



NEWSLETTER OF THE UBC GEOGRAPHY COMMUNITY

Department of Geography
The University of British Columbia

September 2005

Virtual Communities and Wendell Barry

By: Graeme Wynn

We hear a lot these days about the ways in which the Internet is changing peoples' lives, about how information is available anywhere anytime, about how email and instant messaging (and other communications media) have "wiped Geography off the map" by allowing effectively instantaneous and costless exchanges of ideas and information, and about the potential for political revolution inherent in a "networked society". This is all very interesting. Many of the arguments are given some substance by everyday experience: I sometimes feel that I know more about what is going on in the universities of New Zealand and Ontario than in those of British Columbia. But many of the larger claims about transformation, based upon such observations, remain unproven. Some of them are hotly debated. In Prometheus Wired, a recent book from UBC Press, for example, Darrin Barney argues that far from returning power to the people, networked societies reveal many of the worst features of industrial capitalism and reduce rather than enhance political freedom through their capacities for surveillance and control. I also worry about smaller scale claims for the new media, and particularly the sense that the local is no longer of much importance in a wired world. Here I guess I share with the Kentucky farmer, poet, essayist and novelist Wendell Berry the strong sense that place matters and that knowing where you are is an essential part of understanding who you are. And thus this newsletter. As the Department has

expanded in recent years faculty and graduate student numbers have never been higher and undergraduate enrollments have edged upward as the university has grown and our international connections (facilitated by email, jet planes and research monies) have increased, there has been less time to tend to our local space. Indeed, these developments have re-inforced one another: more people, more activity, less time cumulate and translate into less familiarity which makes it harder, in turn, to find connections. In the belief that our "fullest responsibility has to be exercised at home," and that achieving this requires an enlargement of knowledge about and affection for who and what is here, this newsletter will offer a monthly digest of information about people and activities associated with the department. Suggestions about contributions (so long as they are short) are welcome, as are pointers to writings or developments that should be of interest to this community of geographers. In that vein, if you don't know of Wendell Berry, use the Internet to read "Field Observations: An Interview with Wendell Berry" by Jordan Fisher-Smith at http://arts.envirolink.org/interviews_and_conversations/WendellBerry.html and think about its relevance to all of the above.

IN THIS ISSUE

Newsletter welcome	Page 1
J. Cheung - Graduate Secretary	Page 2
New Graduate Students	Page 3-6
Welcome Back Gatherings	Page 7
Trudeau Scholarship	Page 7
Edgington in Japan	Page 8
Nature/History/Society Talks	Page 8
Message from Editor	Page 8

Geography Department Graduate Secretary Junnie Cheung

By: Jennifer Hamilton

This fall twenty five new graduate students will be joining the geography department, making the total one hundred and ten. Junnie Cheung the department graduate secretary has been working diligently to ensure all goes smoothly for one of the largest groups of graduate students the department has ever accepted. From dealing with personal inquires regarding admissions to coordinating assignments for teaching assistants, her job can be demanding at this time of year.

While attending Prince of Wales Secondary School, Junnie was captivated by a physical geography course. Mr. Thomas Harapnuick, Junnie's high school geography teacher explained issues of sustainability, climate and the formation of land masses using props and visuals. Junnie explains that it was this method of teaching that helped her to understand dynamic earth process and enticed her to major in geography. Junnie graduated from UBC in May 2001 with a BSc. in physical geography.

"The faculty at UBC Geography took me many steps further from introductory geography". As a student in the department she was employed in the Geographical Information Center as well as working with the K-12 outreach program. Approaching graduation, she applied for the project web secretary position in the main office. She was hired in 2001 and has been a part of the department for the last four years. In November 2004 she was promoted to the graduate secretary position. Taking on this position was exciting for Junnie; it allowed her to meet new people in the faculty of graduate studies as well as the graduate students in the department.



The graduate secretary position is comprehensive in that it deals with all aspects of the graduate program. Junnie is responsible for developing and streamlining various departmental procedures for admissions, records, registration, academic progress, graduation and awards. Junnie acts as the first point of contact and provides advice to prospective and current graduate students. She manages and administers the department's online application system and application review processes. It is Junnie's responsibility to maintain records for the grad students and to determine the eligibility of applicants, registration conduct and student academic progress. In addition, Junnie is the administrative liaison for the department with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and must ensure that graduate students and supervisors are aware of the Faculty of Graduate Studies policies, requirements and deadlines. Furthermore, Junnie coordinates Spring Review / Spring Symposium and other events for the graduate students through out the year.

Junnie's explains there are many stages and policies to work through in her position and it is very important to make sure everything is done correctly. "There are a lot of deadlines to meet and many steps; I enjoy the thinking process behind everything, problem solving and helping people". Junnie feels that the most difficult aspect of the job is not having the power to give every applicant the opportunity to study at UBC. "It is difficult not to give everyone what they deserve". There were over one hundred and twenty five applicants for admissions to the graduate program last year. Only twenty were accepted. Junnie explained that it was very difficult to send out one hundred rejection letters to so many bright people.

On a personal note, Junnie has been living in Vancouver since the age of ten. When she is not working she enjoys music and riding her bicycle. Music has been a huge part of her life from lessons on the classical piano to saxophone player in the high school band. Junnie explained that she never really enjoyed playing the piano however she has recently found a new interest in playing the drums and spends most of her free time creating new rhythms. Being a geographer has also inspired her to visit places around the world. She has spent time in Japan, China, Australia, the United States and Thailand. She hopes that her next adventure is backpacking with her two younger sisters through Europe.

New Graduate Students

Thank you to all those new graduate students who submitted bios. Expect to see more bios in future issues of GEOG @ UBC

Alejandro Cervantes Larios - MSc Supervisor – Klinkenberg

I was born in the city of Puebla, 150 Km East of Mexico City. I have lived in Mexico City almost all my life. I have a BSc in Systems Engineering / Computer Science. Before arriving in Canada, I worked for 4 years in different consulting firms and have been working in the Department of Geography since January. Currently, I am working in a study that analyses the use of GIS for Critical Infrastructure Protection and Disaster Management in different organizations in B.C. My interests are in the field of GIS and spatial analysis, and its application to social phenomena. I like to hike, jog and play soccer. I love to eat and cook. I like Spanish/Latin American literature and I also enjoy reading about the history of science and mathematics.



Alejandro Cervantes Larios, Brian Klinkenberg and Ruben Santos Alonso

Amy Thai - MSc Supervisor – McKendry

I am a new MSc student, focusing on air pollution. I recently completed my BSc in Environmental Sciences at UBC. Being born and raised in Mississauga, Ontario, there was no way I was leaving beautiful Vancouver. I love riding my bike everywhere: you may see my trusty steed parked outside with Gary the pink dragon

horn. Look out for the wacko in a chicken suit during Critical Mass rides. I also love eating and cooking good vegetarian food, playing outside, hiking, rollerblading, photography, reading, and Nintendo.



Sarah Roberts and Amy Thai

Graham McIntyre - MA Supervisor – Buzzelli

I graduated from U.B.C. in 2004 with a major in Geography. I'm now in the program after a year-long hiatus, this time as a graduate student. My research interests include GIS, water quality, and water management. When I'm not on campus, I generally spend my time running, hiking, weight-lifting, swimming, and playing the odd round of mini-golf. When I am on campus, I'm usually reading in a park or glued to a computer screen.



Emily Davis, John Thistle and Kristin Olson

Sue Moccia - MA
Supervisor – Bakker

Hola, me llamo Sue Moccia. I recently returned from South America after a very profound 5 months exploring the West Coast of the continent, from Patagonia to Ecuador and many places in between. Here at UBC I am exploring questions dealing with water management and privatization issues in South America. Like most incoming students I have yet to decipher exactly what my project will be but I do know that I have a strong interest in water governance and alternatives to managing water supply in the Andean region of Peru and Bolivia. I am not entirely new to UBC or Vancouver. I completed my B.A in International Relations at UBC, after moving to this incredible province 5 years ago from Ottawa. It was my introduction to the Coastal Mountains, living in Whistler, that has left me in awe ever since.



Sue Moccia and Jeffery Phillips

Ted Rutland - PhD
Supervisor – Barnes/Wyly

Like many, it seems, my path to graduate studies in geography was a winding one. I studied commerce at Mount Allison University, aspiring for unknown reasons to become a banker or something like that. This aspiration faded (thankfully) along with my clean and tidy life plan. I spent the next four years wandering: researching for an environmental organization in California, taking care of animals and soil fertility on organic farms in Europe and working with

cooperative farms in Nicaragua, among other projects. Last fall, I began graduate studies in international development at Dalhousie University, but soon found my interests migrating to geography. I wrote my master's thesis on personal identity and space, drawing heavily on the work of Michel de Certeau. I am interested in geographic thought, continental philosophy (although I am a "hack" when it comes to philosophy), and particularly the geography of small cities. Here at UBC, I will be working with Trevor Barnes to maneuver my three interests into a peaceful coexistence.



Russell Smith, Carlos Silva and Jed Cochrane

Sara Koopman - PhD
Supervisor – Sundberg/Gregory

I will be looking at how we imagine and create spaces of terror and spaces of peace, and in particular U.S. imaginaries of Colombia and of Colombian peace communities. I did my Masters in Women's Studies here at UBC. My final paper examines how white middle class women can and do use our historical social construction as benevolent helpers in our work as anti-imperialist activists, in particular in the movement to close the School of the Americas. I have worked for twelve years as a Spanish interpreter and translator, primarily in Seattle. In '93 I graduated in Anthropology from Swarthmore College. I am a long time salsa dancer and a recent tango fanatic.

Simon Springer - PhD Supervisor - LeBillon

Although I was born in Manitoba, I have spent most of my life in British Columbia. I did my undergrad in the Geography Program at UNBC in Prince George. Having lived in Prince George for 17 years I decided to expand my horizons and pursue the rest of my education elsewhere (read: I was tired of drowning in the sea of trees day after day and desperately needed out). I wound up in the foreign land of Ontario at Queen's University for my Master's, where I worked in the Department of Geography under the supervision of Dr. Barry Riddell. Clearly unable to cope with the exoticism of Kingston, I stayed for only one year before moving on to the much more familiar Cambodia. I spent the majority of the second year of my MA programme in Phnom Penh and Pursat, Cambodia conducting research for my project entitled "Cambodia's Fractured Crucible: Democratic Development, Political Violence and the Contestation of Public Space". BC eventually called me home, and here I am at UBC. I am extremely excited to be working with Dr. Le Billon for my doctoral work, in which I plan to continue my exploration of Cambodia's geographies of violence.



Ted Rutland and Elisa Scordo

Elisa Scordo - MSc Supervisor – Moore

Originating from Kamloops, BC, I joined the UBC Geography Department to pursue a

masters program in Hydrology. I first became interested in hydrology while completing a degree in Natural Resource Science at University College of the Cariboo. Since completing my degree, I have worked as a Reclamation Scientist for an oil sands company in Fort McMurray, Alberta. Recently, I returned from a 3 month volunteer position in Tanzania, Africa, where I had the opportunity to organize HIV/AIDS education programs for youth and local women groups. I hope to one day use my understanding of hydrological processes to assist with international development issues. My general interests are travel, triathlon, cross country skiing, mountain biking and snowboarding.



Bonnie Smith, David Luzi, Josh Caulkins and Nira Salant

Ashley Horne – MSc Supervisor - Church

I'm a first year MSc student in fluvial geomorphology. I recently completed my BSc in Geography at this department. My research has taken me to the sand-bed reach of the Fraser River where I've investigated bedform characteristics and migration in the North Arm. I'll be traveling farther upstream to the gravel reach for my Master's research, where I will study spawning gravels. Originally from Victoria, I now call Vancouver home. In my spare time I like to listen to music, be outside, go on road trips, and knit.



Francois Bertand, Luna Vives Gonzalez, Shane McCloskey and Rebecca Klady

Nira Salant PhD **Supervisor – Hassan/Moore**

I was born and raised in Newton, Massachusetts, the youngest of three. My parents and siblings were all born in South Africa. I studied environmental biology as an undergraduate at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire. I stayed at Dartmouth to write my master's, for which I studied sediment dynamics in flow-regulated rivers and the impact on aquatic ecosystems. My research interests broadly include fluvial geomorphology and ecology, specifically sediment transport and sedimentation due to human activities and the interaction between geomorphic and ecological processes. Childhood through high school, I ran cross-country, played soccer, ice hockey, and ultimate frisbee. Since college, I've focused most of energy on outdoor activities - primarily rock climbing, as well as hiking, road biking, and trail running. I also swim and practice yoga. I love to cook, garden, and draw when I have the time.

Bill Magruder – MA **Supervisor - Kuus**

I'm from the East Coast of the U.S. (Connecticut), and I did my undergraduate degree in German Studies at Bard College in upstate New York. My undergraduate thesis dealt with how National Socialist ideology was reflected in German children's literature from 1933-1945. I spent the past year

teaching English at the University of Greifswald in northeastern Germany and traveling around Europe. My academic interest is in the space of the city of Berlin, Germany, and how it has been formed and changed by different ideologies over the course of the 20th century. I'm also interested in German nationalism as well as immigrants in Germany and the spaces that they occupy. My hobbies include reading, bike riding, watching movies and especially seeing new places.



Graham McIntyre and Tyler Pearce

Tyler Pearce – PhD **Supervisor - Wylly**

I come to geography by way of an undergraduate degree in Women's Studies, and a master's in Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning from OISE/UT. My intellectual journey and activist orientation is one of many surprises, but this is best expanded on in conversation. Recent "activism" involves editing and/or copy editing for Life Rattle, a small press based in Toronto which publishes largely non-fiction stories by folks under-represented in the mainstream publishing world and so-called non-writers. I love listening to people's stories, and have been teased for what is my personal cliché: "You should write about that! You should *totally* write about that." I am interested in the ways colonial practices shape Canadian urban space, specifically in terms of inner city restructuring in its various guises since the 1950s. My study focuses on Winnipeg.

Welcome Back Gathering

On September 7th 2005, Faculty, emeriti, post-docs, graduate students and staff were invited to congregate in Thea's Lounge in the Graduate Centre to inaugurate a new and exciting academic year. There was a wonderful array of food and drink, and the event was a great way to bring the department together early in the term. We would like to thank Sandy Lapsky for organizing the event.



Simon Springer, Marnie Springer, Luna Vives Gonzalez, Paul Cordy and Chris Borstad

Aliette Frank Takes Trudeau Scholarship



Aliette shown here in Africa

Graduate student Aliette Frank supervised by John Robinson was awarded a Trudeau Foundation scholarship to support her doctoral study. Frank has a long history of active involvement in research projects which include studying climate change in Alaska and eco-tourism in New Zealand. However writing and storytelling are now her primary focus. She intends to combine storytelling with quantitative technical discourse for the project she's undertaking for her PhD in human geography.

Welcome Back BBQ and Potluck

On Friday September 9th, 2005 the graduate student's social committee invited faculty, emeriti, post-docs, graduate students and staff to the welcome back barbeque at the Brockton Oval Cricket Club in Stanley Park. The annual barbeque is a potluck although the department contributed veggie and meat burgers, buns, fixings and drinks.

Edgington In Japan

By: *David W. Edgington*



Associate Professor David W. Edgington spent his 2004-5 sabbatical at Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan. He is seen here on a site visit to one of the many picturesque villages surrounding the city. "Kyoto has a 1,400 year history" he said. "I want to return here with UBC geography students, not just to visit historic buildings, temples and shrines, but also to learn about modern Japan and to observe dynamic commercial cities near-by, such as Osaka and Kobe". During his sojourn in Japan, Edgington worked on a book-length manuscript examining the rebuilding of Kobe and its port after the massive earthquake that devastated that city during 1995. "I was impressed by the complexity of the reconstruction task. There are many parallels to what has been happening recently in Louisiana and New Orleans after hurricane Katrina. The geography of the earthquake disaster affected the recovery of the Kobe area, and it took a full 10-year period to restore shattered and burnt-out local

neighbourhoods as well as implement an economic recovery plan. Conflict occurred between the local community and the planners over how to rebuild and with the distribution of government funding. I expect similar controversies will occur in the rebuilding of New Orleans". Edgington's second research project was funded by the Japan Foundation. This allowed him to study the growth of foreign workers in Japan and the various services provided to them by local governments.

NATURE / HISTORY / SOCIETY TALKS

Nature/History/Society is an Interdisciplinary Group funded by Green College and convened by Graeme Wynn. Its monthly meetings offer lectures on a wide range of topics of broad interest to those concerned about human relations with the earth, especially but not exclusively in the past.

Upcoming speakers include:

October 20th, *Dr Brian Donahue*, Brandeis University,

"Husbandry was Once a Sacred Art': Environmental History and the Future of Conservation."

Lessons from the history of New England farming and forests, and in particular from recent work on colonial Concord, applied to modern land conservation and stewardship strategies

Venue: TBA

November 17th, *Dr Brett Walker*, Montana State University, Bozeman

"Sanemori's Revenge: Insect Technologies, Eco-System Accidents, and Environmental History in Japan."

Venue: Green College Coach House, 5:00-6:15pm .

A Message from the Editor

GEOG @ UBC would like to encourage all faculty, staff and graduate students to participate in the newsletter. Send stories, news, ideas, photos and new books to Graeme Wynn (wynn@geog.ubc.ca) or Jennifer Hamilton (jhamilt@geog.ubc.ca). Thank you to everyone who helped create the first volume of GEOG@UBC.