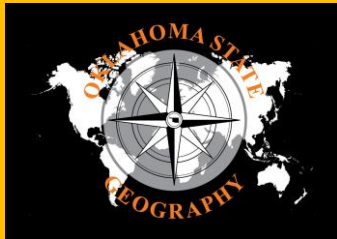


Oklahoma
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Geography Newsletter

September 2014

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Welcome Back!

The 2014-15 school year has started and that means new faces, interesting places (visited), and increasingly occupied (Murray Hall) spaces. This edition of the newsletter highlights personnel changes, new graduate students, news collected from around the department, and summer travels.

First, we say hello to two new staff members:

Adam Mathews (PhD, Texas State University, 2014) is a new tenure-track Assistant Professor. His research focuses on geographic information science and systems, remote sensing, unmanned aerial vehicles/systems, geography of wine and viticulture, and cartography.

Jing (Jean) Wang (MS, Clark University, 2012) is the new CARS Coordinator and will be working on both remote sensing projects and departmental IT needs.



Adam Mathews



Jing Wang

The first colloquium of the semester occurred on Friday, August 22. Dr. Peter Kedron from Ryerson University (Toronto, Canada) gave a presentation entitled "Understanding Bioenergy Policy, Technology, and Regional Development." A reception at Dr. Frazier's home followed.

New MS Students

Elizabeth Armstrong earned her BS in Leisure Studies with an option in Leisure Service Management from OSU in 2014. Her research interests involve health issues in Oklahoma.



Jordan Brasher earned his BS in Geoscience with a concentration in Geography & Geographic Techniques from Middle Tennessee State University in 2014. His interests are in folk culture and architecture and historic agricultural landscapes in the Upland South of the United States. He enjoys watching sports, being outdoors, and reading and writing.

Ben Hemingway earned his BA in Geography from the University of Arizona in 2010. Ben is primarily interested in remote sensing technologies. In his free time he enjoys cycling with his wife, Allison.



Lauren Wood earned her BS in Geography and the Certificate in Geographic Information Systems from OSU in 2014. Her research interests are in Natural Resources Management. In her free time, she likes to ride horses, practice archery, play video games, and read books.

New PhD Students

Ladan Ghahramani holds an MS in Tourism Management from Allameh Tabataba'i University. Her research interests are tourism geography and cultural geography, specifically visitor impact management and open air museums. She spent two years teaching undergraduate courses at University of Applied Science & Technology in Iran. She likes to bike and camp in her free time.



Puja Jana completed her MSc in Geography from Mumbai University in India. She is interested in political geography especially geopolitics and water issues.

Kimberly Johnson received her BA in Political Science from Northern State University (Aberdeen, SD) in 2011 and her MS in Geography from South Dakota State University (Brookings, SD) in 2013. Generally, her interests are in cultural and historical geography. She is specifically interested in gender, identity, public space, and protest.



Amanda Weber earned an MA in Liberal Studies from the College of Staten Island, CUNY (2013) and a BA in Physical Anthropology from the University at Buffalo (2009). Her interests primarily lie within cultural/historical geography, specifically in medical geography. She spent the past year as an English Composition and Medical Communications instructor in Staten Island, N.Y.

New-ish Graduate Students

Tom Cox is a first year PhD student. His emphasis is geoarchaeology with a specific interest in mammoths and their relationship to Paleoamericans. He received His BS in geography in May 2012, and his MS in geography in July 2014, both from OSU.



Brian Gilson is a second-semester MS student. He received his BS in Cartography from East Central University (Ada) in 2013. His research interests are geopolitics and the geography of religion. He and his wife Shelly have 3 children ages 17, 13, and 11.

Matt Haffner is a first year PhD student. As an undergraduate he majored in geography and mathematics at Pittsburg State, and this past summer he completed his MS in Geography at OSU. His interests include urban geography and quantitative methods.



Sean Thomas is a first year PhD student. His focus is on cultural and historical geography, and the geography of memory. He received his BS in Secondary Education from OSU in 2011 and expects his MS in Geography from OSU in fall 2014. Sean lives in Chandler, OK with his wife Melissa and their two dogs Fred and Maximus.

Geography Mentors Program

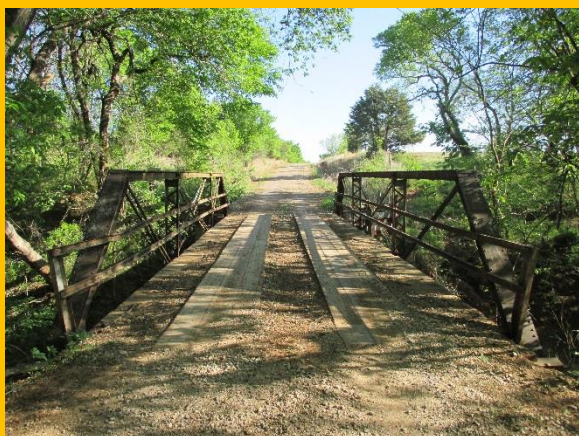
This year the department inaugurated a program that allows undergraduate students to work closely with a selected faculty mentor on research. Students are selected through a competitive process and work with a faculty member on a specific research project. The students enroll for 3 credit hours in an independent study course in the fall semester, and the mentor and student then co-present the research at the SWAAG meeting or another local conference. The student performs the bulk of the presentation. The department covers the student's registration fee, transportation (via OSU van), and hotel costs. This year two undergraduate Geography majors are in the program.

Avonlea (Ava) Keenen is working with Dr. Reuel Hanks on the ethnic and religious geography of Kazakhstan. They will present some of their research findings at the seventh bi-annual conference on Race, Ethnicity and Place in Fort Worth on October 24th. The topic of their presentation is: "Ethnic Identity In Kazakhstan: Emerging Identitiescapes Based on Recent Fieldwork."

Ryan Conner is working with Dr. Brad Bays. Using a database of about 300 properties, they are conducting an examination of retail and residential change in the city of Ada, Pontotoc County, between the years of 2001 and 2011. Their first line of analysis is a re-photography project using analog photographs Dr. Bays collected during a 2001-02 OK/SHPO-funded property inventory contract and a 2011 digital resurvey of the town that he conducted on an Arts & Sciences ASR grant. They will classify and map observable exterior changes to residential and retail properties, including changes to retail activity and type, which will generate more specific research questions that they will follow using site visits and phone interviews. They hope to discover identifiable trends associated with the 2008 economic downturn in a college town that has experienced fairly steady development throughout the period, and plan to present their findings at the 2015 SWAAG conference. Ryan plans to enter the M.S. program in Urban Planning at the University of Oklahoma next year.

News from Around the Department

► This spring Dr. Bay's Historical Geography Seminar (GEOG 6210) was tasked with finding and nominating a property or structure to the National Register of Historic Places. Nick Rose chose Long Branch Creek Bridge, an example of a Pratt Half-Hip Pony Truss bridge. This bridge (photos below) is located over Long Branch Creek five miles north of Stillwater, near the intersection of N3300 and E0540. This bridge nomination was accepted locally for its contribution to the Half-Hip Pony Truss bridge design in Payne County, Oklahoma. Acceptance to the National Register of Historic Places occurred on Thursday July 14, 2014.



► OSU's Chi chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU) was selected an Honor Chapter for 2014. Keeley Heise and Rebecca Sheehan worked extremely hard this year to gain OSU this honor. Only seven out of more than 130 GTU chapters were selected as honors chapters this year.

► Reuel R. Hanks has been named an "Honorary Professor," by Suleyman Demirel University in Kaskalen, Kazakhstan. Hanks has taught at SDU a number of times in recent years, and is currently working on initiating a summer program that would enable OSU students and others to study Russian, Kazakh or Turkish language, as well as several courses in the social sciences. Students receive a month of intensive language training from native speakers. SDU would provide several programs on Kazakh history and culture, and well as hiking and camping trips to the local mountains. Interested students should contact Dr. Hanks at reuel.hanks@okstate.edu.



► Allen Finchum and Yun Zhao attended the 2014 ESRI Users Conference in San Diego in July (panorama below). Allen presented a poster on his Hank Hill project, and both attended several sessions and a training course on ArcGIS Pro - a new module in the ArcGIS Software Package.



Summer Travels

Jon Comer and Tom Wikle led a Study Abroad trip to Amsterdam, Paris, and London in May 2014. Amsterdam landmarks included “coffee” houses, a colorful district, the floating tulip market, and a tour of the Anne Frank House, while a trip to the top of the Eiffel Tower, tours of the Louvre and Notre-Dame Cathedral, and a Seine river cruise were highlights of Paris. Those continuing on to London got to visit the Tower of London, the British Museum, and see Buckingham Palace up close (but no Kate!).



OSU contingent on the River Seine in Paris: (front) Brooke Cox, Lauren Jarman, Alex Comer, Eric Comer, Jon Comer's shoulder; (back) Micah Parnell, Taylor Iberosi, Chandler Phillips, Ethan Farris, and EF Tour Director Aidan Bartley (catching some rest).



Sign by a road in the Caprivi Strip, Namibia, warning of possible encounters with free-roaming elephants

If you haven't seen Carlos Cordova lately it is because he is on sabbatical leave for Fall 2014. He spent the first part of his sabbatical collecting samples of grasses and soil across two bioclimatic transects across Namibia and Botswana. At the same time he is collecting information for his overall study on the environmental history of the Southern African elephant. Taking advantage of the trip and of the availability of a 4x4 camper truck, he surveyed the vegetation around Lake Ngami (northern Botswana) as part of his study of a 17,000 year-long pollen record from the sediments of the same lake.

In September Carlos will attend an international meeting in Brussels, Belgium, where he will present his preliminary results on the potential use of *Stipagrostis* spp (bushman grasses) phytoliths in paleoclimatic, paleoecological and palaeodietary reconstructions.

Carlos will return to South Africa to continue collaborative research with the South African National Parks on questions regarding the prehistoric presence of elephants along the southern coast of Africa. During his sabbatical he is also working on a book that compares the elephant-landscape relations with what we know about mammoth-elephant relations. The tentative title of the book is: *A tale of two megapastures: The environments of extinct mammoths and modern elephants.*