



**President's Column**  
by Thomas A. Wikle



This last month I had the pleasure of honor three long-time GTU members. Randy Bertolas was recognized for his years on the Executive Committee and two years as president of our organization, 2011 and 2012. Some of you know Steve Stevens who has provided outstanding service in our national office. I selected Steve this year as the recipient of the Presidential Citation Award. Finally, Michal LeVasseur has served GTU as 2<sup>nd</sup> VP, 1<sup>st</sup> VP, President and most recently at GTU's Comptroller. It was my great honor to represent the Executive Committee in presenting Michal with the Distinguished Service Award, GTU's highest honor. Below are brief statements that I read at the Executive Board's fall meeting in Memphis.



**Randy Bertolas, GTU President (2011-2012):** I'm pleased to recognize the outstanding leadership of Dr. Randy Bertolas who has served GTU as First Vice President, President and Past President. As

many of you know Randy's service extends from the campus level where he continues to serve as sponsor for Wayne State College's Pi Gamma Mu Social Sciences Honor Society, GTU's Lambda Zeta Chapter and the Explorer's Club which he founded. Randy is also well-known in the state through his leadership within Nebraska's Geographic Alliance.

The success of Randy's two years as international president is underscored by growth and stability within GTU. Randy leads by his own example. His wisdom, integrity, and sense of humor are ingredients that have helped advance GTU

over the last six years. The plaque being presented to Randy today recognizes his service as president in 2011 and 2012.

**Steve Steven, 2014 Presidential Citation Award:** This year's presidential citation award recognizes an individual whose work has been crucial to the growth, development and health of GTU. This person is among a handful of GTU volunteers whose efforts benefit every active chapter in our organization. A partial list of this person's work on behalf of GTU includes the processing of initiate report forms, the organization and maintenance of membership files and merchandise orders, and efforts to resolve chapter IRS issues. We're also grateful for this person's innovative work in designing and maintaining GTU's web-based chapter roll and database. Many of you know this person as the right hand to James in GTU's national office at the University of New Orleans. I'm very pleased to recognize Steve Stevens with the 2014 Presidential Citation Award.



**Michal LeVasseur, 2014 Distinguished Service Award** (with some words borrowed from the nomination letter written by Randy Bertolas): Dr. Michal LeVasseur's leadership and work on behalf of GTU spans

decades. Michal served a full 8-year succession term that included two years as International President in 1991 and 1992. She is the only current Executive Committee member to go through the eight years and, afterward, remain active on the GTU Executive Committee. Michal became GTU's comptroller at a time when the organization was struggling financially. As a result of her leadership and responsible stewardship, GTU's financial records and recordkeeping procedures have improved dramatically, contributing to the growth and



stability of GTU. Having served GTU, NGGE and other geography organizations for many years, Michael is a tireless advocate for geography. Her sustained efforts on behalf of GTU have touched the lives of geography students and others in important ways and for this reason GTU's Executive Committee honors her with the Distinguished Service Award.

### Chapter Activity Reports 2013-2014

by Michael Longan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Once again, Gamma Theta Upsilon chapters have reported on an amazing variety of activities. Of particular note were the many chapters participated in the "Textbooks for Ethiopia" project for which the Chi chapter at Oklahoma State University served as the principal collection site. Geography Bowls were held at Valparaiso University, Northwest Missouri State University, Wayne State College, the University of Toledo, and the University of Richmond. GTU chapters continue to be active in sponsoring Geography Awareness Week activities, spreading knowledge of geography to their campuses and communities. Chapters held workshops, colloquia, and hosted speakers as part of the Visiting Geographical Scientist program. Beta Xi at the University of Missouri for example held workshops on social media and professional futures, internships, and non-academic writing. Eta Lambda at Villanova University invited recent graduates to talk about their job searches and employment experiences. Lambda Upsilon at Grand Rapids Community College not only hosted a variety of speakers but has also posted videos of the lectures on You Tube. Chapters sponsored trips to conferences, day trips, and long distance field excursions. Delta Lambda at the University of South Alabama attended the AAG meeting in Tampa where they also found time to go to a hockey game and tour the Devil's Millhopper Geological State park. Theta Xi at West Virginia University traveled to Washington DC for a "day on the hill" and to visit National

Geographic. Several chapters contributed geographical expertise to serve their communities. Zeta Gamma at Jacksonville State University helped to monitor river water quality in partnership with a local organization. Zeta Theta at Northwest Missouri State collected food at their GeoBowl to donate to a local food bank. Theta Gamma at James Madison University helped to maintain a local elementary school's community garden. I hope that you'll read this year's chapter reports and be inspired to try some new things with your own chapter next year.

You can view this year's chapter reports as well as those from previous years on the GTU website <http://www.gammathetaupsilon.org/>.

### 2013-2014 GTU Chapter Awards

by Michael Longan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

This year seven chapters earned the Honors Chapter Award. The 2013-2014 Honors Chapters are:



Lambda Zeta, Wayne State College  
Zeta Xi University of Toledo  
Eta Chi, Northern Michigan University  
Beta Xi, University of Missouri  
Chi, Oklahoma State University  
Eta Lambda, Villanova University  
Beta Psi, Kansas State University

The Kappa Upsilon Chapter at Texas State University earned the first ever Presidential Chapter Award this year.

Congratulations to all chapter award winners. The criteria for the Honors Chapter Award and the Presidential Honors Chapter Award are available



on the Gamma Theta Epsilon website. Share the criteria with your chapter and use them to set goals for activities in 2014-2015.



Dawn Drake

### Historian's Column

by Dawn Drake

Just like many of you, the beginning of my semester brings many projects demanding my attention all at one time. One of those is this article. As I sat in my office, trying to come up for a theme, I started to wonder what was going on in GTU 30 years ago. I pulled out issues of the *Geographical Bulletin* from 1984. At that time annual chapter reports were printed in the journal. As I flipped through them, I thought looking back might spark ideas for your own GTU chapters in this new academic year.

Volume 25 was published in May 1984 and featured news from chapter activities from 1983. One interesting and notable activity was Gamma Xi at Elmhurst College's "ten best" presentations. Faculty and students were encouraged to put together their ten best slides for an audience. The chapter reported lots of oohs and aahs at the various images and locations. While many chapters today may not have an old school slide projector, this could still be an interesting activity to bring faculty and students together over the ten best photos in a PowerPoint.

In November 1984, Volume 26 of the *Geographical Bulletin* featured chapter news from the 1983-1984 school year. Some of the most interesting activities included Alpha Xi at Valparaiso University's spring initiation breakfast. In 1984 the chapter was sponsored by Dr. Alice Rechlin, for whom the Rechlin Scholarship is named. The breakfast itself was not what was notable as much as the message of the breakfast speaker, Reverend Dr. Bruce Rigdon, from McCormick Theological Seminary. The talk

warned of the dangers of increasing weaponry and the coming nuclear holocaust. The speaker stimulated a lively debate on the campus and in the local media for the rest of what would otherwise have been a dreary February in Indiana. It is always nice when geography can inspire conversation and debate.

Another interesting idea, presented in the 1984 chapter reports, came from Gamma Phi at Frostburg State College (now University). The chapter partnered with the Department of Geography at the State University of New York at Geneseo to sponsor an exchange field trip between the two groups. This was one of many interesting field trips that chapters engaged in 30 years ago.

Hopefully this trip down memory lane helped stimulate some new ideas or bring to mind some excellent memories. The Historian's Column is always looking for your chapter's own personal history, either ancient or recent, to share with others. If you have fodder for future columns, especially photographs, please email me at [ddrake4@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:ddrake4@missouriwestern.edu).

### 2014 Scholarship Award Winners

by Burrell Montz, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President



Burrell Montz

Congratulations to each of the Scholarship recipients for 2014. The applicant pool was very strong with each applicant having impressive academic records in addition to a clear passion for and commitment to Geography.

Some of this passion and commitment was shown through outreach and service activities while others demonstrate it through their research, internships and other academic endeavors. Because of this the Awards Committee had an extremely difficult task. These are the kinds of difficult tasks we like, however, as they illustrate the continuing strength of



Geography and the high quality students who make up the next generation of professional geographers. The scholarship recipients, each of whom received \$1,000, are:

*Buzzard Undergraduate Scholarship:*

Andrew Valenski, Mu Delta (Univ. of Richmond)

*Maxfield Scholarship:*

Ellen Heenan, Theta Kappa (Univ. of Oregon)

*Buzzard Graduate Scholarship:*

William Wetherholt Alpha Nu (Kansas State Univ.)

*Richason Scholarship:*

Amanda Sankey, Kappa Upsilon (Texas State Univ.)

*Rechlin Scholarship:*

Charles Hockett, Theta Kappa (Univ. of Oregon)

**Omega Omega Contributions to the GTU Education Fund**

Richard Earl, Omega Omega Chair

We are grateful to members of our Omega Omega (alumni) Chapter who contributed this year to GTU's Education Fund. The Education Funds supports five \$1,000 scholarships that are presented to GTU student members each year.

*Presidential Level (\$25)*

Richard Earl  
Janet Sachs

*Founders Level (\$50)*

Darrell Napton

*Heritage Level (\$100)*

Liza Raezer  
James Snaden  
Thomas Vaughn



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The process is simple, automatic, and costs you nothing! After you register 0.5% of the cost of each Amazon purchase you make will go to GTU's Education Fund!

**Longtime Chapter Sponsors**

Sponsors are faculty and staff members who work with student members of GTU at each of more than 150 college and universities with active chapters. Gamma Theta Upsilon would like to honor the extraordinary commitment of our senior chapter sponsors:

*15 Years of Service*

Jeffery Gritzner, University of Montana

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