



Geography

# Geography Newsletter

January 2018

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## January Happenings

Welcome back! The Spring 2018 semester is finally upon us – and we had no severe weather in Oklahoma during the break!

Classes start **Tuesday, January 16** owing to the MLK day observances on Monday – the University is closed but the University Store in the Student Union has extended hours on January 13 and 14 to accommodate textbook sales.

On **Tuesday, January 16** MS student Lauren Wood will defend her creative component project, “Spatial Implications of Wind Power Buildout in Oklahoma,” at 2:00 PM in 327 MUR.

The first colloquium of the semester will be on **Friday, February 2** when PhD student Brian Gilson will give a talk based on his research entitled “Postsecularity in Azerbaijan: a Reconnaissance.” See photos on pages 2-3 of Brian’s recent trip to Azerbaijan over winter break.

It’s been quite the *Enterprise*, but last November the editor continued his voyage of *Discovery* by visiting his 3<sup>rd</sup> space shuttle in 11 months, seeing *Atlantis* at Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral. He will *Endeavour* to see his last one, in Los Angeles, soon...



## Azerbaijan

Over the winter break, PhD student Brian Gilson (below, in Baku) spent a week in Azerbaijan conducting pre-dissertation research on religious trends. The trip was enormously productive as he was able to establish contacts within a number of different faith communities, conduct several interviews, and generally begin to get his feet wet with his dissertation. Brian's trip was generously funded by the **Robert E. Norris Field Research Award** and the **Stephen W. Tweedie Travel Scholarship**.





## Azerbaijan (cont.)



A mosque in the town of Sumqayit that has recently erected a tent on the front to house the recent increase of worshipers for Friday prayers.



A highlight of his trip included the surprise birthday dinner for his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday from a Muslim family he had just met! The Azerbaijanis say that if you can touch a finger to the table, there's not enough food. As you can tell from the food on the table in the picture, they take hospitality seriously.





## Holiday Party



On December 8 the department gathered for its annual holiday party and Dirty Santa Gift Exchange. Winners of the Ugly Onesie (Nick Rose), Cac-Tie (Steve Stadler), and overall grand prize for cat faces sweater Lindsay King are shown below.



As this awful cell camera photo shows, the party venue was packed with a smattering of geographers. We were happily surprised to have former secretary Ann Adkins make the trip from Waukomis to be party of the merriment, along with her three grandsons!

Amazingly, that ugly onesie and the Cac-Tie wearing Dr. Stadler snuck into this picture too (Ann appears to be trying to get away as fast as possible).