



President's Column

by Thomas A. Wikle



A few years ago I overheard someone describe a geography colleague with the words, “Oh, _____ is obsessed with travel. He lives from one trip to the next.” For years I’ve wondered if an obsession with travel, exploration, and

discovery is a peculiarity shared by most geographers—an ingredient of our “academic DNA.” Many college and university geography departments direct considerable resources to support fieldwork and travel through scholarships, domestic or international short courses, and longer study abroad opportunities. For many, travel is essential to research and to an even larger number of geographers travel is considered an element of personal and professional development. Our travel experiences enrich our lives, help inform what we teach, and enable us to serve as ambassadors to others.

In 2012 I team-taught a course called “Traveling and Telling: Mobility and the Art of the Narrative” with a colleague in the OSU English Department for 22 Oklahoma State students who traveled to Cambridge University in the UK. During the initial part of our course students learned about interpreting and critically analyzing landscape after reading papers such as D.W. Meinig’s “The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene.” During the second week students took side-trips to a place of their choosing in Europe and in the final week, returned to Cambridge to develop a narrative about their experiences that was shared with others. It was refreshing to see how students emerged with greater poise in writing about culture, place and process but also newfound confidence in navigating unfamiliar territory. For some, the course became a launching pad for subsequent travel and academic work.

Globalization, regional conflict, climate change, and other issues make it more important than ever to understand and appreciate diverse perspectives. The engagement possible through travel cannot be simulated in a classroom or laboratory. Unfortunately, the benefits and joy of travel are not universally appreciated—we must accept that some of our friends and neighbors live happy and productive lives without the need to travel. For our part we should do what we can to share our enthusiasm for learning about new places, cultures and environmental systems and accept and embrace our travel obsession.

Officer Elections

The GTU Executive Committee is pleased to announce the results from the recent election. Dr. James Lowry has been elected to another five-year term as Executive Secretary. Dr. Lowry serves as Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Geography at the University of New Orleans. Dr. Lowry previously served as GTU Second Vice President and Southwest Regional Councilor. Our new Junior Student Representative is Graciela Sandoval, a doctoral student at Texas State University. Graciela earned a BA in Spanish and Latin American Studies at UCLA and her MS in Interdisciplinary Science at Texas State. She is interested in health geography, cultural geography and race/ethnicity.

New from Regional Councilors

Teresa Bulman (Pacific Coast Regional Councilor) reports that geography at UCLA is currently undergoing strong growth within geography courses. In addition, the number of geography majors and minors continues to increase.

Lisa M. DeChano-Cook (East Lakes Regional Councilor): Over the past several years as regional councilor I have conducted a roundtable discussion about GTU at the East Lakes Regional Meeting. I



have had several good conversations with faculty advisors and students about different aspects of GTU through this forum. What has come out of these discussions has been very useful to me. One thing that troubles some GTU chapters is how to get students interested and involved in GTU. One suggestion from the roundtable discussions was to send a personal letter to students who have the eligibility requirements asking them to consider joining GTU, outlining the benefits of membership. Another was to have a cool, fun event for majors and minors at the beginning of the academic year, hosted by GTU. Yet another idea is to have current GTU members talk to classes about GTU, so they are introduced to the organization by a GTU student. I invite everyone to email me (lisa.dechano@wmich.edu) with your suggestions of getting students involved in GTU that I can share with others. One of the things that I have learned is that there are many different forms of GTU out there. Some chapters have formal meetings at least once a month; some chapters do service projects; some chapters have social events; some chapters meet only once during the academic year and this is their initiation. The one thing common among all chapters is that they are inducting the very best students in their department into GTU, which is the main focus of the organization.

Susy Ziegler (West Lakes Regional Councilor): The West Lakes Meeting of the AAG was held October 17–19, 2013 at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. A Gamma Theta Upsilon Roundtable was one of the sessions at the conference. Hosted by East Lakes Regional Councilor Lisa DeChano-Cook, Second Vice President Mike Longan, and West Lakes Regional Councilor Susy Ziegler, this panel was designed for anyone interested in learning more about Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU), the international Geography honorary society. Faculty and students were invited to share experiences, ideas, and issues with their current GTU affiliations. The panelists provided handouts on GTU membership, the

Visiting Geographic Scientist Program, and the new GTU student travel grants.

Historian's Column

by Dawn Drake

Among the materials I received when I was elected historian of Gamma Theta Upsilon was a copy of the Gamma Theta Upsilon Newsletter from 1975-76. In those days, the organization published a newsletter, once a school year. It was a booklet of approximately 50 pages that included letters from the officers, updates from the Alumni chapter, updates from individual chapters, and information about GTU chapters and regions. From time to time, in the next few issues of the GTU Quarterly News I hope to bring you some of the more interesting aspects of the newsletter as a look back into our past.



Dawn Drake

This issue, I have decided to look at some of the news reports submitted by chapters in 1975-76 to see what types of activities are chapters were engaging in almost 40 years ago. These reports included activities from 1974-5 as well as a listing of officers. Some of the officers were those from 1974-5 and some were the incoming officers for 1975-6. If I misidentify anything or anyone, I apologize. I hope you find this content interesting. Maybe it will even stimulate a few ideas for your own chapters in the future.

The first chapter I would like to highlight, in this trip down memory lane, is our very first chapter, Chapter Alpha, at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. In 1974-75, the chapter had been depleted of active members by graduation, but engaged in an ambitious recruiting campaign to initiate 25 new members. The chapter attributed its popularity to semi-annual field trips. In 1974-5, the chapter took students to the Covered Bridge Festival in Parke County, Indiana as well as to the



Illinois State Geographical Society's annual meeting. The chapter helped offset the costs of these activities through fundraisers like bake sales, managing the department coffee pot, and calendar sales.

Another chapter I would like to focus on in this segment is the Psi Chapter at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, North Dakota. In 1974-5, our very own AAG President, Dr. Julie Winkler, was the president of the Psi Chapter. Activities included a fall cook-out, numerous lectures related to geography, and an annual trip to the South Dakota State Geography Convention, where Dr. Winkler and her colleague, Jim Schothorst, won top honors in the College Geography Bowl and the University of North Dakota geographers won in a basketball tournament.

The University of Miami's Alpha Delta Chapter of GTU was also busy in 1974-5. The group participated in the running of the Seventh Race at Calder Race Course, presenting the trophy to race winner, River Lad and its jockey, Ken Le Blanc. In the spring, the chapter battled with the University of Miami's Department of Geology in an annual softball game, suffering a heartbreaking defeat in 10 innings.

I will conclude this trip down memory lane with a stop at one of Gamma Theta Upsilon's most active chapters, Beta Psi at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. 1974-5 was no exception to Beta Psi's history as an active and successful chapter. The chapter planned trips to the Kansas State University planetarium, the AAG meeting in Milwaukee, and the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain divisional meeting in Denver. The group organized several speakers, including a visit from Dr. Wilbur Zelinsky. The spring semester featured a Vernal Equinox celebration at the geodetic datum of North America, which included a camp-out.

I will stop our journey through the pages of GTU's 1975-6 newsletter here, for now. In future issues, I hope to travel through the adventures of more chapters. If you would like the history of your chapter included in a future column, please email me at ddrake4@missouriwestern.edu with pictures, or stories.

Update on the AAG/GTU Travel Award

Have we received your application for the new AAG/GTU travel award to support attendance at the AAG meeting in Tampa, Florida? Students who submit an application will be considered for a \$200 award. Preference will be given to students who are making a paper or poster presentation. Note that a limited number of travel awards are available. The deadline for applications is February 1, 2014. Information is available on the GTU website <http://www.gammathetaupsilon.org/travel-award-application.html>



Forthcoming articles in the *Geographical Bulletin* (November 2013, Volume 54, Number 3)

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Ryan Schleeter

Facebook as a Way of Life: Louis Wirth in the Social Network

Larissa Zip, Rebekah Parker and Elvin Wyly
Geography and the Emergence of Sustainability Science: Missed Opportunities and Enduring Possibilities

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Book Review

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