

PANTHER GEOGRAPHY

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings from the UWM Department of Geography! I'm pleased to be serving as the new department chair, and as I learn the new role, I want to express my gratitude for the wonderful support and assistance that I've received from the last three chairs: Changshan Wu, Mark D. Schwartz, and Mick Day.

Although the pandemic continues to create challenges for all of us, we've been able to take a few steps closer to "normal" this fall. Some of our classes have remained online, but many have returned to face-to-face instruction. So far, things have been going quite well, and I have been glad to be back in the classroom and the office. We haven't yet returned to face-to-face department meetings or colloquiums, but we've managed to get together for some great outdoor activities, including a retirement celebration for Donna Genzmer at the Bavarian Bierhaus, happy hours in Hubbard Park, and a friendly competition to identify and map tree species in Downer Woods.

Of course, happy hours and walks in the woods aren't the only things keeping us busy. Professor Rina Ghose and her PhD advisee Amir Forati have published new articles presenting innovative research on opioid overdose deaths and [geotagged tweets of misinformation about COVID-19](#). In November, Associate Professor Anne Bonds, along with Assistant Professor of English Derek Handley, will co-present the 52nd Annual [Morris Fromkin Memorial Lecture](#) on their research documenting and mapping racial covenants in Milwaukee County. Meanwhile, Associate Professor Woonsup Choi and I have begun work on a new \$2.8 million grant from the National Science Foundation's Advancing Informal STEM Learning Program, which will sponsor programming, research, and evaluation for a public art/science civic project called [WaterMarks: An Atlas of Water for the City of Milwaukee](#). We're also excited about the great work that our new and continuing graduate students are doing, and we're deeply grateful to have our PhD alum Nick Schuelke teaching classes for us again this year. Finally, we've renewed our relationships with adjunct faculty Kirsten Beyer, Jonathan Hanes, and Fritz Nelson, and our alums Ryan Covington and Rong Yu have joined us as adjunct assistant professors.

These aren't the easiest of times for UWM or our peer institutions – we've been going through a period of often painful contraction, which has been accelerated and exacerbated by the pandemic. The cliché of "doing more with less" hits home for us every day. But we're proud of the resilience and perseverance of our students, staff, and faculty, and we're gratified that the UWM Department of Geography continues to flourish as a lively and productive community even amid hardship. We're also deeply proud of our wonderful alumni – and always grateful for your continuing support!

All best wishes,



Ryan Holifield
Chair, Department of Geography



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College of Letters & Science

DEPARTMENT NEWS

The Downer Woods Scavenger Hunt Colloquium, 9/17



On September 17, Geography Department colloquium attendees found themselves participating in a daunting, curious, yet rewarding activity: a competition in Downer Woods. Directed by Prof. Sziarto, students and faculty alike joined forces on two separate teams. Their task? To navigate Downer Woods as quickly as possible while successfully identifying as many trees as possible. Teams were chosen in a gym-class style, and one team was graced with Prof. Schwartz's presence, which prompted concern that the team may enjoy an unfair advantage due to his tree-identifying expertise. Tensions were extinguished, however, and the two teams soon found themselves amid the thick foliage of Downer.

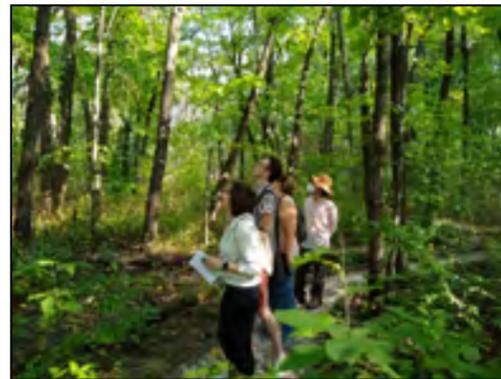
Within each team, a few roles were assigned to each of the members, giving them each a unique ability to contribute to the activity. For instance, there was the photographer, a picture-taker, whose responsibility was to snap detailed pictures of identified species. Another team member was the cartographer, a map-maker, whose task was to chart their teams' course, points of interest, and Downer Woods in general. Each member contributed dutifully to their team's efforts. Team members encountered a number of imposing obstacles and

challenges including hammocking students, narrow wooden bridges, and mud.

Once well along in the woods, one of the more common challenges was distinguishing between species that looked similar or were in the same larger family. For example, there was some confusion over whether a certain tree was really a red oak or a white oak. Furthermore, a great deal of box elder trees were identified as well as some ash, maple, and even the invasive buckthorn. Prof. Schwartz also made team members aware of his various marked trees he was keeping track of in Downer Woods, which were designated by numbers applied with a special kind of pink paint that would not hurt the trees.

However, the escapade for both teams soon came to an end, and after about 20 minutes had passed, both teams found themselves back at the entrance to Downer Woods, eager to find out who had won the competition. After a tense waiting period, it was decided that both teams had identified similar amounts of trees, and participants were awarded with official 'Biggest Tree-Hugger' awards from the department. What an honor! The awards did not stop there though. One student was awarded temporary possession of the infamous Geography Department world map jacket for his artful mapping contributions to the competition.

All in all, the Downer Woods colloquium was a unique and enjoyable outdoor activity, and we thank Prof. Sziarto for organizing it and distributing the awards. Students remarked that it was nice to learn more about Downer after passing by it for so long. Many have been in Downer before, but this activity taught everyone more about it. As the cold starts rolling in for the season, we recall the pleasant weather and fun outdoors we had back in September with our department and lament the trees we observed and the passing of their leaves. Nevertheless, we enter these colder months of the year with a greater understanding of both Downer and its trees and ourselves as officially 'Biggest Tree-Huggers' because of this fun activity!



DEPARTMENT NEWS CONTINUED

Donna Genzmer Retirement Party Recap 10/8



It was with bittersweet joy we celebrated our colleague Donna Genzmer's retirement on October 8 at the Bavarian Bierhaus in Glendale. Throughout Donna's long career, one that has spanned four decades, she made immense contributions to our Cartography and GIS Center. During the early days of ArcGIS, she helped bring it to UWM and implement it into the program. This was no small task as the field was rapidly changing and continues to do so.

Thus, in coordination with the Geography Department, a sizable retirement celebration was planned. The evening started out in an unassuming, sectioned-off portion of the Bavarian Bierhaus, but soon enough around 60 people from various points in Donna's career arrived to enjoy food, drinks, laughs, and speeches to make the evening special and memorable.

Regarding the venue, the Bavarian Bierhaus is a German-style beer garden that offers a variety of high-quality food and beverages. Of particular note were the various styles of German beer they offered and their pretzels with cheese. Each attendee got a ticket for a beer of their choice and helped themselves to a number of wonderful, light appetizers that proved perfect for the occasion, fellowship, and catching up with each other. Prof. Holifield gave a short speech, Prof. Bonds presented Donna with a gift from the Geography Department, and Donna gave a short speech as well, thanking everyone for a rewarding career and for coming to celebrate it with her. The fun lasted well into the evening and into the early nighttime as the weather got colder, the day darker, and folks had to say good-bye.

Overall, we thank Donna for her dedication over these many years and once again wish her the best in her retirement, though as she has stated, retirement for her does not simply mean a break. Donna has many plans and exciting opportunities and hobbies to pursue that are still very much on her plate, so this is not the end, but a beginning of a new chapter. We would also like to especially thank Prof. Holifield and those involved in setting up such a nice evening for this event. The cool, relaxed, evening weather was about perfect, and it was a great way to see everyone in the department in person, socialize, and celebrate after a year plus of online study and relative isolation. Again, we thank Donna for a great career here at UWM, wish her the best of luck in retirement, and remain grateful for this opportunity to celebrate her and each other this past October.



We offer congratulations to our recent graduates:

Trevor Iglinski, MS
Andrew Schendl, MS
Gainbi Park, PhD

And...

A special congratulations to Nate Wojcicki for successfully making the list for Phi Beta Kappa this year! Nate was featured in this past spring's newsletter for his great work with mapping streamflow characteristics in central Wisconsin, which he presented at the UWM Undergraduate Research Symposium in April. Congratulations to Nate once again!



SHARE YOUR UPDATES!

We'd love to hear about what you are doing since graduating from the geography program.

Send updates to Ryan Holifield at holifiel@uwm.edu



ALUMNUS & STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

Scott McComb and Wisconsin Sea Grant



Alumnus Scott McComb has recently been hired by Wisconsin Sea Grant as an outreach specialist in aquatic invasive species. He will oversee southeast Wisconsin in his new job. McComb graduated from the UWM Geography program with a BA in 2010, and he attended years of schooling in Utah for his master's degree in bioregional planning while doing work in planning and conservation. However, this new position means that he is back in Wisconsin!

A little more about Wisconsin Sea Grant – they are a Madison-based environmental organization whose main concern is the Great Lakes and their sustainable use and management. For this reason, Sea Grant promotes education, research, and outreach on environmental topics that encourage sustainable use of the Great Lakes. A few main topics they have done work on are McComb's specialty, aquatic invasive species, but also other environmental

concerns such as aquaculture, coastal processes and engineering, fish and fisheries, mapping and GIS, resilient coastal communities, social science, and water quality.



McComb's work is focused on Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha counties where he will work to coordinate education, outreach, and environmental programs. This does not mean he will only be in the office as he plans to still work in the field. That said, one of McComb's main areas is the planning side of things. On a larger level, he seeks to implement projects that help improve communities and their environmental management, particularly as it relates to invasive species.

We are happy to see McComb back in Wisconsin and congratulate him on this new position!



Cate Heady



My name is Cate Heady and I'm a master's student in UWM's Geography Department. My research interests are in critical urban geographies, feminist, and queer geographies. I'm originally from Louisville, Kentucky where I received my bachelor's degree in Geography at the University of Louisville and worked as a Library Assistant at the Louisville Free Public Library. During my time as a UofL student and a library worker, I became very interested in studying urban spaces, which brought me here to UWM and Milwaukee.

My master's research is an examination LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness in Milwaukee, focusing on questions of mobility and access within urban spaces. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, my project primarily considers the perspectives of service providers, or people who work with youth and LGBTQ+ folks in different capacities at organizations throughout Milwaukee. I've conducted interviews to gain an understanding of how youth homelessness is produced in the city, and how it is tied to social issues such as homophobia, transphobia, and

racism. I also consider the built environment of the city, and how aspects such as our transportation systems are connected to homelessness as well.

In addition to this research, I created a map that will be published in *Shelter: An Atlas* by Guerrilla Cartography. My map, titled "Shelter and Segregation" features the locations of emergency homeless shelters in Milwaukee as well as the racial residential segregation of the city. I also used supplementary data from Milwaukee's Continuum of Care to discuss how housing access and homelessness in Milwaukee is an issue of racial justice.

I hope that my research draws attention to the needs of young LGBTQ+ folks in Milwaukee and the workers that support them, especially those that experience housing insecurity and homelessness in the city. After graduating, I hope to continue to work as a researcher. I'm currently applying to positions in my new state (New Jersey!) that focus on urban issues and social justice.

NEW STUDENTS



Dean Maraldo

Hello! My name is Dean Maraldo, and I am excited to start my PhD at UWM. I received my undergraduate degree in Geological Science at my hometown school - SUNY at Buffalo. After graduating, I moved to New York City and joined the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. I worked in the emergency response and watershed programs throughout my career, and now work in drinking water and wastewater enforcement in EPA's Great Lakes office. Along the way, I received an MA degree in Public Policy and Administration at Northwestern University and an MS degree in Natural Resources and Environmental Science at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. My research interests include geomorphology, climate change, water security, and environmental justice. Free time activities include hockey, biking, movies, and trying to exhaust my dogs.



Elliot DeGuilme

Hello! I am from Staten Island, New York, and am looking forward to the opportunities before me as I attain my master's here at UWM. My fascination with geography goes back to childhood, but I never considered as an academic pursuit until a few years ago. I received my undergraduate degree in International Relations at Hobart & William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York (like Milwaukee, also on the shore of a freshwater lake). However, geography was always lurking in the background of my studies since my interest lay in the perceptions and realities of justifications to territorial claims. Presently, I am following the GIS professional track for the master's. Among my interests are cartography and GIS for urban redesign away from an automobile-centric orientation. In my free time, I enjoy bike riding, travelling, imagining where I will travel next, and working on my model railroad layout (which is back home in NY).



Matthias Schilli

Hi, I'm Matthias, and I was born and raised near Karlsruhe, Germany, and came to Milwaukee for my PhD. I received my undergraduate in Geo-Information Management in Karlsruhe and my graduate degree in Economic Geography and Spatial Development Policy in Giessen, Germany. During my master's, I was able to stay at UWM for a semester abroad in the Fall of 2019. My research interests include working with GIS but also programming and modeling with spatial data. I'm looking forward to narrowing these down over the following semesters of my program. My personal interests are watching sports, especially soccer and basketball, playing sports, and listening to music.

In Memoriam

We are deeply saddened to hear of the passing of former student Karen Diaz-Perez this past April. She graduated from Fort Atkinson High School before attending studies in Geography at UWM and moving on to work at the Pabst Theatre and the Community Coalition Center in Milwaukee. She showed great love toward her family but also her community at large in her numerous social justice efforts and involvements. We empathize with her family and friends and admire their strength these past months.



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