

Panther Geographer

Fall/Winter 2007, Volume 4, Issue 1

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

Field Research in Urban Issues

There is a history behind Geog 650, the fieldwork course. Historically, this required course for geography undergraduate majors has brought students to different parts of Wisconsin, but in particular to southwest Wisconsin where **Professor Mick Day** guided students in collecting data on geomorphology and land-use issues. However, in the summer of 2005, **Dr. Day** decided to try something different. He contacted the Milwaukee County Parks' Department to ask about their information needs, and to offer the students' assistance in data collection. It is not an understatement to say they were ecstatic at the offer. They needed information about the Oak Leaf Trail. Who uses the trail, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and race? What do they use the trail for? When do they use it? The data collected could justify funding the trail system and the periodic upgrades required.



Working collectively to standardize a procedure for data collection, the 15 students monitored use of three sections of the trail. The sections varied from heavily used to relatively lightly used. Early morning hours, evening hours, and weekends were not included in the 2005 surveys. Nonetheless, the students were able to detect temporal and spatial patterns, and potential reasons for some trail sections being relatively lightly used.

In the summer of 2007 Geog 650 students collected additional data on the Oak Leaf Trail. As in 2005, park personnel explained to the

students why the data they would collect was important and how it would be used. This information gave the students a clear sense of purpose.

The students collected data at five sites along the trail system. At some sites, changes had been made since 2005. One site comprised a new trail section. Working in shifts, students collected data during early morning hours, evening hours and on some weekends. The public reaction to seeing the students on the trail was positive. Walkers often stopped, asked them what they were doing, talked with them, and left them with an array of stories. Neighbors came out with offers of refreshment. Evidently the public was happy to see interest and skill focused on the trail.



The students found that trail use varied significantly by section. The heavily used sections were more attractive or more easily accessed. At the end of summer, the Milwaukee County Parks' Commission received the data they could otherwise not have collected. As for the students, **Mick Day** described the learning experience.

Field Work in Urban Issues (cont.)

They learned about the realities of data. They learned where primary data comes from, and how to collect it efficiently and systematically. Knowing they assigned people to age classes based purely on observation, they learned data could be somewhat suspect. They realized the importance of consistency, and they also learned data is collected regardless of the weather.

Where will the students do fieldwork in 2008? Will they return to southwest Wisconsin, stay in Milwaukee, or focus their attention somewhere else? **Mick Day** talks about the camaraderie and group interaction that char-

acterize fieldwork in southwest Wisconsin. He also recognizes the convenience of Milwaukee for those who have family or work obligations. Working in Milwaukee also provides the opportunity to contribute to the city's social and environmental health. Beside field location, **Mick Day** hopes to explore other questions. *Would this course benefit from a rotation of instructors? Is a wider range of field options logistically possible? Would it be possible to run the fieldwork options during the regular semester? Should students be required to take more fieldwork classes?* Similar to the data, these questions have implications on the future.

Geography Welcome Back Picnic

September, 30, 2007, the day of the geography welcome back picnic, was overcast, but children's laughter, informal conversation, and some scholarly exchange made

the day feel bright and sunny. Many enjoyed an opportunity to talk with new faculty members Ryan Holifield and Kristin Sziarto, and their sons Baz and Max, although Max, at two months, observed more than talked. For everyone, the picnic provided an opportunity to exchange thoughts about work



Leyton Ramos-Platt prefers chopsticks for his meal.



Dr. Chris DeSousa and Jeremia Njeru in a global exchange.

and life. At the picnic site in Lake Park, the faculty generously provided hamburgers, hot dogs, and brats for

master grillers and their observers. Additional dishes such as sushi, German potato salad, fried rice, curry, and apple crisp reflected the diversity of backgrounds and culinary skills of the graduate students.



Chef Steve Mauel at work.



Katie, Parama, Elizabeth enjoying it. all.

Dr. Rina Ghose: Graduate Prog. Chair

This fall, Dr. Rina Ghose became Graduate Program Chair. Her response to the appointment radiates enthusiasm.

I am very excited because this is something I always wanted to do. We already have a great pool of students, and I want to see us producing excellent scholars who will be successful in their professional life.



Rina has already been directly involved in graduate program development by instituting workshops focused on teaching preparation. In her view, her current position formalizes her desire to act as mentor not only for developing scholars already enrolled in geography, but for students she hopes to recruit.

I want us to have a range of students with

varied interests because we have faculty members in the department doing great research in physical and human geography. For example, we now have four or five scholars working on social justice and environmental justice, and we have a number of scholars working on physical geography of the urban environment. So I hope to recruit students who will be interested in these directions.

Like many in the geography department, Rina believes the urban focus is a great strength. *This is the urban institution in Wisconsin. We are here because we enjoy conducting research on the urban environment.*

Her desire to mentor comes from her own graduate experience. *I had a great advisor and committee who helped in my scholarly development. The right kind of mentoring can produce so much in a student. I benefited from it and I want to pass it on.*

Geography Faculty News

Dr. Chris De Sousa has published the following papers: De Sousa, C., Gramling, B., and LeMoine, K. 2007. "Evaluating Progress Toward Sustainable Development in Milwaukee's Menomonee River Valley: Linking Brownfields Redevelopment with Community Quality of Life." In J. Sirgy, D. Rahtz, and R. Phillips (eds.) *Community Quality-of-Life Indicators: Best Cases III*. (Blacksburg, Virginia: International Society for Quality of Life Studies); and De Sousa, C. 2006. "Urban brownfields redevelopment in Canada: the role of local government." *The Canadian Geographer* 50(3): 392-407.

Dr. Rina Ghose is continuing her research on empowerment, marginalization and public participation GIS in the inner-city revitalization context. Her most recent publication on this topic is Ghose, R. 2007, "Politics of Scale and Networks of Association in PPGIS," *Environment and Planning A* vol. 39. 1961-1980. She has received a grant from the Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management to explore the complexities of participation of nonprofit organizations in collaborative governance.

Dr. Judith Kenny was recently named to the Editorial Board for the Vernacular Architecture Forum's book series. She will be stepping down at the end of the calendar year as book review editor for the journal *Urban Geography* after holding the position for three years.

Dr. Anna Mansson McGinty is currently working on a research project, "Gender Identity and Activism among Muslim Women in the Midwest," on gender, Muslim sisterhood and activism within Muslim women's organizations. Her article, "Formation of alternative femininities through Islam: Feminist approaches among Muslim converts in Sweden" on Islamic feminism is forthcoming in *Women's Studies International Forum*.

Geography Faculty Profile

Dr. Judith T. Kenny, Chair, Department of Geography

In the Fall of 2007, **Dr. Judith T. Kenny** became Chair of the Department of Geography. During a recent conversation, Judith cited the many reasons for her optimism about the department's future. She immediately points to the strong foundation established by previous chairs. She intends, in her own distinct way, to continue the tradition they established of providing support for the department's growth, while keeping the engine going on a daily basis.



The excellent evaluation the graduate program received strengthens her optimistic outlook. In recognition of the department's future, the commitment to a department of 16 faculty members was reconfirmed. This growth will take place over the next several years. Two positions will be filled in the recruitment process this year. Judith will chair one of the recruitment committees, and **Dr. Mark Schwartz** will chair the other. Judith sees other expressions of the department's strength.

*We have the largest group of funded graduate students since I arrived in 1990. We want to provide students with more opportunities to develop their research. A new fund honoring **Professor Emeritus Clinton Edwards** was just established and will support student field research. We will select a graduate student researcher for that award this spring. I will be shepherding through that*

process, and also raising awareness of the opportunity to contribute to a healthy scholarship/research fund. The department is in sync with the University's mission. We have benefited from changes of the recent past. We are hearing from the Chancellor that this is the university that serves Wisconsin. We have been asked to look at our undergraduate enrollment. Our numbers of those interested in geography keep increasing, but we want to look at having larger numbers of majors.

We spoke about the workshop for department chairs she attended at the beginning of the fall semester. Judith thought it addressed a range of issues not usually dealt with by faculty members until they have the position of department chair.

When asked why she decided to assume this position and how having the position impacts her teaching and research responsibilities, Judith responded:

Professionally I felt it was time, and the opportunity was there, and I thought it was an appropriate time to do my part. In terms of teaching and research, although I enjoy teaching graduate students, I am looking forward to teaching more undergraduate courses. As for my research, I feel even more committed to getting my research done. I think having this position might even give my professional work more balance. The people who have come before have made their mark. I want to contribute no less.

New Geography Staff Profile

New Staff: Nicolle Grassl, Program Asst.

Nicolle came to the United States from Romania in 1983 with her mother and younger sister. Her mother currently works in the IT Department at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. The family stills speaks Romanian.



a college education. She also coordinated field trips to Milwaukee museums and to places of educational interest, especially on campus.

Nicolle is an English major and expects to finish her undergraduate degree at the end of the spring semester. She hopes to get back into pre-college work as an advisor to students from inner city schools. First, she will complete a Masters in the Cultural Foundations of Education program.

Prior to joining the geography department, Nicolle worked in the University's Trio Pre-College program for five years. The program's goal is to raise awareness among MPS high school students of the possibility and advantage of a college education. Nicolle tutored and coordinated workshops such as financial aid workshops in order that high school students could think about how they might afford

Nicolle and her husband have a two year old son, Ethan. They made a decision that at least one of them would be with Ethan, and arranged their work schedules accordingly. As to her current work environment, she describes it in this way: *Everyone is friendly, helpful, outgoing, and with a great sense of humor.*

New Graduate Students

Jonathan Burham

After doing international development work in South America, I am excited to pursue my Ph.D. My research will look into the economic, environmental, and social impacts of the recent wave of Mexican migrants on the city of Milwaukee. These impacts will be situated within the phenomenon of neo-liberal globalization and its effects on the urban environment. I am working as a TA for Geog 110. *The World: Peoples and Regions.*

I-Hui Lin

This is my first semester of my Ph.D. study in geography. I received my Masters Degree

in Urban Studies Program at UWM in 2006. My interest is in urban development and redevelopment, and GIS. I am currently one of three TAs for Geog 110. I look forward to enjoying my study with all of you.

Aswin Subanthore

My dissertation research pertains to cultural geography of the Indian Diaspora in New Jersey. Other interests include post-colonial landscapes of Chennai, India. I am working with Dr. Judith **Kenny**, and I am a TA for **Chris Schroeder** in Geog 114. *Geography of Race in U.S.*

New Graduate Students (cont.)

Katie Williams

I am working towards my Masters Degree. I am still working on specifics, but my interests focus on parks and funding; advocacy and the landscape; and greenspace and economic development. I am the TA for **Ryan Holifield's** Geog 125. Environmental Geography.

Zhang Yixuan

I am seeking a Ph.D. in human geography, specializing in the socio-economic impacts of rural-urban migration and market driven development in China. I am working with Linda McCarthy, and I am TA for Geog 110.

Graduate Student News

Rashi Sharma Lachhwani

I received the AFSA (Asian Faculty and Staff Association) Honorary Scholarship Award for the year 2007-08. AFSA "recognizes outstanding Asian students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for their academic excellence, as well as their commitment and contribution to the Asian community in the greater Milwaukee area."

Wen Lin

I attended, The Second Global Conference on Economic Geography, held in Beijing . My presentation title was: "Constructing E-governance in Urban China: Strategies and Practices." My forthcoming publication is: Lin, W. and R. Ghose. 2008. "Complexities in Sustainable Provision of GIS for Urban Grassroots Organizations." *Cartographica*, forthcoming in Vol. 43, no.1

Sherry Meyer

I am researching Environmental Illness in the spatial contexts of phenomenology, community, and complexity. This year I presented at the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry Conference.

Lorne Platt

I will be attending the Society for City and Regional Planning History (SACRPH) Conference in Portland, Maine. I will present a paper with **Dr. Judith Kenny** entitled: "Beer Gardens to Parkways: Charles Whitnall's Progressive Era Park Design for Socialist Milwaukee."

Parama Roy

On October 6th I gave a presentation at the 14th Annual Conference on Critical Geography entitled: Sustaining Community Green for Environmental Equality in Walnut Way Milwaukee.

Rich Shaker

I spent last summer in Romania on an interdisciplinary project through the National Science Foundation focused on sustainability and sustainable development. Last fall, I was involved with U.S. Trade Development Research Project in northern Romania that looked at open pit coal mines and the effects of mine closures.

Graduate Student News (cont.)

Rong Yu

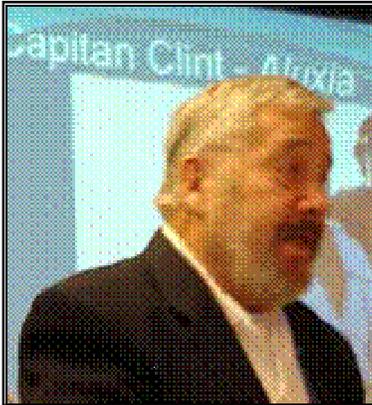
I am serving as PA for **Prof. Mark Schwartz** working for the National Phenology Network. I am doing detailed phonological observation in the Downer Woods this fall.

Sandra Zupan

I attended the Society for the Study of Social Problems Conference in New York, August, 2007. My paper, "Community Participation and Urban Brownfield Redevelopment," was awarded first place in the student paper competition in the Environment and Technology Division.

In Other News...

Clinton R. Edwards Graduate Student Research Fund



Professor Clinton R Edwards

The Department of Geography will make its first graduate researcher award in Spring of 2007. The award, for field research, is intended to instill in the recipient the passion for geography that distinguished **Professor Edwards'** career.

Assistant Professor Tenure Track Appointments Fall, 2008

As part of its future growth, the geography department begins the recruitment process for a Physical Geographer and an Economic Geographer who will concentrate research and teaching on urban issues. Successful applicants will develop an active research program, which includes a Milwaukee-area focus and connections with the local community.

Graduate Student Rep

Alan Halfen joins Jonathan Hanes as part of the team acting as liaison between the graduate students and the faculty. They both attend faculty meetings, facilitating communication between faculty and students.



Congratulations:

A son Max was born to **Kristin Sziarto** and **Ryan Holifield** on August 6th, 2007. He has been at the geography picnic and many of us see him at school. His happy temperament may indicate he finds geography quite interesting.

In Other News...(cont.)



Our Friend, Betty Morgan

Betty Morgan's new career in day care is proving quite successful. She continues to maintain contact with life at UWM, although her nurturing presence is missed. Her husband Glen works on campus, and her oldest grandchild is starting his freshman year.

Alumni News

Becky Riti has secured a position at Talbot County Free Library in Easton MD, where she will use her expertise in map collections. Congratulations from all of us.

Harold Mayer
Distinguished Lecture Series
2007- 2008

Friday, Oct. 19, 2007, 3:00
Prof. Robert Beauregard
(Columbia University)

The Spaces of Urban Theory:
From Chicago to Johannesburg
and Beyond

Please Let us Hear from You

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

Name: _____

UWM Degree(s)/Date(s): _____

Address: _____

E-mail _____

Phone: _____

Post-UWM Degree(s): _____

Employer:

Please enclose news of yourself on separate sheet of paper. Your financial support is welcome. Please make your check payable to the UWM Foundation - Geography Fund and mail it to UWM College of Letters and Science, Holton Hall 253, PO Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413.

PANTHER

GEOGRAPHER

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

Bolton Hall 410

P.O. Box 413

Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413

PHONE: 414.229.4866

EMAIL:

geognews@uwm.edu

WEBSITE:

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

EDITORS

Geri Weinstein-Breunig, editor

Anna Mansson McGinty,
faculty editor

Ryan Holifield, faculty editor