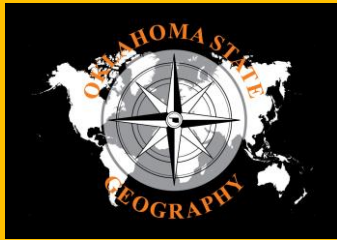


Oklahoma
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INSIDE:

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Welcome | 1 |
| New Students..... | 2 |
| Mentors Program... | 2 |
| RMP-GIS Project... | 3 |
| Faculty Projects | 4 |
| Summer Travels..... | 6 |
| Back to School..... | 8 |
| Drone Time..... | 9 |
| Summer Fun..... | 10 |
| Even More Stuff... | 11 |



Geography Newsletter

September 2015

Welcome Back!

The 2015-16 school year has started and Murray Hall is filling up with new faces. New faculty and staff include:

Emily Fekete (PhD, Kansas, 2015) is the new Clinical Assistant Professor and Undergraduate Advisor. Her research interests are Economic Geography, Consumption, Social Media, and the Internet. She received her MA in geography at Kent State University and BAs in geography and history from the University of New Hampshire.



Clay Barrett (BS {Environmental Science}, 2004; MS {Geography}, 2015, both OSU), began supervising students for AAPG projects May 1st. In between degrees he managed a local specialty food store and started a family. In his free time he enjoys chopping wood and playing games with his son.

COLLOQUIUM: Monday, September 14, 2015 @ 3:30 PM.

[Dr. David Parr](#), Independent Geoanalyst, Metropolitan State University of Denver, will give a talk titled "Data Quality and the Crowd: VGI for mapping, social networking, and citizen science." He will be discussing his work on VGI (Volunteered Geographic Information), a relatively new research area in geography, focusing on citizen scientist data contribution, quality, and implications. The presentation will be in Engineering North (EN) room 515.

New Students

Brian Birchler comes to us from Kansas City, Missouri. He graduated from Northwest Missouri State University with a BS in Geography and a BS in GIS in May 2015. His primary interests are in cultural/historical geography with an emphasis in GIS. He likes to watch and play soccer and go camping or hiking whenever possible.



Colton Flynn is a first year PhD student who has research interests in the remote sensing of agriculture to improve agricultural production and promote sustainability. He got a BS in 2010 and an MA in Geography in 2013 at the University of Arkansas. Outside academia he trains for long distance triathlons; this past summer he completed a 100-mile triathlon.

Anthony Pentimonti earned his BS in Earth Science from Oregon State University in 2015. His research interests include natural and extracted resources, especially within arctic and mountainous regions. An article written about some of his previous field work can be found at: <http://ethosmagonline.com/the-winter-that-never-was>.



Gustavo Ovando earned his MS in Geography from OSU in 2015, so he is not really new but is a new PhD student in the department. He is interested in the applications of GIS to solve transportation and resource management problems. He loves sports, especially rugby and college football.

Geography Mentors Program

This program, in its second year, 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 a nearby 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 geographers are involved:



Emily Ellis' project for the Geography Mentor's Program is "Assessing Vulnerable Populations Related to Tornado Siren Placement and Coverage in Stillwater, OK." This project studies how well the current network of outdoor tornado sirens covers the city of Stillwater. It also focuses on what populations are and are not covered by the system. She will be presenting her results at the Applied Geography Conference in San Antonio, TX at the beginning of November and is working with Dr. Adam Mathews. Emily will receive her BS in Geography from OSU in December and plans to apply to the MS program. Her interests are GIS applications and natural resource management. In her free time she enjoys hiking, kayaking, volunteering for Camp Fire, and all OSU sports.



Taylor Ibersi earned is a junior Geography major at OSU and is working with Dr. Hanks in the Research Mentors program.

Resource Management Plan GIS

The Department of Geography welcomes the Resource Management Plan-Geographic Information System (RMP-GIS) Project this academic year, 2015-2016. The project involves creating and updating resource management plans as well as substantial GIS work (GPS data collection, GIS data management and analysis) for Oklahoma State Parks. The project is funded by the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and Drs. Adam Mathews and Tom Wikle now supervise the project.

Hung-Ling (Stella) Liu (Ph.D., Oklahoma State, 2012) and **I-Chun (Nicky) Wu** (Ph.D., Michigan State, 2014) are new Research Assistant Professors working on the project. Their interests are natural resource management, outdoor recreation and tourism, and GIS.



Stella Liu



Nicky Wu



Tannaz Soltani

Additional personnel include Dr. Tannaz Soltani (Ph.D., Oklahoma State, 2015) a Post-Doctoral Fellow, and two GRAs who are pursuing MS degrees in Leisure Studies, Elliott Edens and Jake Holliday.



Elliott Edens



Jake Holliday

Faculty Projects

Geographers can do things that you will never imagine. Carlos Cordova with his Canadian-American-Jordanian team worked last May-June on unearthing more evidence of the presence of *Homo erectus*/*H. heidelbergensis*, or an early form of *H. neanderthalensis*, in the Azraq Oasis in Jordan. Multi-disciplinary research evidence shows the presence of a lake between 311,000 and 270,000 (interglacial MIS-9 and glacial MIS-8) sustaining a faunal assemblage that included elephant, lion, rhinoceros, equids and camelids –an interesting mix of African and Asian fauna. The hominins made tools out of the local flint outcrop and use them for butchering animals – proof of that will appear in a distinguished scientific journal.



Elephant tooth in the main excavation unit



Handaxe recovered through excavation



Reconstruction of the landscape around former Lake Azraq, around 270,000 years ago

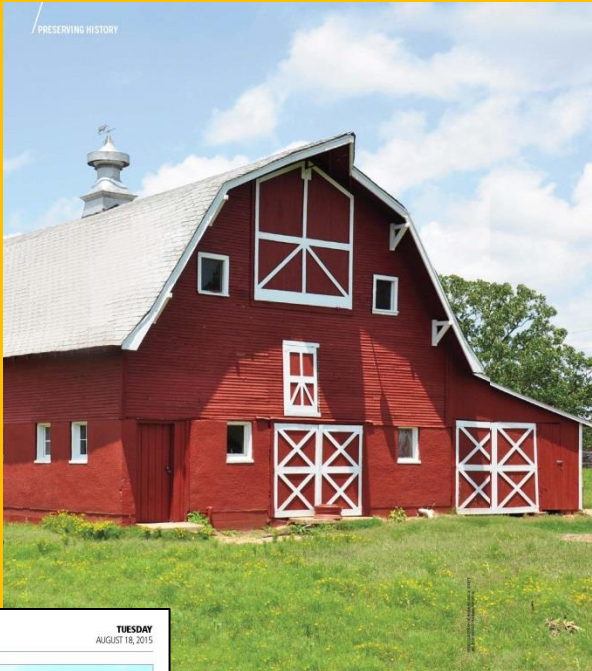
Faculty Projects (cont.)

Dr. Brad Bay's work documenting historic barns was featured in the 2015 edition of *Oklahoma Agriculture*. His work, from 2009-2013, was funded by the Oklahoma State Preservation Office. At least five of the nearly 1,000 barns in the state registry have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Oklahoma A&M College Dairy Barn.

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History Preserved
HISTORIC BARN PROJECT DOCUMENTS AND PRESERVES IMAGES OF STRUCTURES THAT DEFINE OKLAHOMA'S ICONIC FARMING LANDSCAPE

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PRESERVING HISTORY

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Historic barn project documents structures that define farming landscape

There's something special about seeing an old barn in a rural landscape, something that suggests a simpler time, hard work, peace and quiet, family and farming.

An Oklahoma history project has made an effort to preserve images of that era for the future.

For the officials who were involved in the five-year project to document historic barns across the state, the reason for doing so were mostly on the practical side.

For the owners of the barns and similar structures that the Oklahoma Historical Society's State Historic Preservation Office recorded in a partnership with Oklahoma State University, being counted had more to do with family pride.

Chandler Lawson of Newkirk owns one of the 965 barns included in the Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory database during the survey that ran from 2009 through 2014. Her barn, built by her late grandfather, Dennis L. Asperds, in 1934, and used for his dairy farm, has also been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. She says that recognition goes a long way with her family.

"We're very proud," says Lawson, who lives on the 140-acre farm where the barn has been for more than 80 years. "I love the fact that it's listed as a historic barn. I think it's an honor to have that, because of how long the barn has been in my family."

Though the property hasn't operated as a dairy farm for years, the barn still holds much of the original equipment and several tools that Lawson's grandfather used. And, most importantly, she says, it holds plenty of memories.

"I don't think there's a child in my family that hasn't been on the farm and played in the barn, in the hayloft," Lawson says. "Some of my favorite memories are from playing in it."

oklaagriculture.com // 47

8A NEIGHBORS

TUESDAY AUGUST 18, 2015

The Barns of Southwest Oklahoma

By Sara Meacham

If a century-old barn collapses and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?

That's not the sort of deep philosophical question that barns had in mind to answer when they set out to be built. They were built to work and to last. And in the case of Oklahoma, that is some what of the question that would seem to matter the most. With every year that passes, more and more barns collapse into a mass of splintered wreckage. That, the Oklahomans know, is not the way they were intended to be.

It's almost ironic that a geography professor at Oklahoma State University has traveled more than 10,000 miles working on behalf of the Oklahoma State Historical Society and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to document the "bones" of barns in different parts of the state. He arrived in January 2009 and finished his work in January 2013. In that time, he documented the remains of 965 barns, many of which had been destroyed by fire or other disasters.

Other barns are unique in their own way. Some are made of brick or stone. Some are made of adobe. Some are made of concrete. Some are made of steel. Some are made of wood. Some are made of a combination of materials.

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OSU professor sets out to document state's vanishing barns

By Sara Meacham

It's a curious thing to see in the heart of Oklahoma. A man in a suit and tie, with a clipboard and a camera, stands in front of a large, dilapidated wooden barn. He is looking at the structure with a sense of awe and respect. This is Brad Bay, a geography professor at Oklahoma State University, and he is here to document the state's vanishing barns.

Bay's project is a multi-year effort to identify and document the state's historic barns. He has traveled across the state, visiting hundreds of barns and taking thousands of photographs. His goal is to create a comprehensive inventory of the state's barns, including their location, date of construction, and architectural features.

Bay's work is important because many of the state's historic barns are in danger of being lost. Many have been destroyed by fire or other disasters, and many more are in poor condition and at risk of collapse. By documenting these barns, Bay is helping to ensure that their history is not forgotten.

Bay's project has also helped to raise awareness of the state's historic barns. Many people who have seen Bay's work have been inspired to learn more about the state's agricultural heritage. Some have even taken steps to restore their own barns or to donate them to museums or historical societies.

Bay's work is a testament to the importance of preserving our state's history. It is a reminder that even the most humble of structures can tell a story, and that it is our responsibility to ensure that these stories are not lost to time.

Dr. Bays' work was also featured in a recent story in the Lawton Constitution on August 18. This summer Dr. Bays agreed to be a co-coordinator with OU architect, Arn Henderson, for Oklahoma's 100 entries in the SAH (Society of Architectural Historians) Archipedia, an online encyclopedia of historic architecture (each U.S. state will have 100 entries). Also, he was recently invited to join, and accepted, a three-year term on the board of directors of the ISLPMC (International Society for Landscape, Place, and Material Culture).



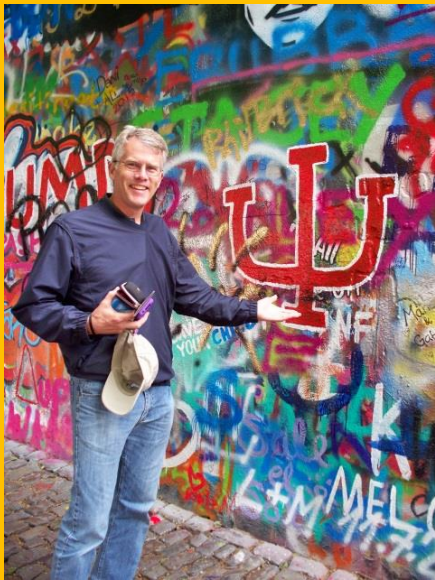
The historic survey of barns identified some beautiful structures like the ones shown here in every region of the state.

Summer Travels

Jon Comer and Tom Wikle led a Study Abroad trip to Eastern Europe in May 2015 with OSU students Lela Berastequi, Nick Deyoe, Natalie Fieldsend, Keeley Heise, and Nguyen Le. Budapest, Kraków, Prague, and Vienna were the main destinations, with excursions to Auschwitz and the Wieliczka Salt Mine near Krakow and the Kutná Hora Silver mine near Prague. This was a working trip as the photo at bottom-right will attest.



Wawel Castle in Kraków



Hoosier group leader? Jon at the Lennon Wall in Prague.



Admiring the Mozart statue in Vienna.



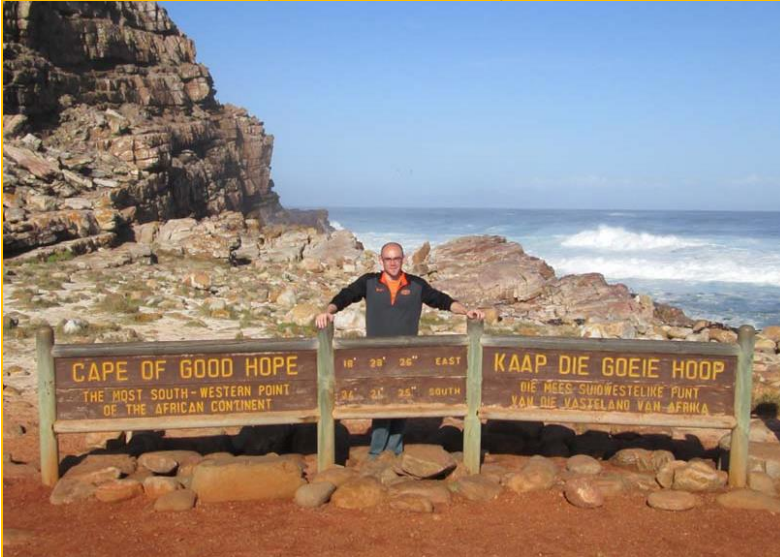
Tom takes flight at the Citadella in Budapest.



The rigors of international travel – searching for Wi-Fi signals in Vienna (L, C) and working in the mines (R).

Summer Travels (cont.)

Adam Mathews visited Stellenbosch University in Stellenbosch, Western Cape in mid-May. He worked with researchers in the Department of Viticulture and Oenology as well as the Department of Geography. The Department of Viticulture and Oenology maintains many vineyards that students can use as test sites for their research. Grapes are harvested and wine is made on campus. We are looking to continue to collaborate on UAV remote sensing applications, specifically focused on viticulture. Dr. Mathews gave a research talk that was well attended by academics, industry folks, and hobbyists. It was a fun and productive trip!



Being a tourist and enjoying the sights.



Working vineyard on the campus.



Views of Cape Town from Table Mountain (above) and Table Mountain from the Cape Town waterfront (below).



It's Back to School time!

On Tuesday, August 11, faculty and staff posed for the traditional group photo.



On August 13, the annual Departmental Orientation meeting was held in the Murray Hall Parlor.



New Graduate students showing off the departmental "swag"



A room full of geographers



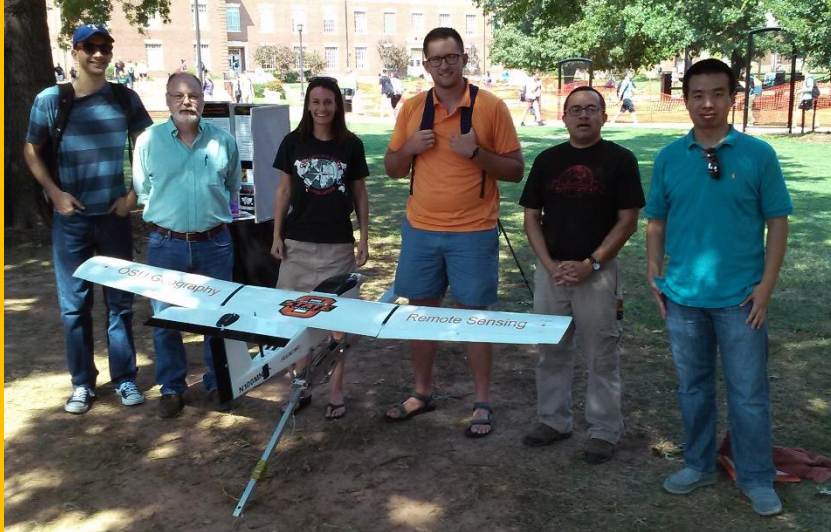
The Newsletter Editor thought it would take a bit longer for people to figure out the projection (Cassini) on the cover of the 2015-16 Graduate Program manual. Kudos to the first three respondents with the correct answer, all of whom replied within 10 minutes of the e-mail going out:

- 1) Colton Flynn,
- 2) Lauren Wood,
- 3) Ben Hemingway.

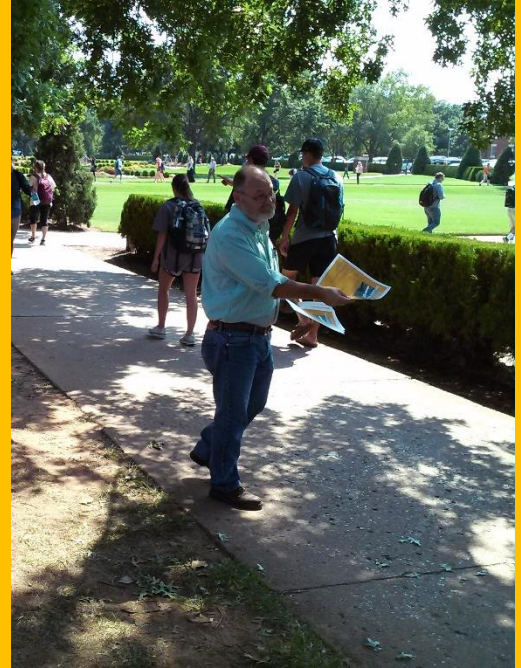


Professors “Drone” about Geography

On Tuesday, August 25, many faculty, staff, and students took turns promoting Geography and the Geospatial Sciences by staffing a display table on the library lawn with the department’s new drone. There were many student “fly-bys” as geographers handed out pamphlets and other swag to passers-by. Thanks to all who spent time promoting Geography at the table – the photos below capture only a handful of those who volunteered (namely, those who were there after 3:15).



Daniel Surach, Michael Larson, Amy Frazier, Jordan Brasher, Carlos Cordova, and Yun Zhao with the UAV



Michael works the “strip”



A mysterious alumnus photobombs my selfie

Summer Fun

Cartography Services does not rest, especially this past summer. Between working on a number of AAPGF-OSU GIS Consortium projects and roaming Western Oklahoma and the Panhandle collecting data for the SHPO-OLI project, the “Cart Crew” of Cartography Services kept themselves busy and productive.



Back: Keeley Heise, Kim Johnson, Kirsten Kuhn, Michael Larson, Liz Armstrong, Clay Barrett, Danielle Dear.
Front: Stephanie Heald, Alex Comer, Lauren Wood.



In July, Adam Mathews and Jon Comer completed the newly-required OSU Precision Driving training. Why would they give up an entire day for this exciting, challenging, and educational experience? So they can transport OSU students in university vans to the upcoming joint SWAAG/Applied Geography Conferences in San Antonio the first week of November. Besides learning the art of the “shuffle steer” and how many people get killed on Texas roads every day*, they learned how to safely take selfies while driving, as evidenced at left.



* About 9.3 on average, or one every 2 hours and 34 minutes (2013 statistics), and November 7, 2000 was the last “deathless day” on Texas roads.

Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Sage Sheldon visited the Department last Friday, August 28. Sage Received her BS in Geography in 2005 and was a former student employee of Cartography Services.

She is currently working in OKC as a GIS Specialist. Pictured (from left to right), Michael Larson, Clay Barrett, and Sage Sheldon.



Upcoming Campus/Departmental Events

Monday, September 7 is a university holiday – no classes and no offices open.

Monday, September 14 – first colloquium of the year (see page 1).

Wednesday, September 16 will be the next departmental birthday gathering, at 2:30 PM in the break room, celebrating all September birthdays.

Monday, October 19 – another colloquium, speaker TBA.

Southwest Association of American Geographers (SWAAG) Meeting

SWAAG's next [annual meeting](#) is **4-7 November 2015** in San Antonio, TX and is co-hosted by Texas State University and the University of Texas at San Antonio. This will be a special joint meeting with the Applied Geography Conference (AGC). The deadline to submit poster or paper presentations is **9 September 2015 at 5 PM CDT**. The reduced conference registration rate (\$75 for students, \$135 for non-students) is available until **23 October 2015** after which point both rates increase by \$10. Drs. Comer and Mathews already have a nearly-full OSU van of folks heading to “remember the Alamo!” so inquire soon if interested in traveling with us.