Welcome Back!

The 2015-16 school year has started and Murray Hall is filling up with new faces. New faculty and staff include:

**Emily Fekete** (PhD, Kansas, 2015) is the new Clinical Assistant Professor and Undergraduate Advisor. Her research interests are Economic Geography, Consumption, Social Media, and the Internet. She received her MA in geography at Kent State University and BAs in geography and history from the University of New Hampshire.

**Clay Barrett** (BS {Environmental Science}, 2004; MS {Geography}, 2015, both OSU), began supervising students for AAPG projects May 1st. In between degrees he managed a local specialty food store and started a family. In his free time he enjoys chopping wood and playing games with his son.

**COLLOQUIUM:** Monday, September 14, 2015 @ 3:30 PM.  
*Dr. David Parr,* Independent Geoanalyst, Metropolitan State University of Denver, will give a talk titled “Data Quality and the Crowd: VGI for mapping, social networking, and citizen science.” He will be discussing his work on VGI (Volunteered Geographic Information), a relatively new research area in geography, focusing on citizen scientist data contribution, quality, and implications. The presentation will be in Engineering North (EN) room 515.
New Students

**Brian Birchler** comes to us from Kansas City, Missouri. He graduated from Northwest Missouri State University with a BS in Geography and a BS in GIS in May 2015. His primary interests are in cultural/historical geography with an emphasis in GIS. He likes to watch and play soccer and go camping or hiking whenever possible.

**Anthony Pentimonti** earned his BS in Earth Science from Oregon State University in 2015. His research interests include natural and extracted resources, especially within arctic and mountainous regions. An article written about some of his previous field work can be found at: [http://ethosmagonline.com/the-winter-that-never-was](http://ethosmagonline.com/the-winter-that-never-was).

**Colton Flynn** is a first year PhD student who has research interests in the remote sensing of agriculture to improve agricultural production and promote sustainability. He got a BS in 2010 and an MA in Geography in 2013 at the University of Arkansas. Outside academia he trains for long distance triathlons; this past summer he completed a 100-mile triathlon.

**Gustavo Ovando** earned his MS in Geography from OSU in 2015, so he is not really new but is a new PhD student in the department. He is interested in the applications of GIS to solve transportation and resource management problems. He loves sports, especially rugby and college football.

Geography Mentors Program

This program, in its second year, allows undergraduate students to work closely with a selected faculty mentor on research. Students are selected through a competitive process and work with a faculty member on a specific research project. The students enroll for 3 credit hours in an independent study course in the fall semester, and the mentor and student then co-present the research at a nearby conference. The student performs the bulk of the presentation. The department covers the student’s registration fee, transportation (via OSU van), and hotel costs. This year two undergraduate geographers are involved:

**Emily Ellis**’ project for the Geography Mentor’s Program is “Assessing Vulnerable Populations Related to Tornado Siren Placement and Coverage in Stillwater, OK.” This project studies how well the current network of outdoor tornado sirens covers the city of Stillwater. It also focuses on what populations are and are not covered by the system. She will be presenting her results at the Applied Geography Conference in San Antonio, TX at the beginning of November and is working with Dr. Adam Mathews. Emily will receive her BS in Geography from OSU in December and plans to apply to the MS program. Her interests are GIS applications and natural resource management. In her free time she enjoys hiking, kayaking, volunteering for Camp Fire, and all OSU sports.

**Taylor Iberosil** earned is a junior Geography major at OSU and is working with Dr. Hanks in the Research Mentors program.
Resource Management Plan GIS

The Department of Geography welcomes the Resource Management Plan-Geographic Information System (RMP-GIS) Project this academic year, 2015-2016. The project involves creating and updating resource management plans as well as substantial GIS work (GPS data collection, GIS data management and analysis) for Oklahoma State Parks. The project is funded by the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and Drs. Adam Mathews and Tom Wikle now supervise the project.

Hung-Ling (Stella) Liu (Ph.D., Oklahoma State, 2012) and I-Chun (Nicky) Wu (Ph.D., Michigan State, 2014) are new Research Assistant Professors working on the project. Their interests are natural resource management, outdoor recreation and tourism, and GIS.

Additional personnel include Dr. Tannaz Soltani (Ph.D., Oklahoma State, 2015) a Post-Doctoral Fellow, and two GRAs who are pursuing MS degrees in Leisure Studies, Elliott Edens and Jake Holliday.
Faculty Projects

Geographers can do things that you will never imagine. Carlos Cordova with his Canadian-American-Jordanian team worked last May-June on unearthing more evidence of the presence of Homo erectus/H. heidelbergensis, or an early form of H. neanderthalensis, in the Azraq Oasis in Jordan. Multi-disciplinary research evidence shows the presence of a lake between 311,000 and 270,000 (interglacial MIS-9 and glacial MIS-8) sustaining a faunal assemblage that included elephant, lion, rhinoceros, equids and camelids—an interesting mix of African and Asian fauna. The hominins made tools out of the local flint outcrop and use them for butchering animals—proof of that will appear in a distinguished scientific journal.

Elephant tooth in the main excavation unit

Handaxe recovered through excavation

Reconstruction of the landscape around former Lake Azraq, around 270,000 years ago
Faculty Projects (cont.)

Dr. Brad Bay's work documenting historic barns was featured in the 2015 edition of *Oklahoma Agriculture*. His work, from 2009-2013, was funded by the Oklahoma State Preservation Office. At least five of the nearly 1,000 barns in the state registry have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Oklahoma A&M College Dairy Barn.

Dr. Bay's work was also featured in a recent story in the *Lawton Constitution* on August 18. This summer Dr. Bay agreed to be a co-coordinator with OU architect, Arn Henderson, for Oklahoma's 100 entries in the SAH (Society of Architectural Historians) Archipedia, an online encyclopedia of historic architecture (each U.S. state will have 100 entries). Also, he was recently invited to join, and accepted, a three-year term on the board of directors of the ISLPMC (International Society for Landscape, Place, and Material Culture).
Summer Travels

Jon Comer and Tom Wikle led a Study Abroad trip to Eastern Europe in May 2015 with OSU students Lela Berastequi, Nick Deyoe, Natalie Fieldsend, Keeley Heise, and Nguyen Le. Budapest, Kraków, Prague, and Vienna were the main destinations, with excursions to Auschwitz and the Wieliczka Salt Mine near Krakow and the Kutná Hora Silver mine near Prague. This was a working trip as the photo at bottom-right will attest.

Hoosier group leader? Jon at the Lennon Wall in Prague.

Admiring the Mozart statue in Vienna.

Tom takes flight at the Citadella in Budapest.

The rigors of international travel – searching for Wi-Fi signals in Vienna (L, C) and working in the mines (R).
Summer Travels (cont.)

Adam Mathews visited Stellenbosch University in Stellenbosch, Western Cape in mid-May. He worked with researchers in the Department of Viticulture and Oenology as well as the Department of Geography. The Department of Viticulture and Oenology maintains many vineyards that students can use as test sites for their research. Grapes are harvested and wine is made on campus. We are looking to continue to collaborate on UAV remote sensing applications, specifically focused on viticulture. Dr. Mathews gave a research talk that was well attended by academics, industry folks, and hobbyists. It was a fun and productive trip!
It’s Back to School time!

On Tuesday, August 11, faculty and staff posed for the traditional group photo.

On August 13, the annual Departmental Orientation meeting was held in the Murray Hall Parlor.

New Graduate students showing off the departmental “swag”

A room full of geographers

The Newsletter Editor thought it would take a bit longer for people to figure out the projection (Cassini) on the cover of the 2015-16 Graduate Program manual. Kudos to the first three respondents with the correct answer, all of whom replied within 10 minutes of the e-mail going out:
1) Colton Flynn, 2) Lauren Wood, 3) Ben Hemingway.
Professors “Drone” about Geography

On Tuesday, August 25, many faculty, staff, and students took turns promoting Geography and the Geospatial Sciences by staffing a display table on the library lawn with the department’s new drone. There were many student “fly-bys” as geographers handed out pamphlets and other swag to passers-by. Thanks to all who spent time promoting Geography at the table – the photos below capture only a handful of those who volunteered (namely, those who were there after 3:15).

Daniel Surach, Michael Larson, Amy Frazier, Jordan Brasher, Carlos Cordova, and Yun Zhao with the UAV

Michael works the “strip”

A mysterious alumnus photobombs my selfie
Summer Fun

Cartography Services does not rest, especially this past summer. Between working on a number of AAPGF-OSU GIS Consortium projects and roaming Western Oklahoma and the Panhandle collecting data for the SHPO-OLI project, the “Cart Crew” of Cartography Services kept themselves busy and productive.

Front: Stephanie Heald, Alex Comer, Lauren Wood.

In July, Adam Mathews and Jon Comer completed the newly-required OSU Precision Driving training. Why would they give up an entire day for this exciting, challenging, and educational experience? So they can transport OSU students in university vans to the upcoming joint SWAAG/Applied Geography Conferences in San Antonio the first week of November. Besides learning the art of the “shuffle steer” and how many people get killed on Texas roads every day*, they learned how to safely take selfies while driving, as evidenced at left.

* About 9.3 on average, or one every 2 hours and 34 minutes (2013 statistics), and November 7, 2000 was the last “deathless day” on Texas roads.
Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Sage Sheldon visited the Department last Friday, August 28. Sage Received her BS in Geography in 2005 and was a former student employee of Cartography Services.

She is currently working in OKC as a GIS Specialist. Pictured (from left to right), Michael Larson, Clay Barrett, and Sage Sheldon.

Upcoming Campus/Departmental Events

Monday, September 7 is a university holiday – no classes and no offices open.

Monday, September 14 – first colloquium of the year (see page 1).

Wednesday, September 16 will be the next departmental birthday gathering, at 2:30 PM in the break room, celebrating all September birthdays.

Monday, October 19 – another colloquium, speaker TBA.

Southwest Association of American Geographers (SWAAG) Meeting

SWAAG’s next annual meeting is 4-7 November 2015 in San Antonio, TX and is co-hosted by Texas State University and the University of Texas at San Antonio. This will be a special joint meeting with the Applied Geography Conference (AGC). The deadline to submit poster or paper presentations is 9 September 2015 at 5 PM CDT. The reduced conference registration rate ($75 for students, $135 for non-students) is available until 23 October 2015 after which point both rates increase by $10. Drs. Comer and Mathews already have a nearly-full OSU van of folks heading to “remember the Alamo!” so inquire soon if interested in traveling with us.