in European Ethnology at Lund University, Sweden, in 2002. Her research interests concern Islam and Muslim women in the West and theories on identity and gender. Her 2006 book *Becoming Muslim: Western Women's Conversion to Islam* is about Swedish and American women who have con-





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## New Faculty Profiles (cont'd)

verted to Islam and the ongoing process of identity construction. Mansson McGinty's present research project concerns the formation of alternative femininities among Muslim women, drawing on both Muslim and Western discourses on gender and the different notions of sisterhood that emerge within Muslim women organizations.



**Dr. Laurel Smith** is an Adjunct Assistant Professor also recently joining our faculty. She received her Ph.D. in Geography at the University of Kentucky in 2005. Her area of specialization intersects the topics of indigenous identity, the use of visual technologies for oppositional cultural politics, and the geopolitics of authoritative knowledge production. Her regional interests lie in Mexico and the U.S. Smith has published articles on cultural and indigenous identity, the most recent "Mobilizing indigenous video: The Mexican Case," appearing in *The Journal of Latin American Geography* this year. Smith intends to do further research on indigenous audience reception of alternative media targeted toward them. She also aims to analyze the everyday lives and livelihoods of Mexican immigrants from indigenous communities who now make their homes in Milwaukee.

## Geography Staff Profiles

In the spring of 2006 Betty Morgan retired from her position of Geography Department Program Assistant, having served in this capacity for 26 years. Betty can never be replaced, but the two people recently hired by the Geography Department as Program and Department Associates will go a long way towards making our community happy and functioning once again. Let's meet the two new faces that greet you upon entering the Geography Office!

**Jacob Recha**, Geography Academic Department Associate, is new to the Milwaukee area. With his roots in Rhinelander, Jacob's first visit to Milwaukee was this past summer when he came to UWM for his job interview. Having survived the first month, Jacob loves the area around the UWM campus where he lives, and especially that everything is in walking distance.

Jacob graduated from Nicolet Area Technical College in May 2005, having earned two Associate's Degrees in Computer Information Science. In addition to some "inconsequential jobs to get him through college", Jacob worked for Nicolet College as a tech support intern, a work study lab advisor and additionally as both a privately employed, referred tutor and an employed tutor to the campus. All tutoring work was in the areas of computers and math. Jacob plans to enroll at UWM at some point during his career to further both educational as well as some personal goals.



When asked about the challenges and impressions of his new job, Jacob replied; "I love the position and the people I've met so far. I've always loved academic communities. People with a passion for learning or education seem to have a way of thinking that makes their personalities mesh well." And it appears that Jacob's personality too, will mesh well with this environment. He is enjoying taking things as they come, learning the proper channels and whom to contact for what, and utilizing his skill of taking very good notes in order to learn his new job. Jacob is also pleased that in this position his computer skills and talents will be put to good use.

On a personal note, Jacob commented that he "feels like an adult for the first time in his life." He is starting to branch out and do a few things on campus, plus is meeting new people. Jacob has also begun applying his creative talents in the realm of cooking, and is especially enjoying preparing creative casseroles based on standard recipes. And finally, while still maintaining a close relationship with his father in Rhinelander, Jacob intentionally left his car in Rhinelander with the definite intention of becoming a Milwaukeean.

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## Staff Profiles (cont'd)

**Va'Na O. Barki** comes to the Geography Department following two years in the Geosciences Department in Lapham Hall in a very similar capacity; University Service Program Associate A. Va'Na is enjoying her new position and commented that she likes doing office work in general. She also enjoys working with the people in the Geography Department.

Currently a student in the Lubar School of Business, Va'Na is in her third year in the Management of Information Systems (MIS) undergraduate program. Although not her favorite, this semester Va'Na is taking two on-line classes. For the spring semester she foresees taking 12 credits on campus. Va'Na is a graduate of Milwaukee High School of the Arts, where she specialized in the Visual Arts program.



In addition to working part-time in the Geography Office, Va'Na has two further part-time jobs. Not only does she tend bar at the *Riverside Theater*, Va'Na is also a hair braider at *Tight Edges*. Va'Na has been braiding hair for more than half of her life. She finds it very relaxing, and loves it. "Braiding is an art," Va'Na explained. "You have to create a style for the customer, realizing that a style created for one individual might not suit another person at all."

Also keeping Va'Na "plenty busy" are her two sons, 8 year old Quavion and Va'Ntrall who is 2. She enjoys taking her boys to the park and museums, and in particular they enjoy the Betty Brinn Children's Museum. Va'Na's hobbies include movies and roller skating as well as spending social time with friends and family. Va'Na emphasizes that she is very family oriented, and that her family comes first. Her parents are both from Nigeria, West Africa, and raised Va'Na and her siblings with an African culture instilled in their values of life.

And although she is not a new face to the Geography Department, *Panther Geographer* is taking this opportunity to reacquaint you with **Dorothy Copeland**, Custodial Support Staff. Dorothy's warmth continues to grace our hallways this year.

Dorothy began her employment at UWM 11 years ago. Having first worked in the Union in the Food Services Department, she was then moved to the physical plant area. Dorothy is now nearing her tenth year in the Geography Department as Custodial Support Staff. When asked about her job, Dorothy talked about the relaxed environment and the relaxed pace, which she enjoys. She finds the people nice as well, and feels that both she and her work are appreciated. And even though Betty Morgan has retired, Dorothy maintains a close relationship with Betty and often thinks of her during her work day.



Born in Yazoo, Mississippi, Dorothy's family moved to Milwaukee when she was a small child. Dorothy graduated from Vincent High School, and then spent one year at MATC pursuing general studies. Following this she took time off for her family of three children, Monique, Jeremy and Myra. Family vacations are among Dorothy's favorite activities, and in particular they have enjoyed site seeing in the Las Vegas area. Her hobbies include playing cards - she likes the game "Spades", and also watching old and classic movies - "Claudine" is perhaps her favorite. Dorothy also enjoys various types of music including the blues and even some rap. And last but not least, very special parts of Dorothy's life are her two granddaughters, Amya (6) and Shavira (2). Dorothy considers herself fortunate in that she gets to see them often, and enjoys being their babysitter from time to time as well.

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# Geography Graduate Students

## **Star Barron**

Star is a Master's student and this year a TA. This past summer Star spent two months in France, Italy, and Germany learning about organic farming, working in the fields with vegetables, fruits and farm animals. The paper she is presently writing based on this wonderful experience gives an overview of organic farming within the European Union.

## **Jonathan Hanes**

Jonathan is a first semester Master's student, serving as Project Assistant to Dr. Mark Schwartz. In this capacity Jonathan has been assisting Professor Schwartz in the organization of the 2nd National Phenology Network Workshop (Oct. 9-13), updating the Wisconsin Phenological Society and National Phenology Network databases as well as creating an interactive, web-based metadatabase of existing phenological data sources for the National Phenology Network.

## **Julie Lancelle**

Julie is a Master's student in the dual program for MA Geography / MLIS. Having completed all the requirements to obtain a Master's degree in Library Science, she is currently finishing up her graduate degree in Geography. It is only Julie's thesis which remains to be completed, and she is very excited about her research topic: Conservation Subdivisions in Southeast Wisconsin. In the spring of 2006 Julie received GIS certification from the Urban Planning department. A 6-year employee of *WE Energies* who works in their Mapping Department organizing and creating usable maps for the companies' engineers, Julie looks forward to a career as a map librarian following graduation in May 2007.

## **Wen Lin**

Wen is a PhD student and in the process of writing her dissertation. She recently attended the 13th Annual Mini-Conference on Critical Human Geography, held at the Ohio State University, Oct. 13-14. Here she presented a paper entitled "GIS Construction in China's Changing Urban Governance: The Case of Shenzhen".

Additionally Wen has been working with Professor Ghose on their paper, "Investigating GIS Provision for Urban Grassroots Community Organizations through Scaled Network-the Case of Data Center of Milwaukee", to be resubmitted to *Geoforum*. During the 2007 AAG conference in San Francisco in April, in addition to participating in a panel whose topic will be "the experience of fieldwork in an overseas setting," Wen plans to present a paper exploring methodological challenges in critical GIS research. "Fieldwork: Making Sense of GIS Construction in a Non-Western Setting" is the tentative title of this work.

## **Falguni Mukherjee**

Falguni is a third year PhD student, and serving as a TA for her third year as well. Falguni continues to do research for her dissertation and is preparing to write her PhD preliminary exams. Her research is entitled "GIS and Spatial Technologies in Urban Governance : Examining the use of GIS and Spatial Technologies in Dane County."

## **Lorne Platt**

Lorne, a PhD student and TA, continues to develop his research on urban parks in Milwaukee. Recently, he has been looking at the design intentions of Charles Whitnall and Frederick Law Olmsted in the Milwaukee Parks System. Lorne plans on presenting this at the AAG meeting next spring, where along with Professor Kenny, he will help organize one and possibly two sessions on urban parks and civic space.

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## Graduate Student News (cont'd)

### **Rebecca Riti**

Becky is in her final year of the dual Master's program in Geography and Library Science. Her prior year Geography Project Assistantship working in the American Geographical Society Library has switched and throughout this school year she will serve as the Geography Departmental Assistant. Becky's new responsibilities include working with Meredith Reitman and Anna Mansson McGintny on the Department Newsletter. Her special project for the year, and one which will put her library science skills to use, will be that of creating a lending library of the geography books, journals and other materials interspersed throughout the Conference Room, Seminar Room and the department.

### **Parama Roy**

Parama, a PhD student and TA, just had her first paper, written jointly with department alums Nik Heynen and Harold Perkins, published in *Urban Affairs Review*. It is titled, "The Political Ecology of Uneven Urban Green Space: The Impact of Political Economy on Race and Ethnicity in Producing Environmental Inequality in Milwaukee."

At the 2007 AAG meeting in San Francisco Parama plans to present a paper entitled "Civil Participation...A Means towards Environmental Equitability or Perpetual Inequality?"

### **Greg Rybarczyk**

Greg is in his third semester as a PhD student and also a TA this year. Together with his advisor Professor Wu, he is beginning to formulate his dissertation proposal as well as gathering participants for his committee. Greg's research will continue that of his Master's degree which involves bicycle planning utilizing environmental variables to find the "best" route. A further issue he hopes to address in his dissertation is that of bicycle travel demand, developing a model that is universal and can predict not only route choice, but volume of bicyclists. Greg will use Milwaukee as a test case, for which he will incorporate urban morphology, social-demographic variables, bicycle crash statistics, and of course GIS.

Besides getting his Master's thesis ready for publication, Greg will be hosting a GIS workshop on network analyst on GIS Day in November. In 2006 Greg attended and presented sessions at both the AAG meeting in Chicago and the National ProBike/Walk conference in Madison.

### **Rashi Sharma**

PhD student and TA Rashi Sharma has just been awarded the *Best Graduate Poster* award at the recent 59th annual meeting of the Wisconsin Geographical Society.

### **Brian Thayer**

Brian is a Master's student who, in addition to his coursework and responsibilities as a TA, is at the time of publication helping with the preparations for UWM GIS Day, November 15th. Chiefly he is helping to organize the many workshops which will take place all over campus in various labs. Throughout GIS Day Brian will also be promoting the newly formed UWM GIS club.

### **Sandra Zupan**

Sandra continues being a TA for GEOG 110 discussion sessions. She has been developing her dissertation proposal on environmental justice and brownfield redevelopment in distressed urban neighborhoods. In order to get a better understanding of her study area - the 30th Street Industrial Corridor in Milwaukee - Sandra has just started conducting a pilot study. Her research proposal will be presented at the 2007 AAG meeting in San Francisco.

# Alumni News

## Joy Zastrow-Mulcahy, BA '77

Joy received her bachelor's degree in December, 1977. Her specialty was Cartography, and Dr. Jim Flannery was her advisor. Some other very memorable courses for Joy were the field trips taken with "Doc" Haglund to the Arctic (Resolute, Canada-1977 and Scandinavia-1978).

Joy writes: "Since my years at UWM, I have enjoyed much travel throughout the US and Europe. In 1991, I spent 2 weeks in Princetown, Trinidad painting a church under construction for a mission project through my church. The LeBrea tar fields there were just amazing!!! I became a Wisconsin licensed land surveyor in 1996 (that's related to Geography!) and owned/ran my own survey company for about 9 years. Right now I am currently able to be in "temporary retirement." Perhaps someday I will find myself back at UWM."

## William P. Mueller, MS '02

Bill wrote to inform the UWM Geography community about his new part time job co-authoring an Audubon book specific to "Important Bird Areas of Wisconsin." Additionally he was recently interviewed on the topic of "mute swans in Wisconsin" by Christina Shockley of WUWM, for the American Public Media "Weekend America" radio program.

Bill concludes his news, adding: "The new natural history tour business I have started takes its first tour (with 18 people signed up so far) to the 15,000-acre Indiana Dunes, on the weekend of October 28-29....As you can see, I am 'keeping out of trouble' around here, and thankfully some longtime efforts are starting to bear fruit."

# Graduate Students have a new Computer Lab



Thanks to the support of Department faculty and the determination of several current students, Bolton 479 has recently been transformed into a graduate students computer lab. The six new computers, desks and printer provide an opportune location for graduate students to work and collaborate on geographic research and departmental projects. The graduate students wish to extend their sincere gratitude to the Geography Department faculty for their support in making this new computer lab a reality.

## Please Let us Hear from You

Please send us news of yourself either by email to: [geognews@uwm.edu](mailto:geognews@uwm.edu) or by sending this form to us.

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

UWM Degree(s)/Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Post-UWM Degree(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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Please enclose news of yourself on separate sheet of paper. *Gifts can be made to the "UWM Foundation – Geography Fund," 3230 E. Kenwood Boulevard, Milwaukee, WI 53211.*

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