

# DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

## Chairperson's Corner

The department continues to become more proactive in defining its mission and role at the University. Dr. Enru Wang, who was filling a nine-month temporary position, was hired for our vacant economic geography position. Dr. Wang has a Master's degree from Kansas State University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Washington. His interests are in economic geography, regional development, urban geography, GIS, and China. He will teach Human Geography, Economic Geography, Conservation of Resources, Regional Geography: China, Introduction to GIS, and another course in his area of interest. Enru will play a key role in our community and urban development track, and the University's growing China initiative.

Dr. Rundquist secured an AmericaView grant (USGS) that will provide long-term funding to support remote sensing education and outreach. We very recently secured a verbal commitment from the Dean to allow us to recruit a GIS Lab Manager professional staff position during the coming year. This person will oversee the GIS lab, teach two courses in our on-line GIS Certificate, and seek to develop and manage contract and grant activities across campus and within the community, state, and

region. This has been a departmental goal for the past 20 years. The lone sad note is that Dr. Kevin Romig will be leaving UND for a position at Texas State University in San Marcos, TX. This is an excellent opportunity for him, however, and we wish him and Julie (as well as their dogs Lazarus and Moses) the best.

Our on-campus Graduate Certificate in GISc continues to do well, and we will launch an on-line version this fall. Our undergraduate majors are growing in number (42), and our graduate program is at or beyond capacity (19). We are advertising for a nine-month replacement to cover Dr. Romig's courses, and hope to receive permission shortly to recruit for a full-time replacement.

Because the 2006 GP/RMD Regional Meeting in Lincoln, NE is the same week as UND Homecoming Week (5-7 October 2006) we will be holding an open house in Ireland Hall on Saturday, 7 October from 4-6 pm instead of a banquet. Please plan to stop by for a visit, and please keep us abreast of your job changes, relocations, and noteworthy news items of a personal or professional nature.

Dr. Paul Todhunter, Chair

## Geography Department to host 2006 Canadian Association of Geographers Prairie Division Meeting

The Geography Department is hosting this year's meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers Prairie Division (PCAG) at Rugby, North Dakota, on Friday, September 29, 2006 through Sunday, October 1, 2006 at the EconoLodge. There will be an opportunity to register on Friday evening at 8 p.m. followed by a cash bar reception until 10 p.m. Papers and posters are being presented on Saturday morning starting at 8 a.m. and concluding by 12:25 p.m.

There will be a soup-and-sandwich luncheon at midday that will precede the two planned field trips. Currently, Dr. Todhunter and Dr. Vandenberg are working on a physical geography-oriented tour of the countryside while Dr. Hansen, Dr. Wang, and Dr. Munski are putting together a small town tour of the community of Rugby. A social half-hour at 6 p.m. will be followed by supper at 6:30 p.m.

Following a short break after dessert is served, Dr. Gary Johnson, a past chairperson of the department and currently the University of North Dakota's Assistant Vice-President for Research and Co-Project Director, ND

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## Feedback for the Alumni Directory

The Department of Geography continues to update its director of the alumni for mailing purpose. If you have not done so or need to update your address information, please complete the following form and return to: Department of Geography, O'Kelly-Ireland Hall, University of North Dakota, 221 Centennial Drive Stop 9020, Grand Forks, ND 58202 or e-mail us the information: [cindy\\_purpur@und.nodak.edu](mailto:cindy_purpur@und.nodak.edu).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation Year \_\_\_\_\_

Major \_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/email \_\_\_\_\_

**NEWS ABOUT YOU** for us to share with other alumni in our next issue (information about your current position, significant achievements, family activities, etc)

*Editor's Note: The Geography Department and GTU were very pleased that so many alumni participated in this past year's department activities. If you have any suggestions that will help us strengthen our ties to alumni, please let us know. The current alumni newsletter, past alumni newsletters, and additional department photos and news of Geography/GTU events can be found at our website: [www.und.edu/dept/Geog/mainpage.htm](http://www.und.edu/dept/Geog/mainpage.htm) If you have any comments or suggestions for items to include in the next year's newsletter, please e-mail me: [devon\\_hansen@und.nodak.edu](mailto:devon_hansen@und.nodak.edu). — Devon Hansen.*

## UND to host 2008 Great Plains/Rocky Mountain Division Meeting

UND has been chosen to host the 2008 Annual Meeting of the Great Plains/Rocky Mountain Division of the Association of American Geographers on September 12-13, 2008. The last time the meeting was held in Grand Forks was in 1979, so we are excited about the opportunity to showcase our department, University, city, and state. In order to ensure a financially successful meeting regardless of attendance we would like to raise \$6,000 toward the cost of the meeting. We have received \$1,000 each from the Dean and Provost, and will be approaching the President and VP for Research for additional funding. We would like to leverage these funds with private funds donated by alumni and friends of the department. If you would like to support this specific need please e-mail the Department

Chair ([paul\\_todhunter@und.nodak.edu](mailto:paul_todhunter@und.nodak.edu)) when you send your donation to the Alumni Association, and he will keep track of all contributions toward support of the regional meeting, and will make sure they are allocated toward that project. Alumni are encouraged to come for all or part of this two-day program. On Sept. 12, UND faculty will lead conference participants on field trips to local/regional points of interest. The meeting itself will be on Sept. 13 in the Memorial Union and will feature poster and paper presentations, a noon banquet with keynote speaker, and a geobowl competition. For more information about attending and even presenting a paper and/or poster, contact Dr. Brad Rundquist at [bradley\\_rundquist@und.nodak.edu](mailto:bradley_rundquist@und.nodak.edu) or (701) 777-4589.



*Dr. William A. Dando, Emeritus Professor of Geography at Indiana State University and former Chair of Geography at UND, gave a lecture as part of our Forum for Contemporary Geographic Issues on September 16, 2005, titled "Religion and Climate: Beliefs Origin and Diffusion and the Impact of Modernity."*

## Alumni News

We are pleased to share news with you from the following alumni:

**John P. Rutten, '59** lives in Devils Lake, ND and reports enjoying his retirement and particularly being with his grandchildren. He is an avid hunter and fisherman.

**Donald D. Schmidt, '62** resides in St. Louis, MO and is retired from the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency in St. Louis after 41 years of service.

**Robert J. Kulack, '68, '71, '85** is in his 37<sup>th</sup> year with Grand Forks Public Schools. He is Associate Principal at Red River High School and on the Board of Directors of the North Dakota Geographic Alliance. He is extensively involved with promoting the connection between geography education students and the local public schools by coordinating presentations with Dr. Munski in both the fall and spring semesters.

**Kathy Spencer, '88, '95** is an Information Specialist or rather an Internet Librarian for the Rural Assistance Center (RAC) at the Center for Rural Health, UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Grand Forks, ND. RAC is a national information service for rural communities funded by the federal government. Ms. Spencer collects and develops online information that includes maps, exhibits and presents at conferences around the country, and

### Canadian Association of Geographers

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EPSCoR, will be the featured banquet speaker. Dr. Johnson's presentation is titled, "Geography and Geographers at the Center of Things", and it is scheduled for 8 p.m. The annual slide competition will be after that talk. The PCAG annual business meeting will be on Sunday from 10 a.m. to noon.

Space for lodgings is extremely limited, so people from the trade hinterlands of Grand Forks, Fargo, Valley City, Jamestown, Devils Lake, Minot, and Bismarck are being encouraged to make it a day-trip. Even if a person arrives only at the time for the 10:15 a.m. coffee break or even at the start of the 12:30 p.m. luncheon, there will be some great opportunities for geographical exploration and camaraderie through the end of the slide competition. However, reservations are needed for the midday meal, the field trips, and the banquet, so any alumni of the Geography Department who might be interested in attending this program should contact Dr. Munski as soon as possible at his e-mail address of [Douglas\\_Munski@und.nodak.edu](mailto:Douglas_Munski@und.nodak.edu), please.

assists clients in finding grant opportunities and research resources to support rural health and human services in their communities across all the states. In addition to her Geography degree, she has a Master of Library Science ('03) from Southern Connecticut State University. Previous to her employment at the RAC, she was the Geology Librarian at the UND Department of Geology for more than 14 years.

**Mark Robbins, '92** works for ESRI at the Minneapolis Regional office. He is the account manager (sales) for state government and their agencies. He primarily works with the states of North and South Dakota.

**Chris Atkinson, '00** has been appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at Bemidji State University in Bemidji, MN.

**Jason Danielson, '00** has been hired as a GIS Analyst with Kadmas, Lee and Jackson Inc. in their Helena, MT office.

**Maria (Valeros) Lukang, '00** is working at Columbia University's Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) as an Information Specialist. CIESIN is a center within the Earth Institute at Columbia University. CIESIN works at the intersection of the social, natural, and information sciences, and specializes in on-line data and information management, spatial data integration and



*The graduate student field trip led by Drs. Vandeberg and Munski was held on August 27, 2005. "New" graduate students and "old" faculty take in the sights at Turtle River State Park located 22 miles west of Grand Forks on Highway 2.*

training, and interdisciplinary research related to human interactions in the environment.

**Josh Beck, '01** is employed as a planner with the Washington County Community Services in Stillwater, MN and works with Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and Home Programs.

**Ben Ehreth, '01** accepted a position with the North Dakota Department of Transportation in their planning division. Ben and his wife Roz are happy to be back in North Dakota. The Ehreths previously resided in Bozeman, MT. Ben reports that Bozeman was a great community to live in, however the cost of living and distance from family and friends back in North Dakota were major considerations in their decision to relocate.

**Jeff Knoff, '01** earned a Masters degree in Geographic Information Sciences from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota (SMU) following his graduation from UND. For the past 3 years, he has been working as a GIS Analyst at SMU. Currently, Jeff is an ArcObjects programmer and ArcIMS developer, as well as a part time instructor for SMU's GIS program.

**John Menzies, '01** graduated from Indiana State with a Ph.D. in geography last spring. He is currently teaching physical geography at Bakersfield College (California). He has plans to introduce both remote sensing and climatology courses in the next couple of years.

## Gamma Theta Upsilon participate in various activities

Kris Parsons (president) and Rodney Iverson (vice president) guided the Psi chapter of GTU in several activities throughout the year. In the fall, GTU played host to Dr. Johnny Coomansingh from Minot State University, who was the guest speaker at the Fall banquet. GTU members joined in a campus wide event to gather school supplies for children impacted by Hurricane Katrina, and hosted popcorn sales in the student union. GTU also sponsored a fall picnic and an end of semester gathering. Several GTU members were part of the "Munski's Marauders" intramural broomball team that terrorized other UND teams. Also, eleven new members were welcomed into the International GTU organization at the spring picnic by Dr. Gary Johnson. The new members include Lane Cowger, Kris Parson, Charles Geraci, William "Zac" Vandevander, Teri Nelson, Molly Lee, Derek Scott, Megan Schlegal, Zachary Karsky, Paige Baker and Brent Pringle. We look forward to another exciting year at UND with new GTU activities.



*Students Alex Fiedler, Lucas Rengstorf, Scott Abel, and Molly Lee enjoy the festivities at the 2006 Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU) picnic held May 5, 2006.*

### Alumni News *(Continued from previous page)*

John and his wife Adrienne plan on visiting Winnipeg this summer and may stop by UND. We look forward to your visit.

**Toni Peck, '02** recently graduated from the University of St. Thomas School of Law, passed the bar exam in Florida, and waived into Minnesota's bar. She is currently clerking for the Honorable Mark Starr, a district court judge in Hibbing. This past March, she and her husband welcomed their first child, Avery.

**Ralph Hoversten, '03** has taken a position as a geographic analyst for Navteq in Little Rock, Arkansas.

**Sarah Eggleston, '04, '06** received a Masters of Environmental Management in Earth System Science and Policy at UND. She has been working as a contractor for NOAA's Hydrographic Surveys Division in Silver Spring, MD, assisting in the development of survey plans for NOAA ships. She is transferring to their Norfolk, VA location where she will learn more about the hydrography and cartography aspects of nautical charting and also spend some time at sea collecting hydrographic data.

**Diane Holden, '04** has accepted a position as a GIS specialist at the EAPC's Wind Energy Division in Grand Forks, ND.

**Dawn Will, '04** resides in Las Cruces, N.M., and is employed at the Holloman Air Force Base as the GIS Technician for GeoBase. She is working on a master's degree in geography at New Mexico State University.

**Cory Enger, '05** is serving with the Peace Corps in the West African state of Niger.

**Kyle Glazewski, '05** has been hired as Watershed Coordinator for the Eastern Grand Forks County Soil Conservation District in Grand Forks, ND.

**Lisa Borgen, '06** recently accepted a position as an administrative assistant with the Energy & Environmental Research Center (EERC) in Grand Forks, ND.

## Forum for Contemporary Geographic Issues held on regular basis

The Forum for Contemporary Geographic Issues is held on a regular basis. Every year the Department invites experts in various fields and the past graduates to share their practical job-related experiences with the university students and community members. Last year's contributors include: Dr. William A. Dando, Department of Geography, Indiana State University; Dr. Gary Johnson, Assistant Vice-President for Research, UND; Dr. Rick Sweitzer, Department of Biology, UND; Dr. Paul Kucera, Department of Atmospheric Sciences, UND; Mr. Scott Ralston, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Devils Lake Wetland Management District; and Dr. Greg Gagnon, Department of Indian Studies, UND.

If you would be interested in sharing your professional or job-related experiences with our students and community, please contact us to be a speaker in one of our geography classes, at a Forum for Contemporary Geographic Issues, or the Fall Homecoming Banquet. Please contact one of the geography faculty.

## Geography Open House set for Oct. 7

The Geography Department will hold an open house in O'Kelly-Ireland Hall on Saturday, October 7, from 4 to 6 p.m. The open house is planned in conjunction with the UND Homecoming Week (October 5-7, 2006) festivities. We extend an invitation for all alumni to stop by for a visit and tour of our department. You can find us by going through O'Kelly Hall's Second Avenue North doorway (across from the Law School) and following the internal signage. For more information, call Cindy at 701-777-4246 or [cindy\\_purpur@und.nodak.edu](mailto:cindy_purpur@und.nodak.edu).

## Online Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Sciences

The Geography Department and the Division of Continuing Education have launched an online Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Sciences. The 12-credit program is designed so students can complete the work and earn the certificate in 12 months. Four courses are required: Cartography and Computer-Assisted Mapping, Introduction to Geographic Information Systems, Advanced Techniques in Geographic Information Systems, and an Independent Project.

The first cohort is full with 20 students. They begin the program in late June. Most of them live in North Dakota, although we also have students from California, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, and Washington.

# Department of Geography Alumni Newsletter - Summer 2006

## Geography Faculty and Staff Activities

**Dr. Devon Hansen** continues to be busy with teaching, research, and service activities. The academic highlights of 2005-2006 include her promotion to Associate Professor and her tenure has been approved, effective in August. Professional travel took her to Winnipeg, Manitoba (regional CAG) and Chicago, Illinois (national AAG). She advised a completed thesis project on Liberian refugee resettlement in the Red River Valley, adding to the growing body of scholarly research with refugees in North Dakota. This past academic year, Dr. Hansen has been working in conjunction with the UND's Center for Community Engagement to strengthen the University's ties to rural communities in North Dakota in the area of community development. To that end, she is supervising a community service internship with the Hazen (ND) Community Development, Inc. in the summer and undertaking a graduate research community project with the City of Larimore (ND) in the fall. This summer she is enjoying gardening and time away from Grand Forks visiting family and friends.

**Dr. Douglas Munski** continues to emphasize service to the department, the university, and the state of North Dakota as well as successfully maintaining an above-average teaching load for the campus. His 2005-06 academic year included being recognized by UND Student Government with the Gordon Henry Service Award this past May. Obviously, his work as the department's graduate director and senior-most undergraduate academic advisor are his most productive and intrinsically satisfying efforts as a professor. He again was a faculty advisor for Student Academic Services this summer, and he received this year's "Mister Getting Started" badge for his extraordinary work at Getting Started 2006. During that six-week program of orientation, academic advising, and registration for incoming first-year students, he met with a number of alumni who had been in his classes slightly more

than two decades ago who now are bringing their offspring to attend UND and to take classes in geography. To Dr. Munski, that kind of confidence by former students to entrust him and colleagues with their children to provide that next generation of geographers with a productive learning environment is the greatest form of recognition and honor that a faculty member can receive. So, he wants to remind all alumni whose children or, in some cases, grandchildren (or nephews and nieces), are thinking about attending the Grand Forks campus for college to include a side trip to the Geography Department when they make their campus visits. His cookie tin and candy dishes are ever available to past, current, and future students interested in the exciting journey to become a geographer at the University of North Dakota!

**Dr. Brad Rundquist** continues to gain great personal satisfaction from working with undergraduate and graduate students on their research projects. He advised three completed thesis projects during the 2005-06 academic year (Sarita Pachhai, Shariar Pervez, and Charles Geraci). All of those students presented their work at national professional meetings. Two papers were published this year, one based on the thesis work of Paul Sethre (M.S. 2003) and one co-authored by Emily Grewe (B.S. 2005). In Fall 2005, Dr. Rundquist attended the AmericaView and Regional AAG meeting in Laramie, WY, and the Pecora Conference in Sioux Falls, SD. UND was selected to host the 2008 Regional AAG meeting, and Dr. Rundquist is leading planning efforts. In late June, our on-line GISc Certificate program begins. Dr. Rundquist is most happy to report that his tenure has been approved, effective in August. On the home front, the Rundquist's spent five wonderful days in March collecting shells, sightseeing and relaxing on Sanibel Island, Florida. They had season tickets for hockey this year, and that helped to shorten the winter. The Rundquist household is a mess

right now, as they are in the midst of a major kitchen/dining room remodel.

**Dr. Paul Todhunter** enters the second year of his final three-year stint as departmental Chair. This past year he gave two presentations – one at the Fall Meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco, CA, and a second at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers in Chicago, IL. He was co-author on a paper in GIScience and Remote Sensing, submitted a paper to the Journal of the American Water Resources Association, created an on-line version of his Introduction to Global Climate Correspondence Division course. He continues his work on Red River flood flow frequency, snow cover control of winter soil temperature in the Great Plains, and seasonally frozen soils at Fargo. Much of his time spent outside UND focuses on the activities of his four middle school/high school age children. His oldest son will attend U. Nebraska-Lincoln in the fall, so Dr. Todhunter will join Dr. Rundquist as a local member of the 'Go Big Red!' fan club.

It has been a busy and exciting second year for **Gregory Vandenberg**, Assistant Professor in Geography. He and his wife, Lara Dando, are getting use to having more than one child about the house, with Anna having turned eight in March, and John having turned one in May. They had some nice fall hikes at Lake Itasca and Turtle River state parks, followed by cross country skiing and skating in the winter. Greg and his family have been doing some hiking and camping this summer, including a trip to Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota.

Greg is in charge of supervising the graduate teaching assistants, and also advisor to Gamma Theta Upsilon. He teaches Global Physical Environment, Introduction to GIS, Introduction to GPS, and Advanced GIS. Greg also helped develop and present a workshop on

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## Geography Faculty and Staff Activities

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Geospatial Technologies held at Mayville State University in June. Dr. Vandenberg was also part of a team effort with Dr. Rundquist, Dr. Munski and Dr. Hansen in securing two successful grants from Student Technology Fees to purchase 7 new computers for the Geographic and Remote Sensing Lab (GARSL), and install a smart podium workstation and LCD projector in the GARSL (almost \$30,000). He has also been working on developing trail maps for Turtle River State Park.

Dr. Vandenberg's research has been advancing as well. He is currently supervising three graduate students who are working on projects associated with 1) the distribution of bald eagles in the Red River Valley; 2) ice jams along the Red River; and 3) the use of LIDAR in mapping archaeological features. He secured a grant from NDView to support a graduate research assistant and an aerial survey of the northern Red River Valley to identify bald eagle nest locations. Finally, he has given several professional presentations this past year including talks at the North Dakota Soil and Water Conservation Society in Jamestown (August 2005); the Association of American Geographers Rocky Mountain/ Great Plains Division Annual Meeting in Laramie, WY (September 2005); the North Dakota GIS Users Conference (October 2005); the Division of Social Sciences, Minot State University (November 2005); the Faculty of Environment, Earth and Resources at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg

(March 2006); Billings Land Reclamation Symposium, Billings, MT (June 2006) and the North Dakota View Conference, Fort Yates (August 2006).

After graduating from the University of Washington (2005), **Dr. Enru Wang** joined the UND Geography faculty in the fall as a Visiting Assistant Professor. His research interests include regional economic development, urban transformation, geography of retailing and consumption, spatial analysis and GIS applications in socioeconomic contexts, post-socialist transformation and political economy. He has taught several courses during the past year (Economic Geography, Human Geography, China Geography, Intro GIS and Conservation) and enjoyed interacting with students. Dr. Wang will join the faculty as an Assistant Professor from Fall 2006. Dr. Wang and his wife's first child, Aurora, was born in October.

**Cindy Purpur** continues as the administrative secretary. This coming fall will be her 19th year with the department. She and her husband Gary continue to go to their cabin at Maple Lake each summer. Their two daughters are now grown and live in Grand Forks and Fargo, ND. Cindy and Gary are especially enjoying spending time with their nine-month- old grandson Brody. Cindy continues to collect information on alumni and what they are doing. Please e-mail her at [cindy\\_purpur@und.nodak.edu](mailto:cindy_purpur@und.nodak.edu) or call 701-777-4246 to give your up-to-date information for the department's files.

## **Bernt Lloyd Wills Memorial Geography Scholarship Award**

The Wills Scholarship Award is presented to a high achieving undergraduate student who contributes to the excellence of the Department, not only by her/his outstanding academic performance, but also by being exemplary among her/his peers. This year's recipients, Chris Sanders and Rodney Iverson, received a check and certificate.

Congratulations Chris and Rodney!

We express our thanks to Laura B. Munski, '93, Gerald Rott, '80, Donn Burke Baker, '76, and Kenneth Jensen, '64 for contributing to the Wills Scholarship Fund. Thank you to Lara M. Dando, '88, Dr. Roger K. Sandness, '68, Miles D. Ramfjord, '81, Steve Walker, '81, Michael Philipp, '84, Michael Swedberg, '84, Jay S. Larson, '84, and Dr. Paul Sando, '88 for their contributions to the Geography Department Fund.

Both funds are administered through the UND Alumni Foundation, so people should identify the fund to which they are contributing when doing so in 2006-07. Alumni support to these two funds is much appreciated.