



# Geography News

Illinois State University Department of Geography-Geology

April 2006 • Volume XXIV

Editors: Amy Bloom and Jill Freund Thomas

## Malone's musings

Greetings from the Department of Geography-Geology! I trust that 2006 has brought you good health and excellent spirit. I am pleased to report that geography is alive and well at Illinois State University. As usual, many changes to the department have happened since my last "musing." Jim Carter, my friend and colleague for more than 10 years, celebrated his retirement in May 2005. Also, Dan Hammel left Illinois State for a faculty position at the University of Toledo. There he will join our former colleague Peter Lindquist and will help anchor a new graduate program in urban planning. Beth Schlemper left for Toledo as well, and is working on a post-doctoral fellowship with the Association of American Geographers (AAG). Kyle Evered also departed, and is now at Michigan State University. On behalf of my colleagues in the department, I wish each of them the best in the next phase of their lives and careers. Each will be missed.



In August, we welcomed Heather Conley back to Illinois State in a tenure-track position in our department. As you may recall, Heather was a visiting assistant professor in Geography-Geology in 2003–2004, but taught at Kansas State last year. Heather brings specialties in medical geography and also human-environment interactions. She joins Amy Bloom in mentoring Geography Club/GTU. As well, Amy Bloom is the new advisor for the environmental studies minor. Dagmar Budikova has been recommended for tenure and promotion to associate professor. We are in the final stages of a search for a faculty member with expertise in economic/development geography. My fingers are crossed for a successful end to this search.

This past fall we welcomed our first class of five students into our new earth and space science education program. We are hopeful that this new program will encourage more talented students to come to Illinois State. Early numbers indicate considerable interest within the incoming (fall 2006) freshman class in this program. Also, we recovered student teacher supervision from the Department of History. This supervision has become a significant part of Jill Thomas' duties.

I am relieved that our budget woes appear to be behind us. Significant new enhancement monies have been awarded to the department. Also, we raised more than \$800,000 in cash and in-kind gifts last year, and won the first Departmental Fund-raising Award for the College of Arts and Sciences. We have established GIS and Cartographic Services and have already worked on several contracts.

The coming year will also involve change. We are in the midst of a curricular overhaul, program review, and formulation of a new strategic plan for geography. Two things are certain: We continue to have dedicated and productive faculty and staff, and talented and enthusiastic students.

As always, I encourage you to visit the next time you are in town.

*David Malone*

David Malone  
Chair, Department of Geography-Geology

## Jim Carter retires

Jim Carter retired in May 2005 after 15 years at Illinois State and after nearly two decades at the University of Tennessee. He came to Illinois State as director of Academic Computing with an academic appointment in Geography-Geology. After reorganization of Academic Computing in 1994, Jim decided to have a greater participation in Geography-Geology. For the last 10 years he regularly taught large general education and major courses in weather and physical geography. He also taught "Geographic Techniques" and "Conservation of Natural Resources."

Jim's record of scholarship is fantastic, and his international reputation is unsurpassed in our department. His research specialties are in cartography, computerized mapping, GIS, and physical geography. He is a longstanding member of the International Cartographic Association, including chairing the Map Use Commission for two terms. He was a founder and active member of the Illinois GIS Association. He served as the coordinator for our hydrogeology M.S. program, beginning in 1997.

In retirement, Jim plans to continue to be very active. He will be busy with academic writing, professional activities, visiting his family, serving a year as president of the Normal Rotary Club, and carrying on his investigations of his beloved ice flowers. The department wishes him good health and happiness and will dearly miss seeing him on a daily basis.



Jim Carter is standing behind a model of the *Torre de Belem* (Tower of Bethlehem) in Lisbon, Portugal. The model was erected by a local Rotary Club. Jim was visiting Lisbon on his way to the International Cartographic Conference in La Coruna, Spain, in July 2005.

## News from Geography Club/GTU

In August 2005, Assistant Professors Amy Bloom and Heather Conley became the new faculty advisors for the Geography Club and Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU). Club members wish to express thanks to Dan Hammel and Beth Schlemper, who served as faculty advisors for the past several years.



**2005–2006 Geography Club officers, left to right: Rian Crowley (vice president), Matthew Mueller (president), Jackie Piolet (treasurer), and Ashley Phoenix (secretary)**

We have continued old traditions and started new ones as well. As part of the Adopt-A-Park program, club members continue to clean up trash at Underwood Park in Normal regularly. This fall the club participated in the biannual bowling match against the Geology Club, which unfortunately we lost. Geography Club/GTU sponsored several activities during National Geography Awareness Week (November 13–19, 2005). On Monday of that week, Fred Walk, an adjunct instructor in both the Geography-Geography and History departments, conducted “A Walk with Walk,” a walking tour of downtown Normal for which numerous students turned out. On Wednesday afternoon, the club sponsored the annual Geopardy! tournament. The week’s activities wrapped up with a GGeo (geography, geology, and hydrogeology) colloquium presentation by Dagmar Budikova and Samanta Lax on their GIS project with the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging. Club members also constructed a display at the Normal Public Library, which combined general information about the discipline of geography as well as specific information on migration, which was the theme of Geography Awareness Week. This display remained in the library for the entire month of November. In late November, two students were initiated into GTU, junior geography major Ashley Phoenix and senior geography education major Jackie Piolet.

## Welcome back, Heather Conley

Heather Conley returned to the Department of Geography-Geology this year. Heather was here as a visiting assistant professor during the 2003–2004 academic year. She earned her undergraduate degree in geography with a minor in geology at Northwest Missouri State University. Following graduation, she worked as a social worker in her home state of Iowa before returning to graduate school at the University of Iowa, where she is in the final stages of completing her dissertation in the Department of Geography.



Heather’s major research focus involves applying principles of physical geography and climatology to the emergence of infectious diseases. Her dissertation examines the indirect impacts of climate variability on the emergence of Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome in the western United States. In addition to this research, Heather is interested in how rural municipal systems cope with extreme environmental events, such as drought, and how these systems affect individual-level decision-making and coping strategies.


Heather taught two courses fall semester, “Natural Disasters” and “Global Environmental Issues,” and is currently teaching “Introduction to Geographic Information Systems (GIS)” and “Medical Geography.” She also plans to teach “World Regional Geography” this summer. In addition to her teaching duties, Heather serves as the geography Honors Program advisor and co-advises Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU) and Geography Club.

## Geography-Geology receives important research equipment monies

One sure sign that the budget situation is turning around for the better is that “enhancement monies” were available this year for the first time in four years. Enhancement monies are allocations provided by the University and College of Arts and Sciences to support new initiatives, and are mainly for infrastructure. In total, more than \$600,000 was available this year, and departments were invited to submit proposals for new initiatives that require special investments.

We are pleased to report that the Department of Geography-Geology received the largest overall allocation of any department in the College of Arts and Sciences. Our department was awarded more than \$56,000 in total. We will use these monies for much-needed improvements to our research and instructional infrastructure. First, we will obtain 20 HP IPAQ handheld computers with blue-tooth GPS receivers and ARCPAD software. They will mainly be used by students for a variety of field-mapping projects. The beauty of these machines is that locations are recorded automatically and continuously. Another large installment of funds will be used to purchase and set up four weather-stream-gauging stations along various stretches of the Mackinaw River. Several faculty members in our department are interested in conducting research on the Mackinaw watershed, and these instruments will generate data to this end. We also are updating our GIS, graphics, and computational software packages. Finally, we are purchasing a high-end GPS unit that can be used for detailed mapping as part of faculty and student research.

This new equipment is fantastic. Most important, it shows a clear willingness of the central administration to support Geography-Geology during tough economic times.



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## Now at Illinois State: GIS and Cartographic Services

In January 2005, the Department of Geography-Geology took the first steps towards the establishment of GIS and Cartographic Services (laboratory) at Illinois State. Through various activities, the laboratory strives to help create new knowledge by engaging in research that helps explore and understand timely and socially relevant issues; provide active learning experiences for its major students by offering unique opportunities for further student training and mentorship in geography and applied GIS through real-life applications; and foster valuable partnerships within our university and with the general community.

I would like to share with you two of the projects the laboratory has participated in to date. First, in the spring of 2005 we began a multi-phase project with the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging (ECIAAA), a not-for-profit organization that aims to preserve the ability for citizens to remain in their homes or neighborhood during their later years. The overall project goal is to use GIS technology to help identify specific areas and neighborhoods that are most in need of planning and development for livable communities for our aging population across 16 counties in Central Illinois.



**Samanta Lax, GIS technician and graduate student in hydrogeology**

In September 2005, Samanta Lax (GIS technician and graduate student in hydrogeology) and I delivered the first phase of the project, which focused on McLean County, to the members of the ECIAAA. This semester, the students enrolled in GEO 304, "GIS Applications," are actively and enthusiastically participating in the second phase of the project, which examines Macon, Champaign, and Vermilion counties. Each team of students is scheduled to deliver its final results pertaining to their counties to the members of the ECIAAA in late April. The students are excited to be applying the GIS skills they obtained in classes to a real-world problem.

Have you ever wondered how the University's Facilities Management Department decides on how much grass seed or fertilizer to order each season? Or how many trees are on campus and what types of trees they are? Or what the square footage of each campus building roof is? In the quest for the precise answer to such questions and many others related to effective planning and management of campus grounds, GIS and Cartographic Services is participating in the development of the first to-scale digital map of our campus. With the help of Neal Schroeder, a senior undergraduate student in geography, Samanta Lax will spend the spring semester and large part of the summer using GIS and GPS technology to construct digital layers of campus buildings, sidewalks, green space, trees, parking lots, manholes, and other desirable features from remotely sensed images (e.g., aerial photographs), existing engineering documents, and lots of footwork around campus. The continuously changing landscape of our campus will necessitate a long-term partnership between GIS and Cartographic Services and Facilities Management, providing unique out-of-class opportunities for our students, while saving the University considerable resources through new planning practices based on a reliable decision support system. It is a win-win situation for all.

Please visit our Web site at [www.geo.ilstu.edu/gis](http://www.geo.ilstu.edu/gis) for updates on our projects. The presence of GIS and Cartographic Services will help increase the visibility of geography and our program on campus and within our community, as well as highlight the strong relevance of our discipline in addressing countless scientific and social challenges facing us today. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Dagmar Budikova  
Coordinator, GIS and Cartographic Services



**Neal Schroeder, senior undergraduate student in geography**

## Historic Route 66: A geographic journey

Nestled in the landscape surrounding Towanda, Illinois, is a 2 1/2-mile stretch of historic U.S. Route 66 right in our own backyard. A classic example of sequent occupance has taken place, as a piece of the "mother road" has been converted into a linear parkway. Once teeming with traffic and tourists, later abandoned, and now a linear parkway, an old section of historic Route 66 lives again. This preservation project was made possible through the efforts of Illinois State University faculty members and students, along with numerous volunteers from the Towanda community.

This lovely parkway didn't always look this way. For many years this historic stretch of Route 66 was barricaded and very unsightly. In 1998 the idea was born to turn an eyesore into a public walkway. Many local organizations and individuals contributed funds to defray the costs of the split-rail fencing; Burma Shave signs; artistic 8' x 10' murals depicting the physical and cultural features of the eight states that Route 66 traverses; sidewalks; shelters; picnic tables; trees; shrubs; benches; historical markers capturing the human activity along the "Road" from years gone by; colorful flowers; and informative brochures. You can experience what it might have been like to travel the 2,448 miles as Route 66 made its way from Chicago to Santa Monica, California. This beautiful parkway is a classic example of how community members cooperate to enhance their local cultural environment. This ongoing project epitomizes the spirit of community service for the public good.

The Historic Route 66: A Geographic Journey Parkway is not exclusive to visitors from the local community. People from all over the world, including Brazil, Germany, France, Japan, Australia, and the Netherlands, have visited this local attraction. The following comment penned by a visitor from Germany captures the essence of the parkway: "You've brought Route 66 back to life through your restoration efforts. Thanks so much for preserving it for my family and letting us enjoy this piece of America. Great job!"

You too can enjoy this cultural attraction. However, you don't have to travel around the world to "get your kicks on Route 66." It's right here in Central Illinois waiting for you to come and visit. Additionally, many individuals have donated trees in memory of relatives and friends. Please contact me if you would like to have a tree planted along with a marker to acknowledge a family member, friend, or organization. Finally, the parkway involves continual maintenance. Any donation for the upkeep and expansion of the

Route 66 Parkway would be greatly appreciated.

Fred Walk  
Adjunct Instructor  
**Students walking Route 66 on the U.S. map at the Route 66 linear parkway near Towanda**



## New adjunct instructors join department

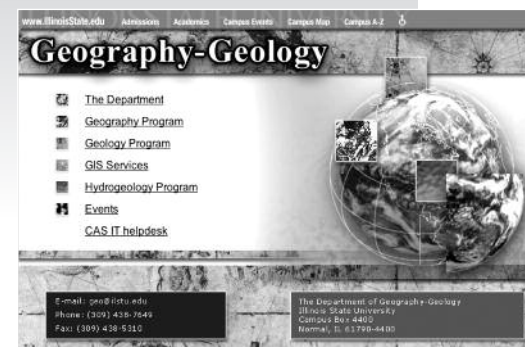
We are pleased to announce that Fred Walk and Mohammad Hemmasi joined our department as adjunct instructors in the fall of 2005. They each fill a needed niche in our department and we are happy to have them aboard. Fred Walk, a retired Normal Community High School geography teacher, taught two sections of "Human Geography" during the fall semester, and is doing the same this semester. In addition, he teaches for the Department of History. Mohammad Hemmasi, professor emeritus from the Department of Geography at the University of North Dakota, taught a section of "Human Geography" last semester and is currently teaching "Geography of Emerging Areas: Middle East."

## New earth and space science education sequence

This past fall, the geology program added a new secondary education sequence in earth and space science. Because this sequence is new, it only has a handful of majors thus far, but as word gets out, we expect these numbers to climb. Students who want to become high school teachers in the earth and space sciences will learn a broad spectrum from all the sciences, such as biology, chemistry, physics, physical geography, and geology under our program. This enables them to teach introductory high school courses in all the above-mentioned disciplines. In the next year or so, we expect to place our first student teacher from the earth and space science sequence.

To find out the latest information on our department, faculty, students, and events, please visit our Web site:

[www.geo.ilstu.edu](http://www.geo.ilstu.edu)

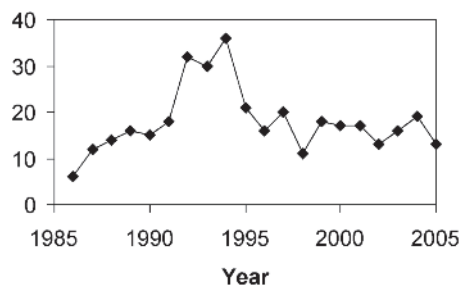


## Intern insights

Has it been two decades since geography introduced the requirement of an internship for our nonteaching majors to graduate? Yes—in the fall of 1985 the faculty made that decision; implementation began the following summer, as the internship requirement began to work its way through the catalog process and into the consciousness of the students. Altogether, in these past 20 years we have sent out geography majors on 360 credit-generating internships (see the accompanying graph). It is safe to say that 350 individual geography majors have interned for credit since 1986. A couple of folks did more than one internship for credit, and a few others (not counted among the 360) interned for something other than graduation credit. Several teacher education majors in geography, even though they had and still have student teaching as their undergraduate capstone, have chosen to intern for credit.

Annual placement totals have varied from a low of 6 to a high of 36, with virtually all occurring in the summers, something that the faculty decided at the outset of the required internship. The low total occurred in the very first year of the period—a few students, who could have avoided the experience, chose to postpone graduation from May until August in order to devote some of their summer to an internship. Beginning in the spring of 1987, I first taught our overhauled Geography 315, "Seminar in Geography," and began urging, cajoling, and insisting that students look at what they could gain from choosing to do an internship. Numbers climbed from 6 to 12 to 14 to 16 by the end of the 1980s. Around 1990, catalogs were finally showing, for seniors, the requirement that all students in our three nonteaching sequences—applied, human, and physical—had to perform at least 160 clock hours of internship (for four hours of graduation credit). Major numbers shot up toward the century mark in the first half of the 1990s, and internship placements followed suit, eventually reaching 36 in 1994. Of that number, all but one went out in the summer to intern.

**GEOGRAPHY INTERN PLACEMENTS FOR CREDIT, ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY: 1986-2005**



The following year, the total fell to 21, and just once since then (in 1997), we have had at least 20 in a single year.

In 2005, we only had 13 interns in the field, but they worked practically coast to coast and border to border. A couple of them were within an hour of one another in the Sierra Nevada, while one was at National Geographic in the District of Columbia. Our first Florida placement garnered us a Gulf Coast representative last spring, and another had his headquarters in Wisconsin (though he actually did most of his work in Tennessee). In between was one in the high country of Colorado's Front Range and a cluster (as usual) in the Prairie State.

The Illinois interns were mainly along I-74 (Champaign to Galesburg) and in the suburbs of Chicago. Unusual was the lack of interest in Bloomington-Normal, Peoria, Springfield, and Chicago.

If all goes as we plan in 2006, we will once again top 20 in a single year, because I have registered, in Geography 315, more than 20 students who need an internship this summer in order to graduate. There are also a half-dozen geography education majors in the class, any of whom could qualify for and accept a for-credit internship placement. Several Geography 315 students are looking into the possibility of pursuing an environmental internship through the Student Conservation Association (SCA), a clearinghouse for lightly compensated but greatly rewarding jobs at federal and state outdoor facilities all over

the country. Planning, GIS, and cartography are also on the table for aspiring interns looking ahead to get away from campus for the summer and into a meaningful (likely paid) experience. Some of our graduates are assisting, by scouting out and sponsoring internships that will help us place this crop of students, just as others helped us place those who are now our alums. Thanks to everybody for making this a rewarding 20 years as the overseer of the geography internship program.

Michael D. Sublett  
Professor, Geography

## Adventures as a student teacher



*I arrive at Dwight D. Eisenhower High School, located in the south Chicago suburb of Blue Island, at 6:15 a.m., although I am not required to show up until 7:50 a.m.—the first bell of the school day. There are only two or three cars in the lot, which means the school day is off to a great start. (The lack of cars means the copy machines are available to use.) After morning preparations for my U.S. history and geography classes, 7:50 a.m. comes and the students start to file in. My day consists of two classes in the morning, one period off, three more classes in a row, and then finishing up with two planning periods. After school I volunteer as the assistant sophomore basketball coach, and I will be at practice until 5:30 p.m. My school day*

*ends and I head back home; however, when I arrive home, I will still have to do a little grading and go over my lessons for the next day.*

Going into student teaching, I knew what was expected of me. I knew that I would have to work hard, long hours in order to succeed. The amount of work and the amount of time that I needed to put into the experience was not a problem for me. Because this is what I wanted to do for a career, I knew that this was preparation for what I would encounter when I got a real teaching job. My biggest concern was how to handle the diversity of students and to get my students wanting to learn. Unlike the previous schools that I had been in, many of the students here didn't really care about school. They had a host of other problems to deal with that were more important than school. Some of these things ranged from having to work after school until 10 or 11 p.m. because their family needed the money to put food on the table, to the fear of always having to watch their backs because someone may be out to get them. Many of these students grew up not having very much, and their outlook on school was not positive. It was my job to get these students to not only learn the material that I presented to them, but also relate the material to their everyday lives.

The main issue that I had was that I needed to gain the respect of my students. In order for the students to learn from me, they needed to respect me. I was able to start building positive relationships with my students right away. Although my background was nothing like theirs, I was able to show them that we did have commonalities. Sports, in particular basketball, helped me connect with my male students. They seemed shocked that I knew a lot about the game and that I could play. Although I had been gaining more respect from the students throughout the year, it wasn't until I started coaching that I truly gained the respect of all my students. It seemed that we started to connect at a different level. Students were now seeing me outside of the classroom either at the games or at practice. Within the classroom, classroom management seemed to get easier. Now that I had been spending time with some students outside of the class, I was able to better understand the mind-frame of the teenagers at this school. I was now getting to know these students on a more personal basis. This connection helped me grow as a teacher, as I was now able to develop better and more meaningful lessons.

After having personally experienced working outside the class with the students, I would encourage every student teacher to get involved with an after-school activity. Even if you are going to a school that is similar to the one that you attended, students are constantly changing, and their problems are becoming different every year. If there is only one thing I could take away from my student teaching experience, it would be that all students have the capability to learn; however, some don't choose to work at it, and others have bigger issues to deal with. By creating an environment in the classroom that is safe and exciting the teacher can help students start to value their education and actively participate. In the end, they will reach their potential.

Nicholas Watson '05  
Geography Education

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## Geography outreach

On April 2, 2005, Amy Bloom, Dagmar Budikova, and hydrogeology graduate student Samanta Lax held two hands-on computer workshops entitled "Natural Disasters: Where are They?" for the Expanding Your Horizons through Science and Mathematics Conference held at Illinois State. Fifth- through 10th-grade girls from the Chicago and Bloomington-Normal communities were introduced to natural disasters, GIS, and cartography during the workshops. Special emphasis was placed on the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Overall, a fun time was had by all.



Amy Bloom and Samanta Lax with students at the Expanding Your Horizons conference

## Geography education update

How are the geography education majors doing in their student teaching? Just fine, thank you. In the spring of 2005, we had four students student teaching, two at junior high schools and two at high schools. Chad Reynolds taught geography at Edison Junior High School in his hometown area of Rock Island. Sam Colburn taught world geography at nearby Bloomington Junior High. Eric Avalos was placed at East Peoria High School and taught earth science. Maria Contreras taught science classes at Heyworth High School. This past fall, we had three student teachers out and about. Brad Aney taught world geography to high school students in his hometown of Crystal Lake. Timothy Misener was placed in the very small junior high attached to the grade school in Gridley, where he taught both the social studies and physical geography classes. Timothy liked the junior high atmosphere so much he is now taking his middle school endorsement classes so he can be certified to teach junior high geography. Finally, Nicholas Watson taught geography and history at Eisenhower High School in Blue Island, a south Chicago suburb, deep in the heart of White Sox country.

Whether our student teachers are teaching close to the Wisconsin border in Crystal Lake, or locally, in Bloomington, all of our students have been exceptional. Their cooperating teachers—the teachers who serve as mentors to our students and allow our students to teach their classes—always have excellent things to say about our majors, including that they are bright, intelligent, and organized student teachers who always excel.

This spring is the "Heather semester." We only have two student teachers out in the field, Heather Crawley and Heather Ryan. Both are teaching close by, with Heather

## Alumni gossip

**Herbert Zobel '48, M.S. '49**, has been retired for many years from his post as professor of geography at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. He taught, he says in a recent letter, "at every level from first grade to Ph.D." Herbert is a World War II veteran and lives in Kent.

**Robert Toothaker '69, M.S. '72**, is the 2006 president-elect of the Institute of Real Estate Management, which refers to itself as the "leading international real estate organization." He was named Realtor of the Year in Indiana for 2004 and is the chairman of Real Estate Management Corporation in South Bend, Indiana.

**Mark Smith '73** has moved from his position as director of planning at the County of Macon (Decatur) to serve as senior planner in the Long Range Planning Division at the City of Decatur.

**Jeff Labahn '76** has moved up to the post of interim director of planning for the City of Kenosha, Wisconsin, where he has worked for many years.

**Ruth Sowers '79** has departed Walt Disney World, where she worked for many years as a theatre technician, and will live on rural acreage she recently purchased in the eastern part of Tennessee. Her plans are to work locally and enjoy her many hobbies, including nature study.

**Janet Goucher '89** is now the assistant director for Research and Sponsored Programs at Illinois State University. Up until the late fall of 2005, she was a planner in Independence, Missouri, where she had worked since obtaining her master's at Southwest Missouri. Janet grew up in Normal, the daughter of the late Professor James Patterson of the Department of Geography-Geology and Lucy Patterson, who still lives in Bloomington.

**Dodd Vernon '92** works as operations manager, IT-Operations, at the Walgreens facility in Mount Prospect. He has been with Walgreens for three years, starting in disaster recovery and backup planning. For the previous nine years, he was in cartography and programming for Rand McNally. He and wife Michelle live in Mount Prospect and are the parents of a brand-new son, Braden. Dodd interned for the St. Louis County Revenue Department in Missouri.

**John Garee '94** is now a technical analyst in Data and Information Strategies at State Farm Corporate South in Bloomington. His responsibilities include oversight on the compliance side of data management systems projects. He lives in Leroy with wife Denise and children Matt and Katie. John interned at the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging in Bloomington. His twin brother, Sergeant First Class **Ron Garee '94**, is serving an active duty tour as a drill instructor with the United States Army at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Ron is married to Stacy and has a son, Daniel. He fulfilled his internship requirement in Lincoln at the Logan County Regional Planning Commission.

**Justin Fuller '96** will be moving back home to Illinois to be a teaching assistant and begin a Ph.D. program in entomology at the University of Illinois in the fall of 2006. Since earning his master's at the University of New Mexico, he has worked full-time for the New Mexico Environment Department and taught part-time at a community college in Albuquerque. Also in his plans is marriage to his fiancée, Jeanette. For his Illinois State internship requirement, Justin interned at the University of New Mexico's Sevilleta Long-Term Ecological Research Station.

**Brian Hill '99** is now an application developer for Stericycle, a company in Lake Forest that provides medical waste removal and treatment as well as other medical services. Previously Brian had been GIS manager for Highland Park. He lives in Waukegan with his wife and four children. Brian interned at the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission in Chicago.

**Erik Rankin '00** is about halfway through his coursework for a doctorate in political science at Northern Illinois University. Erik continues to work as an academic advisor and instructor at Illinois State for the Department of Politics and Government. He did his undergraduate internship at Peoria County Planning and Zoning.

**Micah Williamson '01** has moved from his position as data analyst at Tri-County Regional Planning, in Peoria, to a new job as GIS analyst at the Greater Peoria Sanitary District (GPSD). He likes the fact that GPSD has integrated GIS into all its departments and even put it into eight field trucks, using ArcReader on laptops. Micah interned at Tri-County.

**Mike Woodard '01**, a senior cartographer at Mapping Specialists Limited (Madison, Wisconsin), has won another piece of hardware, the Leadership Award for 2005, from his employer. Mike, formerly a Havana (Illinois) Duck, was Rookie of the Year for 2002 at Mapping Specialists, the company with whom he performed his required geography internship.

**Ken Prchal '02** started work at the end of May 2005 in the south suburbs of Chicago as the GIS analyst for the Village of Orland Park. Although his position is technically a part of the Planning Department, he actually works with all of the village's departments, assessing their GIS needs and trying to promote GIS technology to his colleagues and the village board. Ken interned at Chicago

Crawley at East Peoria High School and Heather Ryan at Morton High School. It will be a nice short drive for me to visit and supervise them. Heather Crawley is teaching both world geography and earth science classes for one of our alums, Mr. Don Bevenour '67, M.S. '70. Heather Ryan is teaching world geography and American studies. I am confident both Heathers will do just as great at student teaching as our past students have done.

One of the big modifications we had this past fall was a change in the length of student teaching. In the past, our students taught for 10–12 weeks. Now, they are in the classroom for 14–15 weeks. I believe this change will help our student teachers tremendously because they will start teaching earlier in the semester and have more time to integrate into the classroom, connect with their students earlier in the semester, and learn classroom management faster.

I strongly believe our geography education program is going in the right direction. We work hard to make sure each student has a solid geography background in addition to the skills needed to teach. We want them to feel comfortable teaching whichever geography class they may end up with when they are hired on as full-time teachers.

Jill Freund Thomas  
Advisor, Geography Education

## We enjoy hearing from our alumni

*Please give us a call at (309) 438-7649, send us a fax at (309) 438-5310, send us an e-mail, or just stop by the department to chat.*

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Metropolis 2020.

**Stephanie George '03** is engaged to marry Ed Raske, a student at Arizona State. Stephanie moved to Arizona from Madison, Wisconsin, where she interned and later worked as a cartographer at Mapping Specialists. She now does payroll and other important tasks for a corporate hospice provider in the Phoenix area.

**Jessica Schultz '03** is a cartographer at Mapping Specialists in Madison, Wisconsin. A native of Normal, Jessica interned at the McLean County Museum of History in Bloomington.

**Laura Vahling '03** is now a physical and environmental planner II at the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission in Chesapeake, Virginia. Her work involves stormwater management, water supply planning, and other water quality issues. She works for John Carlock, a former McLean County resident, whose brother, **Kevin Carlock '91**, works in GIS for the Army Corps of Engineers in Rock Island. Laura had been a planner in Urbana, and before that she interned in Champaign at the Institute for Technology Development.

**Josh Hauer '04** is an environmental scientist working for Tetra Tech out of its Milwaukee office. Thus far a couple of his projects have involved oversight of contractors during the Hurricane Katrina response, and before that locating household hazardous waste in the hurricane debris field. Josh interned in the Chicago suburbs for Robinson Engineering out of South Holland and worked with GPS.

**Tom Laue '04** was one of the last to receive a sequence degree (applied geography) from our department. He interned at the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission in 2004, and since then has been a GIS technician in that office, working for **Mark Toalson '85**. Tom's avid interest in baseball, especially at the minor-league level,

continues.

**Marc McLaughlin '04** continues to move up the ladder in the Planning Division of the McHenry County Department of Planning and Development. He started as an intern in the summer of 2004, came back as temporary hire, and as of November 2005 became a planner I. Marc says they have lots of work for him, his colleagues, and perhaps another Illinois State University intern in this booming area of northern Illinois.

**Darren Schlickman '04** has landed a job as instrument technician at the engineering firm of G.C. Wallace in Las Vegas. He likes the work, which involves traveling to neat places around the Southwest to collect boundary and topographic data. Camping and exploring near the iconic national parks, like Grand Canyon, are part of the package. Darren interned at Starved Rock State Park.

**Sara Wander '04** is an operations coordinator for Abercrombie and Kent, a luxury travel company that specializes in exotic trips, guided or otherwise, around the world. Her job, in Oak Brook, involves behind-the-scenes documentation and building itineraries for clients; she is hoping to progress to the level of tour consultant, which would allow her to do some traveling with A and K clients. Sara interned at Sea Pines Resort, Hilton Head, South Carolina.

**Bob Wise '04** has left the GIS field, where he worked for Sidwell and for Bruce Harris, both in the Fox River Valley, and moved to Fort Collins, Colorado. He is considering his options and thinking seriously about graduate school or teacher training at Colorado, Colorado State, or Northern Colorado. Bob interned at Pace Suburban Bus Service in Arlington Heights.

**Maria Contreras '05** is a science teacher at Lincoln-Way East High School in Frankfort. Since her arrival, they won the state class 8A football championship. Maria student taught at Heyworth High School and also did a for-credit planning internship for Kankakee County.

**Kimberly Jones '05** is an assistant city planner in Lockport in the office where she did her geography internship in the summer of 2005. Since becoming full-time, Kimberly has gotten the chance temporarily (due to several resignations) to work on the economic development side and to manage the planning department.

**Christy Marsick '05** is now a conservation education assistant at the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, between Elgin and Dundee. She recently completed seven months' work as an outdoor educator at Wild Bear Center for Nature Discovery, in Nederland, Colorado, where she began as a summer intern and continued on as paid staff until Christmas 2005.

**Charles Rogers '05** is now a planner for NASA at the Kennedy Space Center. He had several Florida job offers, including one in GIS for a non-profit. His previous position was as a planner with Escambia County in Pensacola, where he performed his second of two geography internships for credit. His first internship was in Bloomington at McLean County Building and Zoning.

**Benjamin Wilson '05** has begun working as a planner at the North Central Illinois Council of Governments in Princeton. His duties include the writing and oversight of planning grants to assist the numerous communities and counties that this agency serves. Ben interned at the same location.

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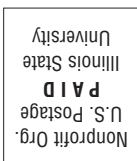
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