



**INSIDE GEOGRAPHY /
NMSU**

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Message from the Department Head

We hope this finds our alumni and other friends of NMSU Geography doing well and looking forward to a nice holiday break with family and friends. As we wrap up the term prior to the holidays, we have much news to share with you. With the end of the term, we see eight students completing their studies and graduating with either BS and Masters degrees.

The Department had a very large contingent travel to San Antonio this fall to participate in the joint annual meetings of the Southwest Division of the AAG and the Applied Geography Conference, and our students did us proud by presenting some excellent papers, winning paper awards, and also taking second place in the marathon Geography Bowl that Michaela Buenemann planned.

A bit closer to home, Gaurav Thapa, a graduating Masters student in the Department, was named Outstanding Masters Graduate Student by the NMSU Alumni Association. What a wonderful award for Gaurav to receive as he finishes his time with us and heads back to Nepal to put his degree and talents to good use in transportation planning in his home town of Katmandu.

We invite to you “turn the pages” on this issue of GeoNotes to learn more about these and other stories, and we hope to hear from you via email, or better yet, visits to the Department as the opportunity to do so comes your way.

Best regards,

Christopher Brown....the fortunate person that gets to serve as Department Head of your Geography Department!

Mission Statement

The mission of the NMSU Department of Geography is to advance sustainable solutions to contemporary problems through innovative and effective teaching, research, service, and outreach in geographic information science and technology and coupled human-environment systems.

Vision Statement

The NMSU Department of Geography will be the premier applied geography department in the U.S. Southwest as evidenced by the successful placement of our graduates in excellent jobs and graduate programs as well as our high research and funding productivity relative to geography departments at our peer institutions.

Master of Applied Geography: Trent Botkin, Class of 2004

Trent Botkin currently has two career positions: Environmental Analyst and NEPA Coordinator for the NMDOT, and he is also the owner of Eco Solutions, LLC which provides environmental consultation and services for landscape management, including erosion control, wildlife relocation, and invasive species management.

What was your specific program or focus of study? Water resource management and restoration of arid lands and riparian ecosystems.

Who was your major advisor? Describe what your thesis was about and your approach. Dr. Jack Wright was my advisor for the first year though he left for a round-the-world sabbatical during my second year, but my then my project was set. My thesis was exploring the historical cause of an incised ephemeral stream channel located on a ranch near Lake Valley, and developing a restoration plan. I attended several workshops with the Quivira Coalition and Bill Zeedyk, familiarized myself with the Roasgen stream classification and restoration system, and created a design within my thesis.

Did anyone else play a role in your work? Dr. Walt Whitford served on my thesis committee and really increased my interest in ecological restoration in arid systems. His only question during my thesis presentation was, "how do you tell the difference between rushes, sedges and grass?" I had learned from his classes that "sedges have edges and rushes are round, and grasses are hollow all the way to the ground."

What was the new innovation of the day (time?) for example I used Arc 3.0 As a teaching assistant, I think I taught the last GIS lab that used 3.0. The funny part was that I had learned on 8.0 and never really used 3.0, so I would offer candy prizes/early releases to the student who could answer another student's question. It actually worked quite well. Sub-meter Trimble GPS units were just coming out and were all the rage.

What did you do when you left NMSU? After graduation, I became the Environmental Coordinator for Heritage Ranch Institute, a small non-profit located on the ranch where I had performed my thesis study. With the help of a grant writer, we were able to hire a Youth Conservation Corps crew out of Hatch High School to perform the stream restoration design I developed in my thesis. To my knowledge the stream improved noticeably after the restoration.

I lived out of the ranch for a year and then fell in love with a girl living in Williamsburg (Brooklyn), NY while I was doing my grocery shopping in Williams-

burg (Truth or Consequences). We both ended up moving to Santa Fe and I became a Water Resource Specialist with the Office of the State Engineer. Most of the work was GIS work related to on-going adjudications.

After 2 promotions and 3 years, I was burnt out with the desk job and moved to the State Forestry Division Wildfire Management Team and served as their GIS coordinator which also required that I be a certified wildland firefighter. I rebuilt their GIS users-system in 8 statewide offices and trained the whole division in GIS and GPS use and integration. I also got out on several wild fires, and learned a lot about forestry, fires, politics, and elk hunting. Three years ago I moved to the NMDOT Environmental Section and now consider myself a NEPA specialist, especially related to United States Army Corps of Engineers 404 permits, The Clean Water Act, endangered species protection and mitigation, wetland delineation and mitigation, and the rest of the environmental clearance process.

Is there any technique or approach you used in thesis/grad work that was particularly beneficial later?

Knowing how to read a river and diagnose erosional and depositional cycles, which is really fundamental geomorphology, has been a useful skill in many different career situations. Understanding the Rosgen stream classification system is a must if you are going to be working on waterways in the west, as it puts you in the top-tier of analysts. GIS continues to be a very important tool in my work, allowing me to perform high-level remote assessments minutes after I find out about a project. For many of my projects, I don't find it necessary to visit the site at all and can complete the analysis and clearance from my office.

How has your geography degree helped you? My MAG and BS in geography, along with a minor in biology and experience in GIS, has made me a jack-of-all-trades. I have been fortunate to work alongside co-workers with degrees in GIS, forestry, planning,



Alumni Updates: Botkin continued....

biology, anthropology, geology, and more, and my education and exposure to those fields has led to a fulfilling career. Because “geographer” is rarely an advertised position, a geographer can use their own experience to fit themselves into a desired position. I think it’s important to not get too specialized in only one field and give you some opportunity to shift your career focus. For myself, I fell out-of-love with water resource management after finding out that lawyers, and not those of us who studied water resources for years, made nearly all of the decisions, and I moved into fields where I was able to better utilize my education and experience.

What are you doing these days? What’s next? I’m currently involved in several very interesting projects with the NMDOT. We just finished the environmental clearance to re-build the flood-destroyed road through the historic mining town of Mogollon, and the field visits and public meetings there were always interesting. And out of the blue a new project just fell in my lap where we have one month to perform environmental clearance consultation, design and build a bank protection system to prevent NM 15 from washing out near the Cliff Dwellings National Monument before the monsoons arrive. I’m using this opportunity to get bend way weirs and bioengineering willow plantings installed, moving way from the standard riprap. A big part of my job is “regulatory facilitation”, which is essentially helping move NMDOT projects move forward while meeting the permitting requirements of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, the New Mexico Environment Department, The Historic Preservation Division, and other entities. I’ve had a lot of fun shaping and guiding permits through perilous” circumstances where they have a good chance of getting “hung up”, which can delay projects and cost tax payers a lot of money.

What are your long-term plans? Would you provide a description of your best or typical day at work? I have two boys, 1 and 4 years old, and they keep me busy during any hours I’m not at work or running my business. We have been living in Santa Fe and just now moved to Glorieta about 15 miles

out of town. As a life-long camper, hiker, and fisherman I’m enjoying introducing these activities to my kids and now that we live on the edge of the national forest we can get out even more. Two hobbies I’ve taken up since moving to Santa Fe are cutting my own firewood in the National Forest

(about two cords a year) and backcountry elk hunting (we keep the freezer full). In the future I plan on getting my doctorate and teaching, though right now I’m enjoying building my resume and gaining life experience. A typical day at work is in my office working on permits, clearances, wetland and T&E issues, and attending organized and impromptu meetings both in the office and around the state as necessary. I work with a small group of diversely educated and very intelligent people so it’s easy to get a second opinion. I also task out biological and cultural resource surveys to contractors and supervise their work and results. A few days a month (or ore depending on the need) I am on the road to examine project sites, which has involved being on-site during wildfire and flood events, hikes through the desert and mountains, dodging herds of elk on the roadway, and a lot of parking in the right-of-way to examine bridges, waterways, vegetation, etc. I also host public meetings as necessary to explain the environmental aspects of a project, and that can vary from the Grant County auditorium in Silver City to a rodeo arena in Cliff.



Editor’s Note: Photographs provided by author.

Bachelor of Science Geography: Mark Simpson, Class of 2012

Editor's Note: Mark sent this letter early in the semester and I asked to publish here to share with everyone. We look forward to other contributions to the Alumni updates column. Contact Carol Campbell at geobird@nmsu.edu to organize contributions.

Carol.

This year, man. It was nuts. I laughed, I cried, I read journal articles. Penn State has been really great,my advisor is Alex Klippel. I'm in the 5 year program, so two years of Master's plus three for a Ph.D. I was originally planning on going for a Master's but got talked into the Ph.D., ha.

My research path started out a little all over the place, but seems to be on set on a very interesting direction now. Alex has a strong background in spatial cognition, so essentially where Geography meets psychology. I've been working on what we're calling spatial measures, essentially ways to quantify the complexity of spatial layouts like building floorplans or street grids. The idea is that these measures can be related to how confusing people find these layouts, and basically get an index of how easy comprehensible spaces are to people (i.e., how likely people are to get lost in them). A lot of the background reading has had to do with things related to urban geography, so that class came in handy.

I'm actually presenting a big chunk of my research (sort of literature review on steroids, with an illustrated classification) at COSIT in Santa Fe in October. We actually have been getting into some exciting territory lately with Virtual Reality technology. It started out as a small investigation- virtual environments being perfect for testing spatial measures experimentally with people since you have total control over what's in the environment. We ended up getting an Oculus Rift headset and computer setup (pictured below!), but it got so much attention that we're looking to try and start a VR lab ASAP and be a center of expertise for the University!



The background is that VR has always promised really cool experiences, always kind of sucked in practice, but now the technology is getting good enough to work very convincingly.

It's been driven mostly by the computer gaming industry, which is kind of funny- I started out in undergrad wanting to make video games (I was in CMI). I then went to geography, but now I'm back to using game development tools in geography. Lots of 3D modelling and scripting in game engines. Basically, the idea is that immersive virtual reality is a great tool for all sorts of geography-related things. You can show people what their neighborhood looks like under various climate scenarios or have them explore other countries without the expense of traveling there. I'm particularly interested in immersive 3D visualization, so seeing what kinds of geographic data you can usefully portray when you can essentially walk through the map, or even what types of representations work best (what about a huge globe, or a 3D relief map on a virtual desk?). Alex and I have had four meetings this week reaching out to other researchers on campus... and everybody's excited. It would be awesome to be on the ground floor of something huge.

Anyhow, I've been in State College for the summer. I just finished teaching in this pre-college program where they bring in students from majority-minority high schools (I think, I'm not sure what the criteria is exactly) and give them a STEM experience. I chose to try a short GIS course, which was pretty interesting with high schoolers... luckily I only had two of them! It had some frustrating moments, but it was a lot of fun.

The grad program is interesting, since you aren't under a lot of pressure explicitly, but everyone wants to be super great at things so there's a lot of self-pressure. But the program does start with a week of orientation, which definitely seems excessive at first but in the end was really effective at getting the new students to know each other and the rest of the department. There were 12 students in our cohort, which is smaller than usual. We were told there were almost 200 applicants, which makes you feel alternatively like a bad_ and like "oh __t they must have let me in by accident, no way am I supposed to be here.

To the credit of you guys, once things got rolling in seminars I felt better prepared than a lot of the other grads, many of whom actually went to Penn State- and we had a couple from West Point! We even spe-

Alumni Updates BS of Geography Simpson Continued.....

cifically had a review of our past geography education in the very beginning, to see if we had any weaknesses in the discipline, but they didn't find any so I didn't have to take any additional courses, which was very nice.

One thing that is a little different here is that all the resident grad students are funded, which means they are full-time students, and therefore a little disconnected from the day-to-day professional GIS world. The focus is generally very much on creating future faculty, which I am fine with, but I think it has some of the other people in my cohort feeling left out. Hm, what else? I did take a class about "cyberGIS" and learned some social media data mining, as well as the R scripting language, and TA'd two spatial analysis courses... I also presented at AAG (met Dr.

Buenemann and DeMers of course), and at a couple local conference things. Also it gets very, very cold and miserable here and the food isn't as good as Las Cruces. Ha, even the Thai food in Las Cruces was better!

Okay, I should get going, Stephanie and I need to work on our wedding website (June 18th!)...

Thanks Dr. Brown for all the support over the years in undergrad. Say hi to the rest of the department for me, and thank you all for helping get here!

-Mark



SpARC Lab Updates:

SpARC Coordinator Wins Prestigious WRI Grant

By Christopher Brown

Hugo Rojas-Villalobos, the Department of Geography SpARC coordinator for the last 8 months, recently won a prestigious grant with the NMSU Water Resources Research Institute (WRI) that will support his research into the water balance of the Cuauhtémoc Basin in Chihuahua, Mexico.

Hugo is a Ph.D. student in the NMSU Water, Science and Management Graduate Program, and Christopher Brown chairs his thesis committee. Working with Brown, Hugo developed a project entitled, "Developing a 3D bathymetric model of a shallow lagoon measured by a solar powered low-cost autonomous surface vehicle prototype in Cuauhtémoc, Chihuahua, Mexico," that he submitted to the WRI Student Water Research Grant Program, and Hugo was one of only eight awards granted among a field of 49 applicants.

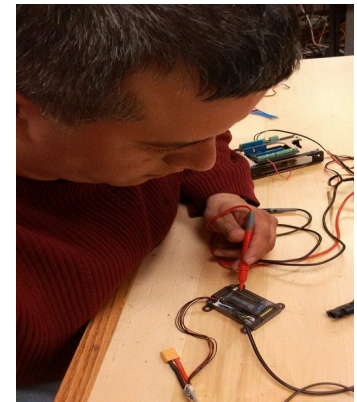
Hugo is using the funds that he received to purchase a range of electronic components that he is assembling to produce a hydro-plane remote control, sonar and



GPS-enabled model boat that will sense the bathymetry of the Laguna Bustillos, a large reservoir in the Cuauhtémoc Basin.

Hugo will use the data generated data to develop a 3d model of the Laguna that in turn will generate estimates of the storage capacity of the Laguna as an input to his water balance model. Funds will also support fieldwork in the coming months that will allow Hugo to deploy the vehicle and gather the data needed for this project. The Department is very proud of Hugo in winning this prestigious and highly competitive award and wishes him well in the important research on which he is embarking.

Bravo, Hugo, Bravo!



Congratulations to the Fall 2015 Graduating Class!

Bachelor of Science

Kathy Barnes

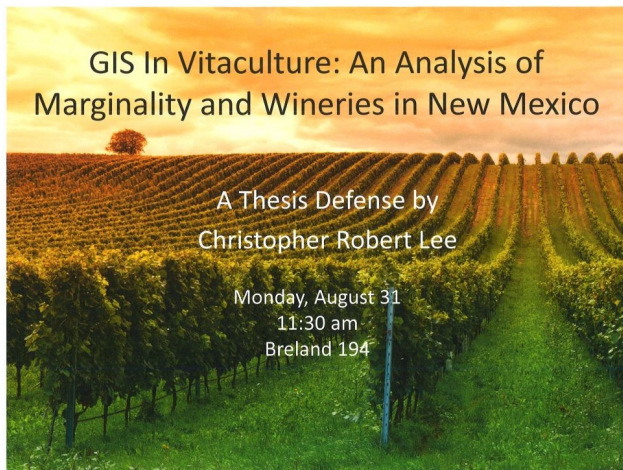
Daniel Duran

Andree Gomez

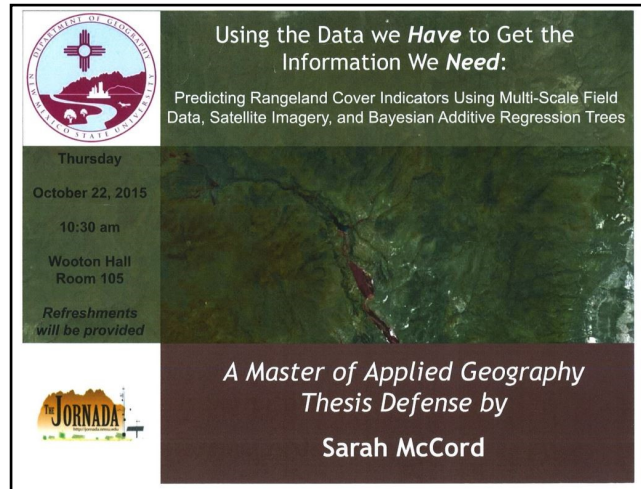
Zachary Conner-White Taraschi -**Honors, Crimson Scholar**

MAG Thesis Flyers indicate defense date and Thesis Title.

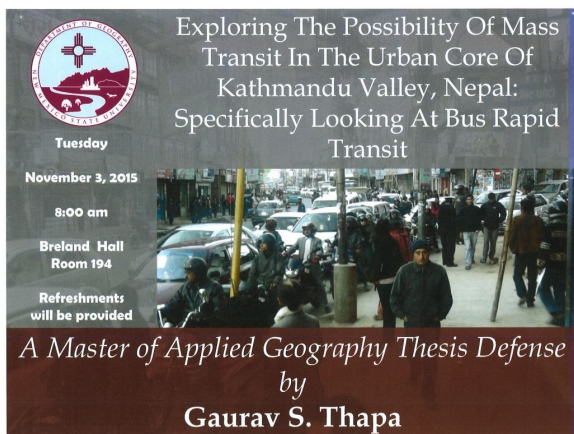
Christopher Robert Lee



Sarah McCord



Gaurav S. Thapa





Southwest Division of the Association of American Geographers

What is SWAAG?

The *Southwest Division of the Association of American Geographers* (SWAAG) is the regional division of the *Association of American Geographers* (AAG) that represents AAG members residing in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Established in 1949, SWAAG exists to further professional investigations in geography, to encourage the application of geographic findings in education, government, and business, and to improve and elevate the public image of geography. The Division supports these objectives by organizing an annual meeting (held in October), distributing an annual newsletter, publishing a peer-reviewed journal (*The Southwestern Geographer*), and supporting annual student paper and poster competitions and awards.

NMSU Geography Faculty and Students Attend SWAAG Conference in

San Antonio, Texas November 4th - 7th, 2015

Dr. Buenemann also organized the first ever SWAAG Geobowl coordinating 7 teams in head-to-head competition. Prizes were awarded for best team and for best individual performance. Team Roadrunner (NMSU) took second overall and undergrad Zach Tarasachi took second place in the individual competition.



Preparations for Geobowl competition above, at right Michaela Buenemann and Alberto Giordano tally scores, Below, Team Roadrunner prepares.



Southwestern Division of the Association of American Geographers (SWAAG) Conference, San Antonio, TX. November 4-7, 2015

This year's SWAAG conference was a huge success. Much of this is due to the organizational and motivational efforts of Dr. Michaela Buenemann, SWAAG vice Chair. She even ventured to drive a van transporting the largest contin-



gency of students that our department has ever been able to support. Conference T-shirts reminded everyone to keep calm and Geog on (sound familiar?) and the New Mexico influence was strong. The location was wonderful and allowed access to San Antonio's Riverwalk for dining and nightlife. Faculty had a chance to spend time with colleagues from UNM and numerous universities in Texas and Oklahoma.

The following people presented papers at the SWAAG Conference:

Michael DeMers. *Recoupling Theory and Application: Legitimizing U.S. Academic Applied Geography.*

___ DeMers. *A Quest-Based GIS Course: Preliminary Experiences.*

Rebecca Martin and Carol Campbell. *Detecting Bird Responses to Urbanization: Do Greater Roadrunners Tolerate Humans?*

Erich K. Druskat, Walter G Whitford, and Carol Campbell: *Population trends of American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) and White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) during an agricultural shift in the southern Rio Grande valley of New Mexico.*

Robert Sabie and Marcus Gay. *Estimating land cover in acequia-irrigated valleys using historical aerial imagery.*

Holly Baker and Michaela Buenemann. *Relationships between bush cover and soil erosion: an assessment using remote sensing, geographic information system, and crowd-sourcing technologies.*

John Wright. *Comparing Strategic and Opportunistic Approaches to Land Conservation: The Case Study of the New Mexico Land Conservancy.*

Nathan Lopez-Broody and Michaela Buenemann. *Spatio-temporal dynamics of woody plants and bighorn sheep in the San Andres Mountains, New Mexico, U.S.A.*

Gaurav Thapa. *Exploring the possibility of Mass Rapid Transit in the Urban Core of Kathmandu Valley, Nepal: Emphasis on Bus Rapid Transit.*

Christopher Brown, Raymond Carr, Madeline Schoderbek. *The Spatial Distribution of Assets and Challenges Driving the Quality of Life in Dona Ana County, New Mexico.*

Zach Taraschi, Jake Dialesandro and Michaela Buenemann. *Hot Pecans: Quantifying the Urban Heat Island Effect in the Mesilla Valley between 1986 and 2014.*

John Wright and Daniel Dugas. *El Cabron: The Spring Wind of the Southwest.*

Terry Huck Retirement Reception: *Good Luck Terry!* *We wish you all the best!*

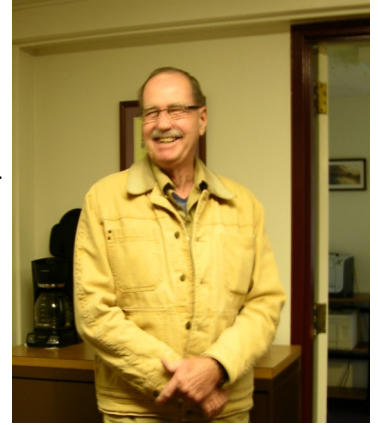
We held a “surprise” retirement reception for Terry Huck as he stopped in the office after completing his Final –final for Climatology on Wednesday, December 9, 2015.

“Teaching the Climatology Course in the Geography Department has been a privilege, a chance to give back what has been freely given to me by the Faculty and Staff.” The experience of over 15 years with the department, students, and NMSU has been a highlight in my life. I leave with mixed emotions of sadness, happiness and a sense of excitement for the future.

What can I say? - My head will always be in the clouds!”

With warm feelings for all,

Terry



Top Photo: Terry Huck, Surprised.



Photo left to right: Dan Dugas, Michaela Buenemann, Jack Wright, Terry Huck, Carol Campbell, Mike DeMers, Christopher Brown and Susan DeMar

Coffee With the Deans Wednesday, October 14th 2015 with Anthropology

The Geography Department was proud to host coffee with the Deans in in collaboration with Anthropology on October 14th in the SpARC Lab.



Mary Alice Scott, Chris Brown and Anne Hubbell



Dr. Brown, Nathan Brooks from History, Susan Coker and Dr. Dugas

Geography Graduate Student from Nepal Wins Prestigious Honor: College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Master Student Graduate Award

On 11 December 2015, Gaurav Thapa, a graduating MAG student in the Department, was recognized for academic excellence and awarded the **2015 Outstanding Master Student Graduate Award by the NMSU Alumni Association.**

This is a very competitive and prestigious award whereby the Alumni Association seeks to recognize students that truly are the very best in their areas of study, and this is a great and well-deserved honor for Gaurav. In the area of academics, Gaurav has distinguished himself as an excellent student, winning the Robert and Beth Czerniak Outstanding Geography Graduate Student Award and the James J. Parsons Award for Excellence in Thesis Research.

As capable as Gaurav has been as a student

and researcher, his leadership on campus is even more impressive; Gaurav's service as Secretary of the Nepalese Student Association is especially noteworthy. After the tragic earthquake that struck Nepal in the spring of 2015, Gaurav helped lead a campus-wide effort to raise approximately \$8,000 to assist those in

need in his homeland. In the process, Gaurav also was part of a delegation to Nepal that worked very hard to deliver these funds directly to the Nepalese



Dean Luis Reyes, Graduate School, Gaurav Thapa and President Garrey Carruthers

Prime Minister and the groups that were actively involved in the relief effort. In doing so, Gaurav made a concrete contribution to help those most in need and demonstrated exceptional character in doing so.

Bob Czerniak and Christopher Brown attended the awards ceremony, and we were very impressed by the truly outstanding students recognized; we were especially proud to see one of our own students win this award. We add our hearty congratulations to those extended by President Carruthers, Provost Howard, and Graduate Dean Reyes at the awards luncheon.

We wish Gaurav the very best as he returns to Nepal to apply his training and talents to transportation planning and disaster relief work in Katmandu.



Left: Joseph Kerski and Holly Baker talk GIS at SWAAG meeting in November

Right Maria Lane (UNM Chair) and Mike DeMers at SWAAG in November



NMSU Geographers Host Homecoming Event: October 20, 2015

Thank you alumni, for making 2015 Homecoming Mixer was a success! It was a wonderful evening to connect and relax. Original plans were to meet outside but weather happens even in the desert. Five Faculty and 33 Alumni and graduate students were in attendance including Elyn Clark, Dennis McCarville, Ruben Rodriguez, Steve Walker, Peg Gronemeyer, Mark Heil, Kirk Clifton, Lee Galt, Kelly Jerks, Michael Villa, Trent Botkin, Steve Meadows, Jennifer Godby, and Heather Glaze. Graduate students Jake Dielesandro, Nathan Brody, Rebecca Martin, Manny Lopez, and guest Jamie Aranda, Thanks for coming!



Elyn Clark and Jack Wright



Mike DeMers, Dennis McCarville



Jake Dialesandro, Manny Lopez



Steve Meadows, Jack Wright, Kirk Clifton, Lee Galt



In Memoriam – Pamela Pick

February 11, 1946- September 25, 2015

With a heavy heart, we share the very sad news of the passing of one of our very special students, Pamela Pick, who passed away at home with family on 25 September 2015 after a

long illness. Pam came to the program well after her wonderful kids were grown and on their own and earned a BS with high honors in Geography in 2003. A very strong hunger for knowledge and an insatiable curiosity about “all things Geographic” were Pam’s guiding principles. Many of us remember the intensity by which she approached her studies, her desire to stay connected with the department by attending many of our events years after she left the program, and her warm generosity in the many donations she made to the Department to help students that followed in her steps.

Several of the department faculty were fortunate to attend the beautiful memorial service that Pam’s husband of 50 years, Robert Pick, had for Pam, and we were able to celebrate Pam’s life with her friends and family. During the service, we learned of the very special place that Geography and the Department had in her life. Only recently did we learn that she valued this time of her life so much,

she secured a vanity license plate for her car that read GEOGR4. In preparation of the service, Bob Pick visited the Department to track down some key dates in Pam’s time with us. During Bob’s visit, he shared with us a special note that Pam kept



with her most treasured possessions in which Pam’s nomination for an award by her fellow students was noted. We have always held a warm spot in our hearts for Pam, and it was moving to know she held the Department in a similar place in her heart. We already miss Pam’s smile and energy; may she rest in peace.

Editors Note: Photographs provided by Robert Pick.

NMSU Geography Department Produces New t-shirt, Brochure, and Booklet—still available!

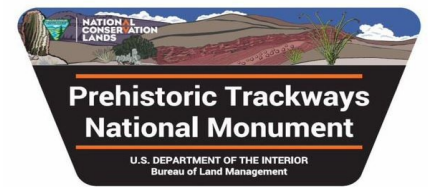
By Michaela Buenemann

The NMSU Geography Department created a new departmental brochure, booklet, and t-shirt in Fall semester. The brochure provides information on the department’s mission, vision, programs, resources, and faculty. The booklet provides information on knowledge and skills a geography student acquires, jobs available to geographers, and much more.

Both the brochure and booklet are available at no charge as digital files or hard copies. The t-shirt is available in women’s and men’s cuts, in dark gray, and features print on the front (Keep Calm and GEOG On) and back (Geographer & NMSU Geography Department logo). T-shirts may be purchased for \$10 per shirt. Questions about the t-shirt, booklet, and brochure may be directed to Dr. Michaela Buenemann.

NMSU Geography Celebrates GISday, November 18

For a second year, Dr. Campbell's U.S. National Parks Class created story maps of the local National Monuments. This year students worked with the local BLM office and local Trackways discoverer Jerry MacDonald to create story maps of the 100th National Monument in the system: the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument.



Dr. Campbell's Geog. 326 (U.S. National Parks) class of 2015 with Jerry MacDonald, Trackways discoverer.



Dr. Campbell's Geog 326 class of 2015 field trip to Prehistoric Trackways with BLM ranger; McKinney Briske at left.



Susan DeMar to receive NMSU's Ralph B. Crouch Award

Susan DeMar, administrative assistant at New Mexico State University, was selected as this year's recipient of the Ralph B. Crouch Memorial Award.

"When I first learned that I won, I was awed and at a loss for words," said DeMar, who works in the Department of Geography in the College of Arts and Sciences. "I want to express my sincerest gratitude to the committee and everyone who nominated me and selected me for this prestigious award."

NMSU graduate student Ronny Forney nominated DeMar for the honor, which was established 1988 to reward an NMSU employee based solely on the person's outstanding contributions to the university. Forney described how DeMar goes above and beyond her role as an administrative assistant. "Preparing for my thesis defense is a stressful time, but Ms. DeMar provided guidance, support and advice," wrote Forney, a master's student in applied geography. "I have seen Ms. DeMar provide the same care and commitment to other students – graduate and undergraduate."

DeMar has worked at NMSU for 11 years, since she moved to Las Cruces from Syracuse, New York.

She was the first woman in her family to earn a college degree.

She recently was honored at a city council meeting for her efforts to bring Amtrak service to the city. Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagishima, who presented DeMar with the Mayor's Citation for Community Service, also wrote a letter in support of her nomination for the Crouch Award.

Friends and relatives of the late Ralph B. Crouch established an endowment to honor the former mathematics department head and associate graduate school dean. The award, which alternates annually between classified employees and faculty or professional staff, includes a cash prize which changes from year to year.

"Receiving the Ralph B. Crouch award is a tremendous honor that I will carry with me throughout the rest of my career," DeMar said. "It will enable me to award two scholarships this year through the NMSU Women's Club in memory of my mom, Ruth Mary Webber."

Editors Note: by Writer: **Minerva Baumann**, 575-646-7566, mbauma46@nmsu.edu

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

<http://geography.nmsu.edu/>

NMSU DEPARTMENT OF
GEOGRAPHY LAUNCHES ITS OWN
FACEBOOK PAGE!

THE NMSU DEPARTMENT OF
GEOGRAPHY HEARTILY INVITES ALL
STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND
ALUMNI TO VISIT THE PAGE, CHECK
OUT WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH THE
DEPARTMENT, AND SHARE SOME
NEWS OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN
YOUR WORLD. WE HOPE TO SEE YOU
THERE!

[HTTP://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/
PAGES/NEW-MEXICO-STATE-
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5](http://www.facebook.com/pages/New-Mexico-State-University-Department-of-Geography/109764555756575)



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STAFF AND ALUMNI.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAROL
CAMPBELL UNLESS OTHERWISE
NOTED.

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Dear NMSU Geography Alums and Friends

You are part of a tradition of excellence in the Geography Department at NMSU. We did a study recently, and we were **very** impressed by the successful careers our alums have in the areas of land use planning, natural resource management, GIS analysis, remote sensing, academia, and other work involving geospatial applications. Many others have selflessly supported us over the years, driven by a personal love of geographic knowledge. We are so honored to have you as part of the NMSU Geography family.

Now, the question. Can you help us continue offering high quality geographic and geospatial education? Any amount will help.

Here's why. The State budget is being cut because of a drop in oil and gas revenues. Our Geography majors are feeling the pain as we struggle to cover the basic costs of providing them the kind of education you received.

The Department needs funds to help cover:

- Student Travel - This pays for student field work and travel to professional conferences where they present research papers;
- Software Licenses for GIS and Remote Sensing work;
- Continuing education and training for faculty and staff GIS&T; and
- A new or less-used department van - Our Chevy is now 20 years old and beat up. I'm sure some of you remember bouncing across the desert in that contraption.

Can you help? If you can, we've made it easy. Just go on-line to <http://geography.nmsu.edu/make-a-gift/>. We invite you to make a donation in any amount to help advance the work we do. Feel free to drop us a line anytime to learn more about how funds we raise are used.

Thanks in advance for lending a hand. The entire Geography Department sincerely appreciates it, especially those young people who will follow you into the workplace.

Christopher Brown
Department Head

