Is your ZIP code your destiny? Maybe, says UWM Sociologist

By Angela McManaman, University Relations

Marcus Britton is a child of the ’80s. By day, he played in the woods and fields of his hometown, Escanaba, Michigan. By night, he joined the first wave of American kids dabbling in computer programming. A love for computers and a fascination with community and the forms it can take – rural, suburban, urban – are represented in his current work as a researcher and an associate professor of sociology at UW-Milwaukee.

After a decade studying large metropolitan areas across the U.S., Britton is now focusing more on Milwaukee. He recently shared what his research can tell us about UWM’s hometown.

Do you study neighborhoods, or do you study the people who live in them?

Most of my research has something to do with neighborhoods, but I most often describe my research as being about race, housing, and what I call “place-based inequality” – the idea that if you grow up in ZIP code 53206 as opposed to an affluent neighborhood in Whitefish Bay, that has consequences for the kinds of outcomes you typically experience later on.

What are the kinds of outcomes that you study when you look at a neighborhood and the experiences of its residents?

I look at birth rates of very pre-term infants, born at 28 to 32 weeks. Very pre-term births account for a significant portion of infant mortality, particularly among black and Latina women.

You’ve also studied education outcomes – literally how much education a child obtains over her lifetime. What patterns have you identified?

There is lots of evidence that growing up in a predominantly black neighborhood, which typically means a high level of concentrated poverty, is not merely associated with a lower level of education.
If it came down to a choice between saving Hitler or Gandhi from a sinking ship, assistant professor of philosophy Stan Husi would let Gandhi in the lifeboat every time.

And that, he argues, is one of the reasons why humanity does not have equal moral worth.

Moral equality is a very abstract concept, but at its core is the notion that each person on Earth has equal intrinsic value and should therefore be given an equal voice and equal regard in society. Moral equality is a quality that theoretically stands apart from all of our other attributes – like integrity, intelligence, social status, etc.

Husi’s not convinced. He challenges the idea in a paper published in the Journal of Ethics entitled, “Why We (almost certainly) are Not Moral Equals.”

“I’m skeptical of equality,” he said. “I say in the paper that we all have witnessed horrible discrimination and racism, all of these things that went wrong in the past. We all agree that these are horrible things. And so we assert that everyone is morally equal. And I’m like, really? Gandhi and Hitler are moral equals? The Dalai Lama and Stalin are moral equals? How can this be?”

The main arguments against moral equality

In his paper, Husi identifies four obstacles to the notion of moral equality.

No. 1: “Moral status would have to be connected to something in us that is significant,” Husi said.

For example, one could make the argument that everyone who is taller than 1 inch would have moral equality. After all, all humans are taller than 1 inch and supposedly have equal moral worth. But, he points out, such a measure isn’t significant (and is, in fact, downright silly).

No. 2: Whatever quality determines equal moral worth “has to equalize. Everybody has to have it in the same amount,” Husi said. “Many philosophers think that 1 and 2 are sufficient for moral equality. In the paper, I’m saying that seems to be curiously mistaken.”

No. 3: Even if we were able to identify whatever quality about humanity makes us moral equals, we would have to prove that there isn’t another similar quality that is also morally significant and present in unequal amounts.

For instance, suppose rationality was the quality the determined peoples’ equal moral standing, and everyone had it in equal amounts. Intelligence is a similar quality, but this feature may be present in people in different amounts. If rationality is so important to moral equality, why wouldn’t our intelligence also impact our moral worth?
Haley Jansen had to fail a few times to reach the success she’s found today.

The first time was when she bombed a standardized test (Jansen admits she’s not a great test-taker) and her college of choice, UW-Oshkosh, wanted to place her in a remedial math class. She transferred to UWM instead and found herself on the pre-vet track.

And then she failed her veterinary board exam after four years of vet school.

“It happens to some people and you have to deal with it. I won’t lie; it was the worst news I’d ever gotten,” Jansen recalled. “I had to work for a year as a vet tech. But, that year was so helpful.”

It gave her experience as she learned to navigate the working world and veterinary care. She learned about clinic operations, animal care, and other tricks of the trade that made her an attractive hire when she passed her boards on the second try.

“It prepared me for what real life was really like,” Jansen said. “It was hard to have that failure, but it helped me hit the ground running.”

Today, Jansen is seeing furry patients at the Appanasha Pet Clinic in Menasha, Wisconsin. It’s been her life-long dream to work as a veterinarian.

“When I was very tiny, people would ask me what I wanted to be when I grew up and I would say, I want to be an ‘aminal’ doctor,” Jansen recalled. “I always had pets that I played ‘Animal Doctor’ with. Luckily they were all pretty good pets.”

She took the first steps toward her dream career at UWM, where she entered the pre-vet track and majored in Biology. Jansen still recalls how her professors were willing to meet her one-on-one to answer questions beyond the scope of her classes.

She was also involved in UWM’s pre-vet club. The club often brought in speakers to talk to students about what to expect in vet school and how to further their careers. The advice was invaluable when she graduated from UWM in 2011 and began veterinary school at the University of Minnesota.

Like medical school, veterinary school is a mix of classroom learning and clinical rotations. Jansen did rotations in radiology, dentistry, surgery, and more to learn every aspect of animal care. Her favorite rotation was internal medicine.

At the Appanasha Pet Clinic, though, Jansen is a general practitioner who focuses mainly on dogs and cats. Her days are a mix of wellness exams, check-ups for sick or injured patients, and surgeries – mostly spays, neuters, and dental cleanings.

There are challenges; it can be heart-wrenching to see a family have to part with a beloved pet when they can’t afford a surgery or treatment. It’s also difficult when Jansen can’t provide a diagnosis for worried owners. Animals can’t communicate so it’s difficult to pinpoint a specific cause for a particular ailment. Sometimes all Jansen can do is treat a patient’s symptoms.

And then there are the funny – and dramatic – moments.

“There have definitely been cheating boyfriends or girlfriends who were found out when the dog ate somebody’s underwear,” Jansen said.

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A spectrum of characters: Grad student researches TV autism

By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science

Hart Hansen, the creator of the Fox TV series *Bones*, has admitted in interviews that the show’s main character, Dr. Temperance Brennan, was based on a friend of his who has Asperger’s. The show never formally labeled Brennan, fearing that an autism diagnosis would not appeal to audiences.

Oh, how things have changed. Just ask Sierra Wolff, a graduate student in Media Studies working on her thesis.

“I’m tracking, over the last decade, how autism in television went from background characters or a plot device to shows centered around the fact that the main character has autism,” she said.

Even in the last 10 years, the portrayal of characters on the autism spectrum has come a long way. Shows like *Bones*, NBC’s *The Big Bang Theory* and CBS’s *Criminal Minds* feature characters that hit many of the marks of an autism diagnosis – traits like difficulty connecting with others, a tendency to misunderstand sarcasm or idioms, and strict adherence to logical thinking patterns – but never formally label those characters.

Those shows began in the mid-2000s. These days, shows like ABC’s *The Good Doctor* or Netflix’s *Atypical* focus on characters who are compelling precisely because they have autism.

“I think, even two years ago, these shows would not have been out and successful. And now, *The Good Doctor* has been renewed and *Atypical* has a second season coming out,” Wolff said.

She puts that down to a larger cultural shift in America. Young people overall tend to be more inclusive in regards to race, sex, and disability. The rise and prominence of social media has made it easier for people on the spectrum to share their experiences. As visibility has grown, Wolff said, so too has acceptance. The CDC estimates that 1 in 68 people in the U.S. has autism.

And, as characters with autism have begun to feature more prominently in popular media, the conversations and plot lines have changed.

Wolff recalls one 2009 episode of *Private Practice* in which a mother

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lost her child to a vaccine-preventable illness. She didn’t vaccinate her children after she blamed vaccines for one child’s autism diagnosis, a cause that has been de-bunked.

“I think we’ve shifted more from talking about that controversy and are more looking at the characters. There’s not been that kind of increase in more mainstream characters up until the last year or so,” Wolff said.

While television has made great strides in increasing the prominence and visibility of characters with autism, there is still room for improvement. In many shows, characters on the non-verbal end of the spectrum are used merely as a plot device, especially in crime dramas, and are never seen on-screen again. Shows typically feature white, male characters with autism, ignoring the struggles of women and people of color. And, Wolff noted, there’s the tendency for shows to portray characters with autism as savants.

“Less than 10 percent of people with autism have savantism,” she said. “They don’t have those crazy, special abilities most of the time. It doesn’t mean that they’re less; it’s just different. Many times you’ll see portrayals of people with these super-special skills.”

How people with autism are portrayed is a subject that hits close to home for Wolff: one of her younger brothers has Asperger’s. She’s interested in finding television shows featuring characters like him and other special needs children she’s worked with.

Unfortunately, Wolff is a terrible person to watch TV with when she’s researching.

“My brother hated watching Atypical with me, because if I was getting behind in notes, I’d make him pause it so I could catch up,” she said with a laugh. “It’s this constant pausing, rewinding, listening, getting direct quotes, or going back and catching these little details.”

If current trends in television continue, she’ll have the opportunity to annoy more friends and family as she researches the ever-widening spectrum of characters with autism.
LETTERS & SCIENCE APRIL 2018

UWM atmospheric science associate professor Clark Evans believes that southeastern Wisconsin is beyond the worst of winter. However, he makes no guarantees.

Evans, coordinator of UWM’s Atmospheric Science program and an advisor for Innovative Weather, UWM’s in-house forecasting service, said he learned one thing early in his career: “Never make a forecast you don’t have to! The level of specificity goes way down very quickly the farther out you try to make a forecast.”

What is on the horizon, Evans said, are bright career prospects for graduates of UWM’s atmospheric science degree programs, including two advanced degrees that have been restructured this year to meet employer expectations within the meteorology industry. The native Floridian recently talked about what makes UWM’s atmospheric sciences program effective, described his preferred weather events and offered an armchair analysis of spring weather and the 2018 hurricane season.

Tell us about atmospheric sciences’ new degree programs at the graduate and PhD level.

We’re not necessarily expanding our program offerings in that we had atmospheric science concentrations in math and geosciences already, but rather we’re formalizing our master’s and PhD offerings in atmospheric sciences. We’ve tweaked the requirements of this rebranded degree program to match employers’ expectations and so that students have the skills to succeed no matter what they choose to do post-graduation.

What skills are employers looking for in new meteorologists?

There are terabytes, if not petabytes, of data that meteorologists need to process. To build a model or prepare a forecast, we need people who both understand the physical processes in the atmosphere and have the skillset to mine these large datasets that can tell us what to expect from the weather.

So the average broadcast meteorologist has to reference a complex collection of data just to give us a three-minute weather report?

Yes, they’re taking into account three to 10 different computer models plus their own intuition, plus their own observations – and millions of observations from balloons and aircraft and boats, any number of different platforms. Also involved are equations that describe how the atmosphere evolves. Back at the news station, someone gets an hour to put it together in a story that we can all understand.

Often, broadcast meteorologists are now called “station scientists” because they have expertise within the science of meteorology, which is itself a combination of applied physics, applied math and applied chemistry. The kinds of students who succeed in this field have an innate curiosity with how things work. And, there are some mathematical skills that need to be mastered as well. Meteorology is bringing this all together into study of something we all are affected by each and every day.

How has climate change posed challenges to you as a professional and educator in the field?

It’s difficult to relate individual weather events to climate change. You can’t attribute one specific weather event to climate change even though climate change has affected the atmosphere in which those weather conditions evolve.

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UWM physicists have created a new hybrid material that dramatically boosts the energy storage capacity of lithium-ion batteries.

Professors Carol Hirschmugl and Marija Gajdardziska formed a startup company called SafeLi with the goal of breaking into a market hungry for improved lithium-ion batteries. Their graphene monoxide material would replace commonly used graphite in a battery’s anode, allowing for novel, lighter and safer anode materials that will charge faster and store more energy.

It has other advantages, too, because it can solve a problem with silicon-graphite, which has great potential as a next-generation material in anode research.

Adding about 10 percent silicon nanoparticles to the graphite anode doubles the battery’s capacity. But silicon massively swells and shrinks during charging and discharging, causing it to break up quickly. Graphene monoxide is a better match with silicon because it does not swell when it takes up lithium, and the new material’s flexibility compensates for the expanding silicon.

“Through Hirschmugl and Gajdardziska’s efforts, the mechanism of lithium insertion into graphene monoxide and silicon anodes will be understood, and that will help their startup remain competitive in this crowded market,” UWM professor of Mechanical Engineering Deyang Qu says.

To learn how to think like entrepreneurs, the physicists, including team member Marvin Schofield, joined the Milwaukee I-Corps program. A partnership of five area universities, I-Corps trains academics how to turn ideas from lab research into products and startups. Administered by UWM and funded by the National Science Foundation, it’s the only I-Corps site in Wisconsin.

“I-Corps taught us how to get potential customers to tell us what is needed to gain a market share,” says Gajdardziska, who is also dean of UWM’s Graduate School.

Through I-Corps, the team met mentor Loren Peterson, an entrepreneur in UWM’s Lubar Entrepreneurship Center. They also met with top companies in the battery field, like locally based Johnson Controls. The researchers subsequently were accepted into the national I-Corps program in the Silicon Valley cohort, giving them access to people in companies like Tesla, Apple and Samsung.

“I-Corps made our startup possible in a way that we never would have expected,” says Hirschmugl. “It is turning physicists into entrepreneurs.”

Lithium-ion batteries consist of a short stack of metal and plastic layers, with the positive electrode — the cathode — on one side, and the negative — the anode — on the back. Add the electrolyte between the electrodes, and you have a lithium-ion battery in a pouch. The electrolyte carries positively charged lithium ions from the anode to the cathode and vice versa during charging or discharging, causing electrons to accumulate at the anode. These “free” electrons will return to the cathode along a wire that connects the electrodes, creating a current.
April 24
Film Premier: Anne Morgan’s War / L’autre chemin des Dames. 4th Floor Library Conference Center. 7 p.m. Shown in conjunction with photography exhibit “Anne Morgan’s War: American Women Rebuilding France 1917-1924.” https://bit.ly/2HYumNB

April 26

Geosciences Colloquium: SETI: The Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence – Perspectives of an Earth Scientist. Lubar N120. 3:30 p.m. Donna Jurdy, Northwestern University.

2018 Maps and America: The Arthur Holzheimer Lecture Series. AGS Library. 5:30 p.m. Carme Montaner, Institute Cartografic i Geologic de Catalunya/Spain, presents “Franciscan Cartography of the Peruvian Amazon in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century.”

April 27-28
IHonors College Drama Club Presents “Reasons to Be Pretty”. Honors House 155. 7 p.m. Honors College students perform Neil LaBute’s play exploring the end of relationships. Open to the public. Admission is pay what you can.

April 27-29
Italian Film Festival. UWM Union Theater. 7 p.m. Enjoy nine recent films shown in Italian with English subtitles. Free and open to the public. Show times at https://bit.ly/2ucCat7.

April 27-May 4
Planetarium Show: Indigenous Voices - Sharing the Wisconsin Sky. Manfred Olson Planetarium. Fridays at 7 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. Tickets are $5. http://bit.ly/2F1fmkd

April 27

Geography Colloquium Series: The UWM Field Station – Properties, Programs and Research. AGS Library. 3 p.m. Gretchen Meyer, UWM Field Station.

May 2
Author reading: The Novels of Mario Vargas Llosa and the Poetics of Power with Peruvian Novelist Alonso Cueto. Curtin 175. 3:30 p.m.

May 3-5
21st Century Studies conference: Ends of Cinema. Curtin 175. Beginning May 3 at noon. Speakers include Caetlin Benson-Allott, Georgetown; James Leo Cahill, Toronto; Francesco Casetti, Yale; Mary Ann Doane, Berkeley; Andre Gaudreault, Montreal; Michael Gillespie, City College; Jean Ma, Stanford; and Amy Villarejo, Cornell. https://bit.ly/2Ji6pS7

May 2
United We Read: Student/Faculty reading. Riverwest Public House, 815 E. Locust St., Milwaukee. 7 p.m. George Clark, Maria Ortiz, RS Deeren, and Shanae Aurora Martinez. Free and open to the public.
Gregory Fueger, the former department manager of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, passed away on March 26. He was 70 years old.

Greg began his career at UWM as a professor of Military Science in 1986. In 1989, he both retired from active duty as a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army and took up his post as the department manager of Chemistry and Biochemistry. He was dedicated to ensuring that the department and building ran smoothly. In addition, Greg served on numerous university committees. He is remembered for his sense of fairness and thoroughness. He retired from UWM in 2002.

Greg was laid to rest on April 5. His obituary is available at https://bit.ly/2JfkU9e.

Edward Wellin passed away April 5 at his home in Madison. He was 100 years old.

Edward spent 25 years as a professor of anthropology at UWM, where he taught and mentored thousands of students and conducted research with lasting and significant impact.

As the son of Ukrainian immigrants, Edward supported his family after his father’s death in 1937 by joining the Army to serve in World War II in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He later earned his PhD in anthropology from Harvard University and became a specialist in medical and applied anthropology.

Edward’s full obituary is available at https://bit.ly/2HUvTWe.

Moral equality continued from page 2

No. 4: Husi’s final argument is the “threshold” premise – the idea that people are moral equals if they possess an amount above a certain threshold of whatever virtue determines equality. The problem there, he argues, is that you must prove that there isn’t another, equally significant threshold.

“Suppose it’s rationality in excess of some amount ‘x’ that matters,” Husi said. “Now you must make the further claim that rationality in excess of ‘y’ makes no difference.”

Husi can’t see how philosophers can reconcile any of those four issues.

The implications of no moral equality

Though Husi thinks humans are not moral equals, he’s quick to stress that this is not a justification to discriminate against people or hold on to prejudices. In fact, in some cases, it’s an argument for the exact opposite.

“White supremacists say white people are superior,” Husi pointed out as an example. “Both the egalitarians and I say that’s nonsense. My egalitarian friends say it’s because we’re moral equals, and I say it’s because race has nothing to do whatever might matter (for determining moral equality). … It would violate the first condition that I posited in the paper.”

Which is not to say that we shouldn’t discriminate in select instances. Picking Gandhi over Hitler to share his lifeboat is discrimination, but morally necessary, Husi argued. If people were truly moral equals, picking between the two should be an impossible choice.

Husi was inspired to write his paper after reading a paper by his mentor, George Sher of Rice University, that argued for the existence of moral equality. The two had lively debates about the subject, and Husi eventually penned a rebuttal.

“I have a lot of mistrust in slogans and assertions that sound nice,” Husi said. “I’m just asking some deep philosophical questions about things that some people believe are true and trying to see whether they can be justified.”
A standing-room-only crowd of friends, parents, siblings, instructors, and other well-wishers congratulated the winners of the 24th annual Women’s and Gender Studies awards contests on March 15 at the Hefter Conference Center. The ceremony featured winners of the UWM Undergraduate and Graduate Student Paper and Project Contest, the Milwaukee Public Schools’ Wisconsin Women Making History contest, and, for the first time this year, the Casey O’Brien Outstanding Activist Award.

Winners of the Rachel Skalitsky Award for Undergraduate Research included Amanda Lawrence (1st), Bailey Flannery (2nd), and Grace Amelia Kreuser (3rd), and for Undergraduate Project, Emily Fitzgerald (1st), Emma Mae Weber (2nd) and Katie Maedke-Hall, with honorable mentions going to Olivia Dimmer, Eleanor Clement, and Grace Amelia Kreuser. Winners of the Eliana Berg Award for Graduate Research included Jill Hoffman (1st), Megan Orcholski (2nd) and Rose Hennessy (3rd).

The Casey O’Brien Award—given in honor of former WGS instructor and mentor Casey O’Brien in recognition of student activism and leadership within the areas of women’s issues, gender and sexual equality, and social or racial justice—went to WGS major Nataley Neuman, the organizer and president of PASA (Panthers Against Sexual Assault).

Winners of the MPS Wisconsin Women Making History contest included, at the high school level, Gepsaida Fernandez (1st), Quincy Noakes (2nd) and Jazlyn Molton (3rd), all from Golda Meir High School.

At the middle school level, winners were Cloey Knapp (1st) and Nicole Saranecce (2nd), both from Fernwood Montessori School, with a third-place joint award to nine students from Ms. Erin Sivek’s class at the International Newcomer Center, part of the Milwaukee Academy of Chinese Language (MACL): Aisha Ramzan Ali, Jamilah Abu Bakar, Saidah Dolah, Asma Osman, Moo Ah Tier, Tuwahidah Muhammad Ali, Nur Khadijah Abdul Gafur, and Suhur Hassen. Each of these students wrote about their mothers’ incredible journeys to America as they became Wisconsin women, and their mothers and other family members were among those at the ceremony.

Quincy Noakes’ essay also focused on a contemporary Wisconsin woman, UWM History Professor Chia Vang, who joined the crowd congratulating Quincy and the other winners.

Each year this ceremony brings to the UWM campus middle- and high-school students and their families who may have never been on a college campus before, where they mingle with some of the best UWM undergraduate and graduate students.

Above: UWM History Professor Chia Vang stands with Golda Meir High School student Quincy Noakes, who won the second-place prize for the MPS Wisconsin Women Making History contest with his essay focusing on Vang.

Left: Third-place winners of the MPS Wisconsin Women Making History prize stand with their mothers at the Women’s & Gender Studies awards presentation. The students wrote an essay describing the struggles and triumphs of their immigrant mothers. Photos courtesy of the Women’s & Gender Studies program.
Alumni Accomplishments

Calum Hastreiter ('10, BA History and Political Science) takes on a new role as the chef de cuisine at the Milwaukee ChopHouse after being promoted from culinary supervisor. Milwaukee ChopHouse is part of the Marcus Restaurant Group.  

Sharon Foster Adams ('70, BA Political Science) was lauded in OnMilwaukee’s “Coming Home” series, highlighting people who moved away, then returned to Milwaukee to make a positive impact on their hometown. Adams co-founded the Walnut Way Conservation Corp., responsible for improving blighted areas of Milwaukee.  

Emily Kozak (Stawicki) ('02, BA Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies) takes a seat on the National Association for Female Executives’ 2018 NextGen Roundtable. She is the Vice President and Chief of Staff to the President and CEO at Northwestern Memorial HealthCare.  
https://bit.ly/2um6xQv  

Brad Hentschel ('07, Masters of Public Administration) is the new city planner of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. He leaves a job at the engineering firm Short Elliott Hendrickson to begin his career in the public sector.  
https://bit.ly/2pHaZCd  

Bonnie Shucha ('94, MA History and MLIS) has been appointed Associate Dean for Library and Information Services and Director of the Law Library at the University of Wisconsin Law School. She joined the UW Law Library staff in 1999 and has served as Reference & Electronic Services Librarian, Head of Reference, Assistant and then Associate Director for Public Services, and most recently Deputy Director. She received her JD from UW Law School in 2014.  

Dennis McBride ('76, BA Journalism) announced that he will run for Wisconsin State Assembly District 13. McBride is the former president of the Wauwatosa Common Council and he will challenge incumbent Rob Hutton.  

People in print


https://bit.ly/2GPoQg7  

https://bit.ly/2uYgSjn  

https://bit.ly/2Hm0USN
In a case of unintended consequences, John Heywood (Economics) and fellow researchers found that when London instituted a fee on vehicles to combat air pollution, it increased diesel vehicle emissions, according to AOL. [https://aol.it/2GuF6pT]

Need to brush up on business skills? Sally Haldorson ('98, MA English), the general manager of 800-CEO-READ, had some book recommendations she shared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. [https://bit.ly/2I65nbz]


Are you a “Red Balloon” person or a “Madeline” person? Find out when you read Liam Callanan’s (English) new novel, Paris by the Book, which was previewed in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel ([https://bit.ly/2YFdlP]) and on Fox6 News ([https://bit.ly/2pMwnFt]).

Headed by Krista Lisdahl (Psychology), UWM is participating in a new long-term, national study examining childhood brain development. She went on WUWM to explain the study. [https://bit.ly/2GjxfIM]

Students in the Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies department traveled to Washington, D.C. to cover the March for Our Lives event, and then journeyed to interview pro-gun advocates afterward. They told their story on Wisconsin Public Radio. [https://bit.ly/2GA4MBJ]

A Chinese satellite that crashed into the earth at the beginning of April likely did not pose a threat to human life, Jean Creighton (Planetarium) told CBS 58 News. [https://bit.ly/2lbYrYv]

As the Trump Administration proposed adding a citizenship question to the 2020 U.S. Census, media organizations including CNN ([https://cnn.it/2GRZD5M]), Time Magazine ([https://ti.me/2pN25SO]), The Atlantic ([https://theatlnt.tc/2IZDRqZ]), and Quartz ([https://bit.ly/2pP90ed]) turned to Margo Anderson (History) for historical context surrounding the issue. The Washington Post also ran article detailing Anderson’s research revealing that Census Bureau data was used to target Japanese-Americans for internment during World War II. [https://wapo.st/2q3QP5k]

Anderson was also an invited speaker at the “Who Counts? 2020 Census & Fair Voting Maps” public program hosted by the League of Women Voters in April. [https://bit.ly/2qCVT4h]

William Holahan (emeritus Economics) was quoted in opinion piece in Urban Milwaukee questioning the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel’s decision to rely on a study touting Foxconn benefits. ([https://bit.ly/2usL1Hx]) He also worries that recent financial legislation was enacted to help political interests, rather than the economy, as he wrote in an editorial for the Montgomery Advertiser. [https://on.mgmadv.com/2Ek0QQp]

Graduate student Will Tchakirides (History) sits on the March on Milwaukee’s oral history committee because he thinks communities should develop their own institutional memory, he told Urban Milwaukee in a piece remembering the city’s Open Housing marches. [https://bit.ly/2GHxMrk]

Robin Pickering-Iazzi (Italian) spoke at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville on her book “The Italian Antimafia, New Media and the Culture of Legality.” [https://bit.ly/2GJ5xIM]

For the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., the BBC consulted Marc Levine (History) to determine how much Milwaukee has changed as a result of Dr. King’s legacy. [https://bbc.in/2qKbJn]

Levine’s research into black poverty and unemployment was also quoted in a Milwaukee Independent article exploring the same topic. [https://bit.ly/2q9MAE1]

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Insurers are wary of insuring utility companies against cyber-attacks, but Wei Wei (Mathematical Sciences) hopes to change that by creating models to quantify the risk of attacks on power grids, the Insurance Journal reported. [https://bit.ly/2J7keDU](https://bit.ly/2J7keDU)

There’s a lot of science and history that go into fermentation and brewing, Bettina Arnold (Anthropology), Barry Cameron (Geosciences), and Jennifer Jordan (Sociology) revealed on WUWM. [https://bit.ly/2GpFvqH](https://bit.ly/2GpFvqH)


Nan Kim (History) was the featured speaker at the Potluck for Peace & Teach-In On Korea hosted by Peace Action on April 28 in Milwaukee. [https://bit.ly/2GsxzDs](https://bit.ly/2GsxzDs)

Can gambling on politics increase peoples’ interest in government? Don’t bet on it, Ivan Ascher (Political Science) told CBS 58 News. ([https://bit.ly/2InEgbV](https://bit.ly/2InEgbV)) He also argued that we shouldn’t rely on the markets and the fact that “green energy is cheaper” to reduce climate change on Project Syndicate. [https://bit.ly/2J40aBs](https://bit.ly/2J40aBs)

Many of Milwaukee’s residents are at risk of lead pipes leeching the dangerous element into their drinking water. WUWM talked to Noelle Chesley (Sociology) about her own filtering issues and the research she’d like to conduct to find out how to best help families use their water filters correctly. [https://bit.ly/2H47vQM](https://bit.ly/2H47vQM)

Milwaukee celebrated National Poetry Month with graduate student Soham Patel (English), who read from her works at the Milwaukee Central Library in April. [https://bit.ly/2EybOlC](https://bit.ly/2EybOlC)

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel highlighted the Latin American Film Festival and the Festival of Films in Italian, presented by the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and the Department of French, Italian, and Comparative Literature respectively, as must-see events in April. [https://bit.ly/2GtsUXx](https://bit.ly/2GtsUXx)

Herbert Hoover had a long list of accomplishments to his name, Glen Jeansonne (emeritus History) wrote in a piece for the Des Moines Register. [https://dmreg.co/2HaLjpd](https://dmreg.co/2HaLjpd)

Larry Kuiper (French, Italian, and Comparative Literature) presented, “Let’s Table This: What a Linguistic Corpus Can Tell Us About Culture” at the University of South Dakota’s 30th annual Phi Beta Kappa Lifting Amundson Lecture in April. [https://bit.ly/2Ha1e6V](https://bit.ly/2Ha1e6V)


In Canada, there is evidence that police use libel laws to punish critics of government, David Pritchard (Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies) wrote in a piece for The Globe and Mail. [https://tgam.ca/2H934rb](https://tgam.ca/2H934rb)

Erik Gulbranson (Geosciences) was surprised to find prehistoric tree stumps in Antarctica, he told Mother Jones. [https://bit.ly/2HmgDkQ](https://bit.ly/2HmgDkQ)


A new study suggests a method by which scientists could look for wormholes in space, but John Friedman (Physics) told Science Alert that the types of wormholes hypothesized about might not actually exist. [https://bit.ly/2qH2O8L](https://bit.ly/2qH2O8L)

More than 1,500 young scientists descended on UWM’s campus in April to compete in the Wisconsin Science Olympiad. Anja Blecking (Chemistry) spoke to Fox 6 News about the event. [https://bit.ly/2Jy3mGn](https://bit.ly/2Jy3mGn)
Laurels, Accolades, and Grants

Gladys Mitchell-Walthour (Africology) received the Rodney Higgins Best Faculty Paper Award at the National Conference of Black Political Scientists in March 16 in Chicago. Her paper used an intersectional approach to examine Bolsa Familia beneficiaries’ political opinions in Brazil.

Adam Greenberg, Christine Larson (both Psychology), and Edgar DeYoe (Medical College of Wisconsin) have received a 2018 CTSI-AHW REP Pilot Award (Clinical & Translational Science Institute-Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Research and Education Program), which includes funding of $50,000 over the next 12 months, for their project “Neuropsychological & Neurobiological Markers of Attentional Control Fluctuations Associated with Anxiety.”

Woonsup Choi (Geography) has been elected Regional Councilor for the West Lakes Division of the American Association of Geographers (AAG). In this role, he will liaise with the Division and the National Council of the AAG, representing the Division to the National Council and vice versa. He will also coordinate the business of the Division with the Division officers.

Two students took home top prizes at the Japanese Consulate’s 32nd annual speech contest. Lauren Singer (Japanese) was awarded the grand prize, and Stephen Cannell (Japanese) won the Chicago Shimpo Award. This competition is held by the Japanese Consulate in Chicago and features contestants from universities all over the Midwest.

John Berges and Erica Young (Biological Sciences), in collaboration with Hunter Carrick (Central Michigan University), have been awarded $214,422 in NOAA-Sea Grant funding to study silica cycling in Lake Michigan. This research will address critical gaps in our understanding of the role of silica in changing lake dynamics.

Lisa Taxier (Psychology), Jessica Skinner (Anthropology), and Anahit Campbell (Chemistry) took the top prizes in UWM’s inaugural Three-Minute Thesis competition, where each had to explain their research to a general audience in an elevator-pitch style. The three were chosen from among 14 finalists hailing from 11 different departments on campus. https://bit.ly/2vf4rQm

Xiaohua Peng (Chemistry and Biochemistry) received an Applied Research Grant for her project, “ROS-Activated Prodrugs that Target Cancer Cells.” The grant award is $49,000.

Student journalists from the Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies Department took home 14 awards from the Wisconsin College Media Association, including two awards in the Journalist of the Year category. The department’s immersion trip to Flint, Michigan to cover the city’s water crisis won two first-place honors, and the students won a first-place Freedom of Information award. For a list of all awards and winners, visit https://bit.ly/2GXtInP.

Veterinarian alum

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Overall, though, the job is very rewarding, especially when a dog or cat who was doing poorly makes a full recovery.

“I remember diagnosing diabetes in a cat. It doesn’t always have to be a miraculous surgery. Just figuring out the little things can make people so grateful,” Jansen said. “You’re very happy to see a family happily taking their pet out the door.”

She has some advice for aspiring vets. No. 1, be prepared for the amount of debt that veterinary school brings. And No. 2, be persistent, even in the face of failure. It’s hard to get into vet school and some people have to apply multiple times. Ask questions and be willing to take criticism to improve.

“If you really want to do it,” she said, “don’t give up.”
Atmospheric science

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Attribution science uses historical observations as well as climate model forecasts to determine how much more likely events like hurricanes Harvey or Maria might be in a changing climate, but there is uncertainty in how to communicate this. But, I would say that instead of posing scientific challenges, climate change poses new scientific opportunities, ripe for the next generations of students to make their mark in the world.

What makes UWM a great place to study meteorology?

The scale and level of involvement that students get as a result of coming to a research university like UWM, with a broad weather forecasting enterprise, is one advantage. Through our Innovative Weather forecasting service, UWM students help forecast for a wide range of clients and a wide range of factors. They’re helping the Brewers determine if the roof will be open – questions of precipitation, sunshine, temperature. Or, they’re helping clients like the Lake Express Ferry determine if they should send ferries out on a particular day – looking at wind patterns, wave height and more. For power/utility companies, they’re developing forecasts by looking into sunlight, wind, heavy snowfall and ice. Summerfest is a client.

And, students can gain professional experience and get paid all the way through to graduation day. They get paid to work in the world’s greatest lab – the atmosphere – and apply what they study in the classroom to see how it all fits together.

What do UWM atmospheric science grads do with their degrees?

We see about one-third of our alumni working for the National Weather Service and one-third in the private sector (broadcast news, private weather forecasting firms, insurance and power companies). The final one-third go into academics to become professors or research scientists.

Our program is geared to prepare students for all types of careers, and Innovative Weather really is key to this. There is no program like it in the country or the world. We’ve talked to universities from McGill to Valparaiso interested in replicating this model.

Our 11 years of success are starting to build on themselves as our alumni are significant positive contributors to their employers and their bosses want to hire more people from UWM who they know will come in and do a great job. Their success makes my job easier!

You moved here from Florida in 2011. How are you adjusting to the weather here?

It’s been a continual adjustment, with winter in particular. My first winter here included the March of 2012, the hottest March on record here. That did me no favors in terms of understanding what winter and spring actually look like in Wisconsin! The winter we have seen this year and last year – getting out in it and doing activities really help.

The arrival of spring provides hope. And Milwaukee summertime is fantastic. You don’t know how bad summer in the south is until you have a Great Lakes summer. The cool Lake Michigan breezes, the long and warm days makes winter here worth it in a lot of regards.

You were originally trained as an expert on tropical weather. What can we expect from the 2018 hurricane season (June through November), considering last year’s remarkably devastating hurricanes?

On a hopeful note, the past year was by far the most damaging year on record – one-quarter of a trillion dollars of damage from Harvey, Irma, Maria – and it will be very difficult for 2018 to match those levels of damage and devastation. Another way to explain how unusual last year’s hurricane activity was: Before 2017, the last time a major storm directly impacted land in the U.S. was 2005. Last year, we got three storms of that magnitude.

What is your favorite weather event?

The first thunderstorm of spring – you don’t get that electric nature of the atmosphere in many other events. When you get that first one it’s exciting and, though I almost don’t want to say this, it’s electrifying! When it happens, you know that spring is coming.
Some of my work has shown that even moving to a new, more affluent neighborhood often leads to a lower level of education for young black men, even if that’s the kind of move that we’d like to think leads to better educational outcomes.

One thing this may point to is that it’s important to make various kinds of investments in poor neighborhoods, and that the educational outcomes are different when you’re moving at a very young age versus moving as a teenager.

Are you saying that segregation creates poverty or poverty creates segregation?

Segregation creates poverty to the extent that we have two relatively disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups in the United States: African-Americans and Latinos. Not only do these groups experience relatively high poverty rates — in Milwaukee around one-third of African-American people are living under the poverty line, which is about three times higher than poverty rates of the American population as a whole — but they also experience segregation on top of that.

Segregation concentrates groups that have relatively high poverty rates into a subset of neighborhoods that then have all the problems that go with very high poverty: high rates of violent crime, poor health outcomes, etc.

Segregation can also, arguably, create poverty in the sense that it becomes harder for people to find jobs because many of the jobs they need to lift themselves out of poverty are located in suburban, predominantly white areas, as is the case in Milwaukee.

What is done with the knowledge and insight you’ve accumulated doing this kind of quantitative sociological research?

The kind of work I do can provide some insight into policy responses or even responses on the part of the nonprofit sector or business interests. For example, the fact that we see fairly strong associations between segregation at the metropolitan level and poor outcomes for individual black and Mexican children may point to a solution like making medical services more available in their neighborhoods. Doing things like increasing Medicaid funding is not going to help if there aren’t good prenatal care services in the neighborhoods where pregnant women live.

What are some other new directions you would like your research to take?

A comparative analysis of neighborhood change and its consequences in Milwaukee and Las Vegas. The general trend in black/white segregation, which is the most extreme form of residential segregation — feeding into school segregation and other forms of segregation — is for areas to become less segregated. This has been an encouraging development that began in the 1970s, but it’s been happening to an uneven extent across metropolitan areas.

Why are other cities desegregating while Milwaukee’s segregation and poverty rates persist at such high levels?

Cities have very different histories. Cities like Las Vegas that have more recent housing developments tend to be less segregated because they don’t have the same history and, I think it’s fair to say, animosity that you can see in Milwaukee. This makes it easier to do stuff and use the housing marketing as an integrating mechanism, which is a tall order in a place like Milwaukee where there are very clear and long-established histories at least since the 1980s that have locked in some of those inequalities. Being a city of neighborhoods is appealing, but it may also be one of the factors that help to perpetuate residential segregation and the inequalities that go along with that.
Honors College students serve on spring break

By Matthew Wamser, University Relations

When her instructor said UWM’s Honors College was planning a service trip, Emma Cowen, a sophomore majoring in Spanish and global studies, leapt at the opportunity.

“I didn’t care where we were going. I just knew I wanted to go,” she said.

She was just one of 15 Honors College students who spent six days in New Orleans during UWM’s spring break to do community service. Called the alternative spring break, the trip was organized by Benjamin Schneider, an Honors College senior lecturer, and Peter Sands, director the Honors College and an associate professor of English.

“We thought we could attract students to do something different for spring break and give back to a community that has need,” Schneider said.

They partnered with HandsOn New Orleans, an organization that creates and manages service projects and connects volunteers to service opportunities.

On the first service day, the UWM group travelled to the Lower Ninth Ward, an area that was devastated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Only about 37 percent of households returned to the area after the hurricane. There aren’t any grocery stores or supermarkets in the neighborhood.

Sands, Schneider and the students worked on a community garden, where they built a fence and cleared overgrown vegetation from a nearby vacant lot.

“We actually got to see the impact that the work made,” Cowen said. “We met and talked to people who directly benefited from the work we were doing.”

On the following two days, the group went to New Orleans East, where they worked to refurbish and paint a charter school’s fitness room.

In addition to serving the community, the students took walking tours of iconic New Orleans neighborhoods such as Treme, sampled foods like beignets and visited the city’s historic Saint Louis Cemetery to see the graves of notable people including Robert Brown Elliott, who was one of the first African-Americans to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

“We wanted the students to be able to connect what they do in the classroom, like studying literature and film, with the world and places like New Orleans that appear in those works,” Sands said.

He also said he wanted to show high-achieving students that classroom success is only one component, and that there are people working with organizations like HandsOn New Orleans who are using their college education to fill needs.

“We could see how special the work we were doing was to other people,” Cowen said. “It felt like we had power to make change in a community that isn’t getting a lot of attention.”