



Vol. 24, No. 1, Summer/Fall 2017

# SWAAG Newsletter

<http://www.sw-aag.org/>

Edited by M. Fry

## SWAAG Chair's Column

By Jason Julian, SWAAG Chair,  
Texas State University



This has been a great year for SWAAG, with many new programs, initiatives, and honors. First, I would like to congratulate the Department of Geography and the Environment at the University of North Texas for receiving the 2017 AAG Award for Masters' Program Excellence. And I also thank UNT-Geography for hosting the Regional Meeting last year, where all shared good times and great research. Congratulations to Stephanie Mundis (NMSU) who won Best Graduate Student Paper award at SWAAG and the first annual AAG Outstanding Graduate Student Presentation at a Regional Meeting (see page 5) for her very important collaborative research on "Spatial distribution of mosquitoes that vector Zika, dengue, and West Nile Virus in New Mexico." Congratulations to Texas State University for winning the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual SWAAG GeoBowl. At the World Geography Bowl in Boston, the SWAAG team (composed of grad and undergraduates from UNM, NMSU, UNT, UCO, and TXST) finished in third place (see page 6). I look forward to seeing the SWAAG team in the championship round next year (no pressure, Matt). At this year's regional meeting in Huntsville, we will elect our first student board member, to serve a two-year term. At next year's meeting in Baton Rouge, we will elect a second student board member, to serve an alternating

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two-year term. These student leaders will be vital in making sure that SWAAG meets its priority of serving and promoting students in the Region.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank some of the SWAAG members who have provided mentorship and assistance in organizing SWAAG initiatives and activities. As Treasurer and then Secretary, I benefitted from Michaela Buennemann's leadership and enthusiasm. Michaela continues to support SWAAG in many ways, including (but not limited to) maintaining the website, listserv, social media, and providing advice whenever called upon. Ron Hagelman's and Darren Purcell's leadership (as Regional Councilors and all-around great guys) and advice has also been invaluable. It has been rewarding working with Matt Fry, Emily Fekete, and Amy Frazier, and I'm sure they will take SWAAG to new heights.

Congratulations to Emily Fekete, who is now Communication, Education, and Media Specialist at AAG headquarters, where I'm sure she'll continue to support SWAAG and fight for all geographers. I also thank Alberto Giordano for supporting and encouraging my role in SWAAG. Finally, thank you to all who have contributed to SWAAG over the past three years (way too many to name) in various roles (judges, question writers, letter writers, session organizers, field trip leaders, etc.) and also to all those who have supported SWAAG over the past decades (way, way too many to name).

I have been a member of SWAAG for four years and an officer for the past three years, which goes to show you that you can "jump right in" to SWAAG and be a contributing member. At this year's annual meeting in Boston, I attended the Regional Chairs and Councilors meeting. From this meeting, my thoughts on the dynamism of SWAAG was reinforced. We are one of the most active and enthusiastic Regional Divisions of AAG, which I believe is the result of (1) a strong foundation laid by long-term dedicated members, (2) a culture of collegiality and support among faculty and students across institutions, and (3) enthusiasm from many young and emerging Geographers. My hope is that newcomers to SWAAG will continue to support this culture and add to this enthusiasm.

## Musings from the Regional Councilor

By Darren Purcell, SWAAG Regional Councilor, University of Oklahoma

In preparing the annual SWAAG report for the Spring AAG Council meeting, many chairs shared with me a range of challenges facing universities and the field as a whole.

However, news of a few new programs and growth in some areas provided reason to be encouraged. In



this column, I want to highlight three issues I hope SWAAG members are keeping an eye on to consider how they might act to effect positive outcomes.

The AAG is monitoring the progress of the Geospatial Data Act (S. 1253) in the U.S. Senate.<sup>1</sup> According to the AAG's Becky Pendergrast, passage of the act would change a procurement law known as the Brooks Act, which limits federal contracts for architectural and engineering services to architectural and engineering firms.<sup>2</sup> The AAG has no issue with that. AAG's concerns arise with the definition of mapping and GIS services as architectural and engineering services. This would exclude many in the GIS sector from competing for contracts unless they were part of such firms. As of mid-July, S. 1253 was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. Let me encourage you to look at the bill's text, the AAG's analysis, and contact your lawmakers to weigh in. It is my personal view this bill could facilitate moves of GIS and remote sensing education to other disciplines, as many universities have seen other departments offer GIS coursework.

Shifting gears, at last November's AAG Council meeting, the Great Plains/Rocky Mountain councilor relayed concerns over the impact of Advanced Placement Human Geography (APHG) on enrollments in college human geography courses. While no hard data was presented, the perception of negative impacts remains. There may be reason to be concerned. This past June, just over 200,000 APHG essay exams were scored, and 49% of students scored a 3 or higher (the minimum score for some institutions to offer course credit). The number of exams has grown annually since the course's first offering in 2001 and Texas is one of the two largest contributors to the total.

After the concerns were shared, the discussion shifted to impacts on geography in terms of the number of majors. Julie Cidell councilor for East Lakes, shared that in a review at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, only six percent of incoming students

reported an APHG score and of those, only six percent took more geography courses. At the University of Oklahoma (OU), 14 percent of the 2014 freshman class reported an APHG score (many students from Texas, where APHG is a popular course for high school freshmen, attend OU), 12 percent of those took another geography course, usually a physical geography course for general education credit. Fewer than three percent took more than one geography course and less than one percent attempted a geography major. Personally, I would like to know how other SWAAG region universities are faring in this regard.

Such numbers should motivate geography departments to seriously look at what faculty can do to reach out to high school educators and their students to showcase the discipline. Additionally, faculty **must** consider how to improve the position of geography courses in social science education programs. If the teachers receive greater exposure to the field, it can only benefit the students taking the course and potentially aid departments in getting the word out early about what is often termed a "discovery" discipline.

Finally, the two issues are connected in the proposed Advanced Placement Geographic Information Science and Technology (GIS&T) course, which the AAG has developed.<sup>3</sup> The assumption is that such a course will help the discipline. While offerings of this course are several years out, if College Board approves it at all, we have to ensure it does indeed help foster greater interest in geography and GIS programs.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Sam Houston State University, in Huntsville, TX, for the 2017 SWAAG meeting. If you have questions about AAG activities or concerns you want raised at the November council meeting, please contact me at [dpurcell@ou.edu](mailto:dpurcell@ou.edu).

## References

- 1) S. 1253, 115<sup>th</sup> Congress. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/1253/text>
- 2) Pendergrast, Becky (2017) <https://www.dropbox.com/s/3khk7szkh0ufyo4/The%20Geospatial%20Data%20Act.pdf>
- 3) AAG (n.d.) <http://gistcourseproposal.org/>

## 2016 SWAAG Conference in Denton, TX

By Matt Fry, Meeting Co-Organizer,  
University of North Texas

The 2016 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Division of the American Association of Geographers (SWAAG) was held October 20-22 in Denton, TX. The meeting was hosted by the Department



of Geography and the Environment at the University of North Texas. Nearly 150 students, faculty, and practitioners attended the meeting. Paper and poster sessions were held in and around the historic Courthouse Square district in the heart of the city.



*SWAAGers enjoy the lawn outside the Denton Courthouse.*



2016 SWAAG GeoBowl at UNT Environmental Science Building.



2016 SWAAG paper session in the historic Courthouse in Denton, TX.



2016 SWAAG paper session in the historic Courthouse in Denton, TX.

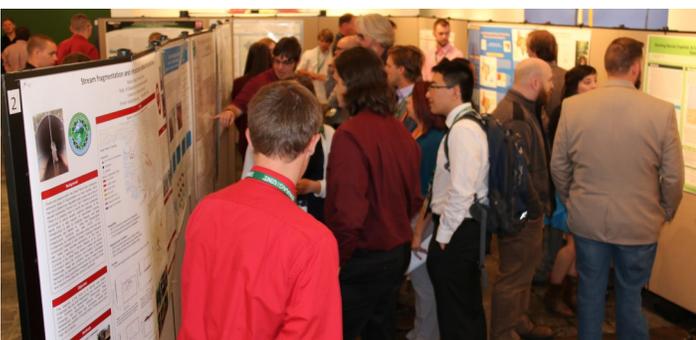


2016 SWAAG paper session at Mulberry Street Cantina in Denton, TX.

The meeting featured 17 paper and three poster sessions, in addition to the student GeoBowl competition and the annual SWAAG business meeting. The plenary speaker, Dr. Derek Alderman, University of Tennessee, Vice-President, of the American Association of Geographers, brought the meeting to a close with a presentation on his research into the struggle for civil rights as “geospatial work.”



SWAGers at UNT on the Square (l) and the Courthouse (r) in Denton



2016 SWAAG poster session at UNT on the Square in Denton, TX.



2016 SWAAG Banquet at UNT Environmental Science Building.

## 2016 SWAAG Student Competitions

By Matt Fry, SWAAG Secretary,  
University of North Texas

As a past SWAAG student paper competitor (SWAAG College Station, 2007), it was my pleasure to organize the 2016 Student Paper and Poster Competitions for the SWAAG meeting in Denton. For many of us, the student competitions are a SWAAG meeting highlight and the 2016 meeting in Denton was no exception. The submissions included 10 graduate student papers, five graduate posters, and three undergraduate posters (including a high school submission). I thank all student competitors and congratulate them on their research and presentation skills. In particular, the graduate paper sessions were exceptional and highlighted some excellent up-and-coming scholars from our region. In total, 10 students received awards. Congratulations to you all! Finally, many thanks to the eight volunteer judges who helped evaluate and rank the student papers and posters.

### Graduate Student Paper Competition

**1st Place**— Stephanie Mundis, NMSU, "Spatial Distribution of Mosquitoes that Vector Zika, Dengue, and West Nile Virus in New Mexico"

**2nd Place**— Ioannis Kamarinas, TXSTU, "Nonlinear Relationships Between Land Use/Cover Change and Sediment Runoff on an Intensively Managed Landscape"

**3rd Place**—Reed Underwood, UNT, "Memory and Continuity Amidst Irreversible Decline in the Texas Big Empty"

**3rd Place**—Yun Zhao, OSU, "How Urban Form Rejects High-Speed Rail: A Focus on High-Speed Rail Proposals in the United States"



### Graduate Student Poster Competition



**1st Place**— Nathan Sleight, OU, "Stream Fragmentation and Infrastructure Condition in the Great Plains"

**2nd Place**— Levi Shinn, UN-Omaha, "Effects of Land Cover Change on Duck Populations within Managed Duck Hunting Areas in Missouri"

**3rd Place**— Grant Moss, TXSTU, "Connecting Protected Places in Texas Using Riparian Conservation Networks"

### Undergraduate Student Poster Competition

**1st Place**— Alex Shaffer, OU, "Media Coverage of Drought in Southwest Region"

**2nd Place**— Emil Karlsson, SFASU, "The Case of Mr. Hardeman"

**3rd Place**— Seguin Alexander, et al., Selwyn College Preparatory School, "Predicted Impact of New Selwyn College Preparatory School Campus Location on Enrollment"



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*Jason Julian (l) with Stephanie Mundis (r) of NMSU after winning the AAG Outstanding Graduate Student Presentation at the Boston AAG meeting in 2017.*

## 2nd Annual SWAAG GeoBowl

At the 2016 SWAAG meeting in Denton, seven teams competed in the 2nd Annual GeoBowl:

- Tarleton Texans
- Texas State Wild Rice
- Central Oklahoma Earth-Shakers
- New Mexico State Roadrunners
- UNM Wolfpack
- North Texas Navigators
- OU-OSU What the Frack-ers

Congratulations to the following GeoBowl scholars:

### Team Competition

**1st Place**— Texas State Wild Rice (Texas State University)

**2nd Place**— Wolfpack (University of New Mexico)

**3rd Place**— North Texas Navigators (University of North Texas)

### Individual Competition

**1st Place**— Nathan Lopez-Brody, New Mexico State University

**2nd Place**— Sagert Sheets, University of New Mexico

**3rd Place**— Katie Krupala, University of North Texas



A team composed of graduate and undergraduate students from UNM, NMSU, UNT, UCO, and TXST (pictured below) also finished in third place at the World Geography Bowl at the Boston AAG in 2017.





## 2017 SWAAG Meeting

By Don Albert, SWAAG 2017 Organizing Committee Chair, Sam Houston State University

The Department of Geography and Geology at Sam Houston State University invites you to attend SWAAG 2017 in Huntsville, Texas. Our meeting will take place from Wednesday, October 25 (pre-conference) to Saturday, October 28, 2017. Our conference hotel, the Hampton Inn & Suites, is located within the Ravenwood Village Shopping Center, Huntsville, Texas. We will be meeting on October 26 and 27, 2017, at the Walker Education Center (pictured above), located on the grounds of the Sam Houston Memorial Museum. Parking is available at the hotel and the center. More details on parking will be forthcoming. A shuttle will run between the hotel and the nearby conference center.

In addition to paper and poster sessions, we are planning a number of special events, including:

- Invited address by Dr. Derek Alderman, University of Tennessee, President, American Association of Geographers;
- Invited presentation by Dr. Jeff Littlejohn (Sam Houston University), Associate Chair, Department of History, on *German and Japanese Prisoners of War at Camp Huntsville, Texas, 1942-1945*;
- Two socials and two luncheons included with registration;
- A variety of local field trips (prison landscapes, housing from recycled materials);
- Student paper and poster competitions, including a World Geography Bowl.

See our conference webpages at <http://www.swaag.org/2017-meeting.html> for more information.

Session submissions are due by **5 PM CST on 18 September 2017**. Submissions for paper and poster presentations are due by **5 PM CST on 20 September 2017**. Use the session and abstract submission forms available from the SWAAG 2017 website.



The Texas Map Society will be joining us at SWAAG 2017. SWAGG members will be welcome to attend their sessions and vice versa. The Texas Map Society will have representation and participation in select SWAGG sessions and other activities, but their main gathering will be Saturday afternoon, October 28, in the Department of Geography and Geology located in the Lee Drain Building, Sam Houston State University. We will provide more information about the Texas Map Society's activities on the SWAGG 2017 webpages and onsite during the conference. The Department of Geography and Geology at Sam Houston State University, the City of Huntsville, Texas, and IGI Global are sponsoring SWAAG 2017.

### Meeting Overview

**Wednesday, October 25:** Registration at Hampton Inn & Suites; evening social at Buffalo Wild Wings

**Thursday, October 26:** Registration at Walker Education Center; luncheon and invited address by Dr. Derek Alderman; campus tour (Walker Education Center); Geography Bowl (Hampton Inn & Suites)

**Friday, October 27:** Registration at Walker Education Center; luncheon, keynote address and awards; SWAAG business meeting (Hampton Inn & Suites);

Sam Houston Memorial Museum tour (Walker Education Center); evening social (Hampton Inn & Suites)

**Saturday, October 28:** Field trips (departing from Hampton Inn & Suites)

### 2017 SWAAG Student Competitions

By Amy Frazier, SWAAG Treasurer  
Oklahoma State University

All students, both graduate and undergraduate, are encouraged to participate in the student paper and poster competitions at the SWAAG conference in Huntsville, TX. Note the submission deadline of 17 September 2017 at 5pm CST. For complete competition guidelines and instructions, please visit: <http://www.sw-aag.org/student-competitions.html>. All questions or inquiries should be sent to [amy.e.frazier@okstate.edu](mailto:amy.e.frazier@okstate.edu)

### *The Southwestern Geographer*

By John Tiefenbacher, Senior Editor of *The Southwestern Geographer*, Texas State University

Three articles were published in the 2016 volume of *The Southwestern Geographer* (see below) and there are three manuscripts at various stages of review for the 2017 volume. The journal's [website](#) is free to use, though one must register first, and has all current and past issues of the journal and articles available for download.

The editors would like to thank those who have given their time to review submitted manuscripts, particularly when their reviews were turned around quickly and within the desired time-frames to enhance the speed to publication. Your help is very

important for enhancing the quality of the journal and is very much appreciated by the editors

The editors would like to reiterate their call for a colleague to join us: Drs. Erik Prout and John Tiefenbacher, the co-editors of *The Southwestern Geographer*, and extend invitations for expressions of interest to serve as a co-editor of the journal. We invite faculty members of the Southwest Division of the American Association of Geographers (SWAAG) who may desire to assist with the processing of submitted manuscripts, the extending of invitations to review manuscripts, and the evaluation of reviews to contact us.

Submissions are always encouraged and welcome. For queries, comments, and other information, please contact the editors, [tief@txstate.edu](mailto:tief@txstate.edu) or [prout@geog.tamu.edu](mailto:prout@geog.tamu.edu)

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*The Southwestern Geographer*, Vol 19 (2016)

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## SWAAG News and Announcements

### BA in Global Studies at OSU

The Department of Geography at Oklahoma State University is excited to announce a new undergraduate degree program: a **Bachelor of Arts in Global Studies!** The degree is housed in the department of geography and has a foundation rooted in introductory and regional geography courses. The remainder of the degree is interdisciplinary in nature with a focus on one of three themes of a student's choosing: Culture, Arts and the Humanities; Geopolitics and the Global Economy; or Global Sustainability. Students can also incorporate their study abroad experiences or internships as part of their degree curriculum. The Global Studies degree is the department's second new program in the past two years and will be available in addition to the department's current offerings of a BA/BS program in Geography, a BS program in Geospatial Information Science, a MS program in Geography, a PhD program in Geography, and a professional Certificate in Geographic Information Systems. For more information, see the program website: <http://geog.okstate.edu/programs/undergraduate-program/b-a-in-global-studies>.



Geography



BA GLOBAL STUDIES

### University of Oklahoma – Department of Geography and Environmental Sustainability

#### *New hires*

Mary Lawhon will start as a new assistant professor in the department in June 2017. Before joining us, Mary was an assistant professor in Geography at The Florida State University. She holds a Ph.D. from

Clark University and was a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. She also held a lecturer position at the University of Pretoria in South Africa.

Joseph Pierce will start as a new assistant professor in the department of geography and environmental sustainability at the University of Oklahoma in June 2017. Joseph will have a split appointment with the Division of Regional and City Planning in the College of Architecture. Before joining us, Joseph was an assistant professor in Geography at The Florida State University. He holds a Ph.D. from Clark University. Joseph is an urban geographer with research interests in urban politics, ecology and sustainability, and urban landscapes.

#### New educational / degree programs

In collaboration with the Division of Regional and City Planning, the department will offer 5-year accelerated degree programs with any undergraduate program in our department (Geography, GIS, or Environmental Sustainability) and a graduate degree in Planning. The 5-year degree programs were approved just last month and will officially start in the Fall of 2017.

#### Awards and other noteworthy news

Nick Bauch's 2016 book, *Enchanting the Desert* was recognized in Slate's Five Fascinating Digital History Projects for 2016: [http://www.slate.com/blogs/the\\_valley/2016/12/30/five\\_great\\_digital\\_history\\_projects\\_from\\_2016.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_valley/2016/12/30/five_great_digital_history_projects_from_2016.html)

Doctoral alumnus, Dr. Jeff Widener, received the National Council for Geographic Education Distinguished Teacher Award for Higher Education.

Doctoral alumnus, Dr. Angela Person received an honorable mention for the 2017 Dissertation Award from the Architectural Research Center Consortium.

#### Texas A&M-Kingsville, Geosciences

Jim Norwine and Brent Hedquist presented their collaborative research on "Southwest Asia's Ominous Climate Future: The End of an Ancient Heart (h)" at the annual meeting of the Association of Israel Studies at Brandeis in June. Other collaborators include Pinhas Alpert of Tel Aviv U. and Michael Jennings of Idaho U. If interested, please contact Brent ([brent.hedquist@tamuk.edu](mailto:brent.hedquist@tamuk.edu)) or Jim ([kfjrn00@tamuk.edu](mailto:kfjrn00@tamuk.edu)) for a link to the entire 50+ page document.

#### Update/Introduction to Texas Tech Geography

By Jeff Lee ([jeff.lee@ttu.edu](mailto:jeff.lee@ttu.edu))

Fellow SWAAGers: Texas Tech Geography hasn't been nearly as involved in SWAAG as we should be and that's mostly my fault. So, this note is to introduce you to our program.

As a bit of history, Geography was a small department (four faculty) until 1994, when we merged with Economics and became Economics and Geography. It was a marriage of convenience that worked administratively, but not synergistically. We joined the Department of Geosciences in 2009, which has been a better fit for us. Our department has Geography, Geology, Geophysics, and Atmospheric Science.

#### Our Geography Faculty:

**Lucia Barbato** (MA UCLA, GISP) came to us after a career with Esri. She teaches GIS courses and has been involved in a wide variety of GIS projects.

**Goufeng Cao** (PhD UC Santa Barbara, Postdoc Illinois) specializes in GIS and spatial statistics, spatial uncertainty, cyberinfrastructure, and GIS applications in public health and environmental science.

**Perry Carter** (PhD Ohio State, Postdoc Kentucky) is a human geographer. His current research is on depiction of African Americans in commemorative

landscapes in the South.

**Gary Elbow** (PhD Pitt; joint appointment Honors College) is in his forty-eighth year at TTU. Along with his research interests in Latin America and geography education he serves as Geography Grad Advisor.

**Cameron Griffith** (ABD Indiana (Anthropology)) teaches GIS courses for us and, on the side, teaches a summer field course for all majors titled, "Global Learning in Belize."

**Linda Jones** (MA UCLA) teaches human geography courses and is our undergraduate advisor. She is the glue that holds the program together.

**Jeff Lee** (PhD Arizona State) is a physical geographer. Current research is on mapping and characterizing sources of blowing dust in the Southwest. He also is department chair.

**Kevin Mulligan** (PhD Texas A&M) teaches GIS and physical geography classes. His research mostly revolves around water resources and aeolian geomorphology.

**Duane Nellis** (PhD Oregon State, AAG President, TTU President). Unfortunately for us, Duane is leaving this summer to be President of Ohio University. We will miss him.

The force of nature named **Patricia Solis** (PhD Iowa) is leading several projects related to Geography education and international development. (See the overview of YouthMappers, below.)

**Naizhou Zhao** (PhD Texas State) is a postdoc in the Center for Geospatial Technology, focusing on remote sensing and GIS, especially relating night time images and human activities.

**Zhe Zhu's** (PhD Boston, Postdoc BU and USGS) research focusses on remote sensing of forest, urban, and clouds; land cover and land use change; time series analysis; digital image processing; and carbon cycle modeling.

We are in the process of hiring a climatologist, to start Fall 2017.

We are affiliated with two interdisciplinary centers on Campus. The *Center for Geospatial Technology* (Guofeng Cao and Patricia Solis are co-directors; [www.depts.ttu.edu/geospatial/center/](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/geospatial/center/)) leads and coordinates GIS related research on campus. The *Climate Science Center* ([www.depts.ttu.edu/csc/](http://www.depts.ttu.edu/csc/)) is part of a USGS-funded consortium and many of our faculty and students are involved in their research, education, and outreach projects. **Katharine Hayhoe**, co-director of the Climate Science Center, works closely with our faculty and students. Among many accolades, she is on Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential Thinkers (2014), Foreign Policy's 100 Leading Global Thinkers (2014), and Forbes World's 50 Greatest Leaders (2017).

*YouthMappers* ([www.youthmappers.org](http://www.youthmappers.org)) was started by a coalition of Texas Tech, West Virginia, and George Washington Universities in conjunction with USAID. The purpose is to help economic development, public health, and natural disaster recovery efforts by mapping regions using open source software. Currently, almost 80 universities have chapters and if you would like to join the effort, please contact Patricia Solis ([patricia.solis@ttu.edu](mailto:patricia.solis@ttu.edu)). Fueled by a desire to help the world (and pizza), mapathons are popular student activities. They also attract a wide variety of students who learn about geography.

Degree Programs: we have a BA and an MS in Geography. The MS was started in 2011 and slowly is growing. When we became part of Geosciences, we gained access to the PhD in Geosciences, which is adaptable to both human and physical geography. We currently are working on a proposal for a BS in 'Geography-Earth Systems Science,' which will have enough physics, chemistry, math, and GIS/RS to prepare physical geographers for grad school in leading universities. We have about 60 undergraduate majors, 80 GIST minors, 15 graduate students, and an unknown number (seriously, we can't find anyone

who can give us a number) pursuing the GIS graduate certificate.

So, next time you are in Lubbock (it could happen), let us know and we'll be happy to show you around.

### Texas State University, Department of Geography

Texas State University graduate student honors: Zahra Ghaffari is the new National Geographic Society Grosvenor Scholar and will spend the 2017-2018 academic year at the NGS headquarters in Washington, DC. Mael LeNoc was awarded the Outstanding Master's Thesis award by the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools, an organization of over 200 graduate schools.

Texas State University faculty honors: Dr. David Butler received the Distinguished Career Award from the AAG Biogeography Specialty Group. Dr. David Butler has also been appointed Editor of the environmental sciences and physical geography section of the *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*. Dr. Lawrence Estaville received the 2017 AAG Enhancing Diversity Award. Alberto Giordano has been voted President-Elect of UCGIS (University Consortium for Geographic Information Science; <http://www.ucgis.org/>).

The 48th Annual Binghamton Geomorphology Symposium will take place at Texas State University October 13-15, 2017. The theme of this year's symposium is Resilience and Bio-Geomorphic Systems. The symposium is organized by Drs. Julian, Butler, and Meitzen at Texas State University. For registration and more information on the symposium, visit <http://www.geo.txstate.edu/about/news/binghamton2017.html>

Sarah Blue is the new Director of the Race, Ethnicity, and Place Conference Series and organizer of the 2018 conference, which will be co-hosted by the Department of Geography at Texas State University and

the Department of Geography and the Environment at UT Austin.

*New Faculty* at Texas State University: Dr. Eric Sarmiento (PhD, Rutgers University, 2015), a tenure-track Assistant Professor in Urban Geography who specializes in Urban Development, Political Ecology, Cultural Economies, and Social Theory. Eric is also lead singer in the band New Tribe. Dr. Alexander Savelyev (PhD, Pennsylvania State University, 2016) is a tenure-track Assistant Professor in Cartography who specializes in Geovisual Analytics, Text Visualization, Big Data Visualization, Visual Cognition, and Web Cartography. Dr. Dolores van der Kolk (PhD Geology, UT Austin, 2016) is our new Geology Senior Lecturer.

Dr. Michael Solem (PhD, University of Colorado, 1999), a Research Professor in the department since Fall 2013, has joined us full-time. Michael has served various roles at AAG since 2003, including Educational Affairs Director, Acting Executive Director, and Deputy Director for Research and Education. Michael is also Co-Director of the National Center for Research in Geography Education and is the Director of Research for the Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education at Texas State University.

*Retirement* (below written by Chair Alberto Giordano)

It is with both sadness and joy that I announce that Dr. Jim Petersen will retire as of May 31, 2017.

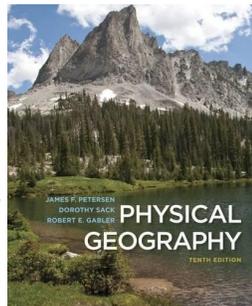
Jim came to Texas State Geography in 1980, the year before completing his PhD in Geography at the University of Utah. During his long career at Texas State, he served the department as Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor and as Assistant Chair in 1991-1992. Most recently, Jim was the Coordinator of the Texas Alliance for Geographic Education, a position now held by Associate



Chair Ron Hagelman (thank you, Ron, for stepping up to the challenge! And thank you, Maggie Hutchins-Wagner, for your indispensable role and leadership as TAGE Program Director!).

In the 37 years Jim was at Texas State, the department grew from seven faculty members to the large PhD granting department it is today. As Jim writes, "we have benefited from a collegial faculty that recognizes the importance of maintaining the department's strength and reputation in addition to pursuing their own professional goals. This is an extraordinary, forward-looking department with an exceptional and productive faculty, a fine group of active, enthusiastic students, and a wonderful, hard-working support staff... I am fortunate to have had many great opportunities for professional and personal development in my career, and am proud to have been a part of this department and of the discipline of geography."

Jim's accomplishments are too many to list here, but I want to mention a few. In the area of teaching, he created and taught many courses in geomorphology and other topics; created and led study abroad programs in Germany and in other countries; created and led the Big Bend trip. In the scholarship area, I want to mention the several editions (11 to date!) of his now classic physical geography textbook; his edited books; three edited journal issues; and dozens of book chapters, conference proceedings, and journal articles. Jim also appeared in the documentary "Enchanted Rock, the Heart of Texas," a nationally televised PBS video production; co-edited the English version of the German Educational Standards for Geography; and worked as a consultant and reviewer of textbooks for several publishers, including John Wiley & Sons, Columbia University Press, and Prentice-Hall. As concerns service, Jim held several leadership position with the



NCGE, including President in 2000, and he currently serves in the Board of Directors of the Friends of Enchanted Rock; and he was awarded several honors, including the Outstanding Service Award, Gamma Theta Upsilon, National Honor Society.

Finally, Jim is a Vietnam Era Veteran, having served in the United States Army Security Agency from 1966 to 1970. We thank him for his service.

## Department of Geography & Environmental Studies at the University of New Mexico

The Department of Geography & Environmental Studies at the University of New Mexico is pleased to announce the arrival of the following new faculty members:

### *Arrived fall 2016:*

Assistant Professor Yan Lin (PhD Geographic Information Science, Texas State University, 2014). Dr. Lin specializes in Geographic Information Science, spatial data analysis, WebGIS, health and medical geography, spatial epidemiology, and health disparities.

Visiting Assistant Professor, Xi Gong (PhD Geographic Information Science, Texas State University, 2016). Dr. Gong specializes in Geographic Information Science, health and the environment, spatio-temporal data mining, and GIS-based modeling.

### *Arrived spring 2017:*

Associate Professor, Ronda Brulotte (PhD Anthropology, University of Texas at Austin, 2006). Dr. Brulotte specializes in food systems, tourism geography, critical heritage studies, materialism, transnational indigeneity, Mexico, and Latin America.

Assistant Professor, Lindsay Smith (PhD Anthropology, Harvard, 2008). Dr. Smith specializes in medical geography, migration and human rights, forensic DNA, science studies, transnational justice, social

movements, feminist geography, Argentina, and Latin America.

#### *Arriving fall 2017:*

Associate Professor, Tema Milstein (PhD Communications, University of Washington, 2007). Dr. Milstein specializes in ecoculture, environmental communication, environmental meaning systems, ecological identity, nature tourism, and transformative ecopedagogy.

Assistant Professor, Ben Warner (PhD Sustainable Development, Arizona State University, 2014). Dr. Warner specializes in water governance and institutions; Latin American development; vulnerability, risk, and adaptation to environmental change; political economy; development studies; and mixed methods.

#### **Tarleton State University , Geography Program**

In Fall 2016, Tarleton started a new Geography/GIS major, hired Dr. Opeyemi Zubair (GIS), created a Geography minor, and Created a GIS certificate.

#### **University of Central Arkansas, Department of Geography**

Professor Jeff Allender is retiring this summer after 27 years at UCA and SWAAG (plus 10 years in Wisconsin universities and West Lakes AAG). Allender organized and ran the SWAAG meetings twice over the years, Hot Springs in the 90's and Little Rock just a few years back. He loved teaching, loathed administration ("one I was pretty good at, the other abysmal at best, you can guess which was which"). His retirement plans include a lot of solo backpacking, getting recertified as a soccer referee ("I just love pissing the hell out of coaches and parents!") and "beer, copious amounts of beer".

Dr. Steve O'Connell, who was promoted to Associate Professor this year, will assume the Chair position . Dr. Brooks Pearson also was promoted to Associate Professor.

The Geography department at UCA is the oldest in Arkansas, with a full blown geography major offered since 1927.

#### **Recently Hired**

Dr. Yolanda J. McDonald will be joining Vanderbilt University as a tenure track Assistant Professor in the Department of Human and Organizational Development, Peabody College. She received her Ph.D. in Geography from Texas A&M University, College Station (2017). Her research areas include health disparities, environmental justice, health services accessibility, and the rural-urban continuum.



#### **Race, Ethnicity & Place Conference**

The 9<sup>th</sup> Race, Ethnicity & Place Conference will be held in October 2018 (specific date tba) in Austin, Texas, with a focus on immigration as well as its traditional focus on interrogating issues of racial and ethnic diversity and place. The REP Conference is a small conference (around 300 participants) that provides many opportunities for advancing research findings, networking and collaboration for scholars interested in promoting diversity and inclusion in the field of geography. The 9<sup>th</sup> REP Conference will be hosted by Texas State University in collaboration with the University of Texas-Austin. The first REP conference was held in 2002 in Binghamton, NY. It has since been held every two years in locations across the US and Puerto Rico, including Washington, DC; Miami, FL; San Marcos, TX, San Juan, PR; Fort Worth, TX; and Kent, OH. All scholars interested in issues of promoting diversity in the discipline of

geography or engaged in scholarship related to immigration, diversity, and ethnicity are encouraged to attend.

*Shrinking Cities: Understanding urban decline in the United States* (2017) by Russell Weave (Texas State University), Sharmistha Bagchi-Sen, Jason Knight, and Amy E. Frazier (Oklahoma State University)

Published in August by Routledge, the book by geography and planning experts examines several decades worth of data to provide an analysis of the state of shrinking cities across the United States.

Among the questions addressed: Which areas of America are declining in population today? Is population loss stabilizing in these regions? And how

does shrinkage influence the quality of life for the residents who remain?

### AAG Council Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Paper at a Regional Division Meeting

The AAG is encouraging all Regional Divisions to invite submissions of graduate student papers under the [AAG Council Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Paper at a Regional Division Meeting](#). The award is designed to encourage graduate student participation in Regional Division meetings and support their attendance at the AAG Annual Meeting. Each awardee will be issued a prize of \$1,000 to support his/her travel and registration costs to attend the next [AAG Annual Meeting](#) in New Orleans, LA April 10 - 14, 2018.

### SWAAG Budget (10 May 2017)

By Amy Frazier, SWAAG Treasurer, Oklahoma State University

Date	Description	Receipts	Disbursements	Balance
8/31/16	Balance forward			\$ 6,328.73
9/30/16	PayPal fees (Conf. Reg.)		(340.29)	5,988.44
9/30/16	SWAAG 2016 Registrations	10,055.00		16,043.44
9/30/16	Payment never cleared - Levi Shinn		(35.00)	
10/4/16	Pan Ector - Conf. T-Shirts		(859.22)	15,184.22
10/20/16	Comer - WGB Donation	100.00		15,284.22
10/13/16	SWAAG 2016 Conf.		(12,372.66)	2,911.56
10/31/16	PayPal fees for registrations		(140.66)	2,770.90
10/31/16	SWAAG 2016 Registrations	4,115.00		6,885.90
11/2/16	Hagelman - WGB Donation	50.00		6,935.90
11/2/16	Mundis - 1st Place Graduate Paper Award		(250.00)	6,685.90
11/2/16	Kamarinas - 2nd Place Graduate Paper Award		(100.00)	6,585.90

Date	Description	Receipts	Disbursements	Balance
11/2/16	Underwood - 3rd Place Graduate Paper Award		(50.00)	6,535.90
11/2/16	Zhao - 3rd Place Graduate Paper Award		(50.00)	6,485.90
11/2/16	Sleight - 1st Place Graduate Poster Award		(250.00)	6,235.90
11/2/16	Shinn - 2nd Place Graduate Poster Award		(100.00)	6,135.90
11/2/16	Moss - 3rd Place Graduate Poster Award		(50.00)	6,085.90
11/2/16	Shaffer - 1st Place Undergrad Poster Award		(250.00)	5,835.90
11/2/16	Karlsson - 2nd Place Undergrad Poster Award		(100.00)	5,735.90
11/2/16	Lopez-Brody - GeoBowl		(100.00)	5,635.90
11/2/16	Sheets - GeoBowl		(50.00)	5,585.90
11/2/16	Krupala - GeoBowl		(25.00)	5,560.90
11/2/16	Smith - 1st Place HS Poster Award		(50.00)	5,510.90
1/25/17	Buenemann - domain name renewal		(20.17)	5,490.73
1/30/17	Texas State Univ. check received WGB17	250.00		5,740.73
3/7/17	Buenemann - website renewal		(44.10)	5,696.63
3/30/17	WGB 2017	850.00		6,546.63
4/21/17	Univ of North Texas SWAAG conference	6,181.14		12,727.77
4/17/17	Jandick - WGB 2017		(300.00)	12,427.77
4/17/17	Russell - WGB 2017		(300.00)	12,127.77
4/17/17	Beveridge - WGB 2017		(300.00)	11,827.77
4/17/17	Lopez-Brody - WGB 2017		(300.00)	11,527.77
4/17/17	Sheets - WGB 2017		(300.00)	11,227.77
4/17/17	Jones - WGB 2017		(300.00)	10,927.77
4/30/17	<b>BALANCE</b>			<b>10,892.77</b>