

# Geography News

2003

Welcome to another edition of the Rutgers Geography Department newsletter. An active fall semester is in the books and we have begun what is bound to be a rewarding spring term.

The past year has been a good one for Rutgers Geography. We continue to attract record numbers of students to our courses, and by graduation time last spring had a record 85 majors. As is the case each year, this fall we welcomed an excellent group of new graduate students, joining an exceptional cadre of students already in our midst. As always, our faculty are remarkably active. Their leadership and activities within the University and the discipline are impressive, and the level of scholarship exceptional.

This fall we welcomed back Rick Schroeder from his year at Stanford. I am so pleased that Rick has assumed the graduate directorship. I am equally thrilled that arrangements were completed this past summer so that Robin Leichenko and Kevin St. Martin now have 100% of their lines in Geography. Congratulations to Peter Wacker upon his retirement from the department. This past November, we had a tremendously enjoyable seminar and dinner celebrating this occasion.

Everyone was sorry to see Mike Medler and Elvin Wylly leave the faculty last spring. They made important contributions to the program and will be missed. Best of luck to each of them at their new universities. We continue to actively lobby for new faculty lines, and are well positioned to add to our numbers once better economic days arrive in New Jersey and at Rutgers.

There is much to look forward to this spring. Our weekly seminar and brown bag series will continue, and many of us will be heading to Cajun country for the AAG meeting. Rick, Kevin and graduate student Kate Albert have organized an exciting conference for late March, entitled "Political Ecology at Home". Check the backpage of this newsletter and on our website for more information. We are grateful to Mark MaGrann (RU Geography '72) for his generous contribution to the John E. Brush Fund, a portion of which will be used to support this and future conferences!

This semester completes my second three-year term as department chair. My gratitude to each of you for your support over these six years. Thanks especially to Elaine and Betty Ann, who as most know, really run things around here! Everyone reading this newsletter shares credit for making the departmental environment so stimulating and collegial. It is your interest in Rutgers Geography that makes great things happen here.

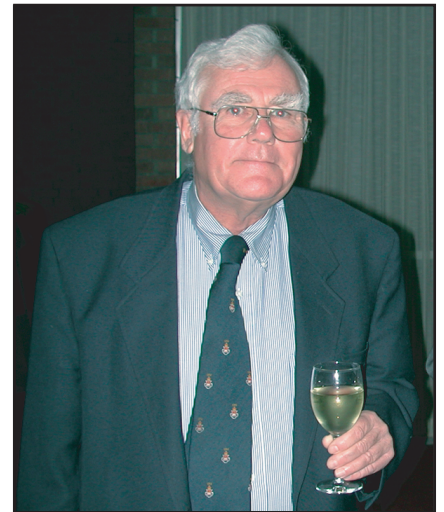
Read on, and learn more about the diverse activities of our faculty, students and staff. And please don't be shy about letting us know of your recent interests and accomplishments.

All the best.  
Dave Robinson  
Chair

**The Changing Landscape of  
New Brunswick**  
Historical photos and maps  
<http://oldnewbrunswick.rutgers.edu>

## Geographers Toast Peter O. Wacker

The Geography Department organized a celebration on November 22, 2002 to honor Peter Wacker, who retired after 38 in the department. The afternoon symposium featured presentations by: Ronald Becker, Special Collections Librarian, Rutgers Libraries; Howard Green, NJ Historical Commission; Richard Hunter President, Hunter Research; Maxine Lurie, Seton Hall University; and David Robinson, Rutgers University (see photo on pg 5).



The symposium was followed by a dinner at Neilson Dining Hall, where many people toasted Peter and he was presented with a clock as a token of appreciation. One of the evening's highlights was a presentation put together by people at Hunter Research. They selected images and experiences from Peter's life to fill out the 15 page form that is used to nominate buildings for the National Register of Historic Places.

Peter's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places can be viewed in the digital version of this newsletter on the geography webpage:

<http://geography.rutgers.edu>

## News from the Graduate Program

The Graduate Program began the year with a change in directorship, as Briavel Holcomb passed the mantle to Rick Schroeder who will serve as director for a three-year period. Coming off a sabbatical year spent as Visiting Scholar at Stanford University's Center for African Studies, Rick's initial task was to welcome a new cohort of 12 students who joined the program in the fall. Among the new group were three students with research interests in environmental geography, two urban/economic, two cultural, two working primarily in geographic techniques, and one each studying physical geography, hazards and development. The group's regional specialties include Korea, the Caribbean, West Africa, the Mediterranean, and northern Europe. Three members of the incoming group are international students (two from S. Korea and one from the UK). Four enter at the Master's level and eight are either beginning or advanced PhD students.

RAGGS members took new students on a canoe trip and hosted a barbecue as part of their orientation to the department and the State. The new year was also marked by a convocation held in Lucy Stone Hall. Short talks on the state of the program and the discipline writ-large were given by Rick Schroeder (for the grad program), Dave Robinson (for the department) and Mark Pendas (for the graduate students). This was followed by a pool-side barbecue at the Robinson's, which brought out many of the growing number of geography kids (children of faculty, staff, and students).



Hans Lechner, Gennadi Poberezhny, Gwangyong Choi, Linda Fair, Bob Donovan, and John Wing represented Rutgers in the Middle States Geography Bowl.

Rutgers students once again stole the show at the Middle States Division of the AAG's annual meeting, held this year at Montclair State University. The Rutgers team won the Geography Bowl for the second year running, with Gennadi Poberezhny winning top individual honors. In addition, Mark Pendas won the honor of best student paper at the meeting.

Congratulations are also in order to Doctors Noriko Ishiyama and Melina Patterson, who successfully defended their dissertations over the summer, and to Master's degree candidates Abdou Aziz Jeng, Jojo Hardoy, Kavitha Ramsamy, Sam Hanes, Nicole Davi, Josh Halofsky, Jun Ren, and Raysa Martinez, who completed all the requirements for their respective degrees.

The Graduate Program lost three members of its faculty this year: both Norb Psuty (Coastal and Marine Sciences) and Peter Wacker (Historical Geography) opted for retirement, and Elvin Wyly (Urban/social theory) took advantage of an excellent job offer from the Geography Program, University of British Columbia.

Fortunately, some of this loss was offset by the recruitment of three new graduate faculty members. We were joined by Bonnie McCay (Human Ecology/Anthropology), Edward Ramsamy (Africana Studies/Planning) and Roger Balm (as an associate member from Geography).

Spring 2003 brings with it two new initiatives sponsored by the graduate program. Rick Schroeder, Kevin St. Martin, and PhD candidate, Kate Albert have organized a national conference around the theme, "Political Ecology at Home." A dozen scholars working on a wide range of political ecological issues set in North America will present their research in a day-long event to be held on Douglass Campus at Rutgers' University Inn on Saturday, March 29 (see details on the back page). The conference is funded by a generous donation from Mark MaGrann (RU Geography '72), and matching donations from the Faculty of Arts and Science Dean's office, the Graduate School-New Brunswick, and the Human Ecology program.

A second project, also funded by the Graduate School, will involve the development of a special department-wide training module devoted to "Progressive Pedagogies in Geography." Rick Schroeder will be working with PhD student, Wendy Mitteager, who has been appointed head TA, to gather information on "best practices" employed by the program's faculty and graduate instructors. Her findings will be presented in the department's spring speaker series. Wendy will also be compiling an annotated list of appropriate web-based instructional materials in support of this effort.



**Rick Schroeder**  
Graduate Director



## People, Places, & Patterns

**Roger Balm** was awarded the 2002 McColl Fellowship by the American Geographical Society that enabled him to spend three weeks in May at Machu Picchu, Peru reconstructing the first photographs taken of the site. Roger used an original 1911 camera and tripod for this project, on loan from the collection of the George Eastman House, Museum of Photography and Film (Rochester, New York). Preliminary results of the work were presented in October at the 2002 annual meeting of the Society for the History of Discoveries in Guadalajara, Mexico, with more detailed write-ups now in progress. Following the fieldwork in South America he found barely enough time to do the laundry back in New Jersey before flying to Piraeus, Greece to join the University of Pittsburgh's Semester-at-Sea ship *World Renaissance*. June through August was spent teaching two courses (in art history and anthropology) aboard the ship on its European itinerary (Greece, Spain, Ireland, Norway, Russia, Poland, Belgium, Italy and Croatia). He found that teaching class at 7:45 AM off the coast of France in a near gale with the students in their

pajamas popping Dramamine was an excellent character-building exercise, but not one to be repeated too often. Closer to home, Roger received a course-release grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, through the Zimmerli Museum at Rutgers, that enabled him to further develop his course "Geographic Information in the Visual Arts" by integrating the Zimmerli's collection of Soviet non-conformist art into his syllabus. This upper-level seminar attracted some terrific students during the fall semester, from both Geography and the Mason Gross School of the Arts.

**Briavel Holcomb** "retired" from graduate program directorship and spent last summer voyaging with Roger, teaching *women and social change in Europe* and a course on tourism. She also went to Guadalajara to speak on artists' roles in touristic discovery of the Hudson Valley - an adaptation of the paper she did for the Mellon Colloquium at the Zimmerli. She is enjoying playing granny to Sylvan who was one year old in December.

**Robert Hordon** writes: Is urban/surburban sprawl causing a decline in regional ground water levels above and beyond climatic factors such as the recent drought? R.M. Hordon has added this issue to his research agenda.

In a Seminar on Ground Water Issues in Hunterdon County held in October, 2002 in Flemington, the issue was discussed by R.M. Hordon and other ground-water hydrologists. Hunterdon County officials were particularly concerned about this issue as the county is 90% dependent on ground water and is experiencing enormous pressures for growth. As impervious cover increases as a consequence of development, infiltration opportunities are reduced and ground-water recharge is diminished.

Runoff from impervious surfaces is directed to streams which transport the water out of the county to either the lower Raritan or Delaware basins rather than recharge local aquifers. The issue is expected to get

worse unless additional recharge opportunities are provided for new developments. Some examples of these enhanced recharge opportunities include roof drains leading into dry wells and detention/retention ponds being sited in areas of better infiltration.

**Robin Leichenko** writes: One of the major changes for me this year is that my faculty line at Rutgers became full-time in Geography. Prior to this year, I had a joint faculty appointment between Geography and the Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers. While I miss my wonderful colleagues at CUPR, I am very pleased by this shift because it has allowed me to focus my teaching efforts on improvement of the undergraduate and graduate programs in our department.

In the area of research, I have been focusing my efforts over the past year on the execution of several projects. These include a study of the impacts of international trade on employment and income inequality across U.S. regions (funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture), and two large, international collaborative studies of the effects of economic globalization on rural vulnerability to climate change, one in India (funded by Canadian International Development Agency and the Norwegian Development Agency) and one in southern Africa (funded by World Bank). Julie Silva, a Rutgers PhD student is working with me on both the USDA project and the southern Africa project. She discusses her recent research visit to Mozambique in a separate article in this newsletter. Adam Diamond, also a Rutgers PhD student, is working with me on the India study.

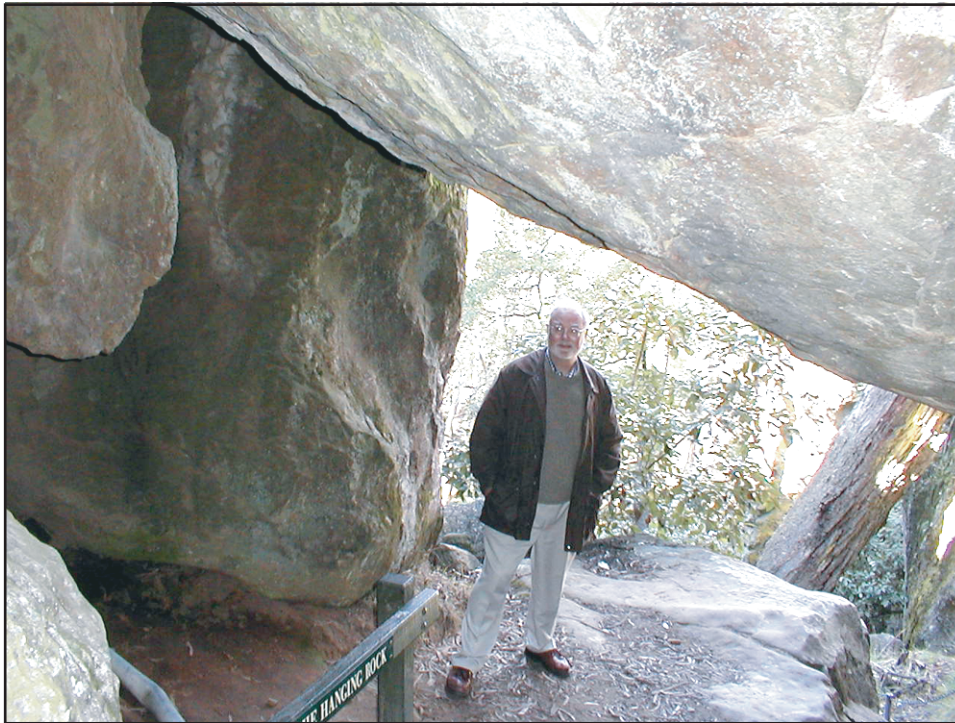
I have been awarded a Fulbright Research Award for study in Norway during Spring semester, 2004. My work in Norway will entail a study of the determinants of regional, agricultural vulnerability to climate change.

Finally, on the home front, my husband Chris and I are pleased to announce the birth of our second son, Charles. Charlie was born on June 11, 2002, and he has been keeping Mama, Papa, and big brother Henry busy ever since!



Roger Balm at Machu Picchu, Peru

**Ken Mitchell** visited Acadia National Park in early June to explore the hazard history of Bar Harbor, Maine. The previous existence of that community as a Newport, RI-style resort for the super rich, was abruptly terminated by a massive wildfire in 1947 and its subsequent redevelopment provides a good illustration of the dramatic departures that sometimes follow in the wake of catastrophe. Special thanks to Mike Siegel for recommending the Atlantic Eyrle Lodge as a superb vantage point from which to observe the comings and goings of natives and visitors. Later in the month Ken gave a paper in Berlin on "Problems in the interpretation of disasters as indicators of global environmental change", at a Symposium on Disaster Reduction and Global Environmental Change, sponsored by the Federal Foreign Office of the German government. The sight of the Brandenburg Gate's supporting columns decked out as soccer stockings and cleats and the circle of full size dancing Berlin Bears, each identical in size, shape and pose but decorated in the distinctive motif of a different country, almost made the journey worth it by themselves. However, dinner in a restored palace on the Unter den Linden was even more memorable, especially when a thunderstorm killed the air conditioning and blacked out the entire city for 30 minutes, reducing the room's illumination to candles struggling against gale force gusts coming in through frantically opened windows.



Ken Mitchell down under

From August 10-31, Ken and Liz journeyed "down under" where he was an Official Visitor to the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and Emergency Management Australia. Ken gave a series of public lectures on Megacities and Disasters, Emergency Management in the wake of 9/11 and Research on Terrorism as well as participating in federal agency retreats, research planning seminars and graduate classes. There was a striking contrast between Melbourne, a sophisticated metropolis of three and a half million that mixes 19th century British Victoriana with 21st century Aussie panache, and the cool green hills of rural Mount Macedon where Australia's Emergency Management Institute nods distantly to the dissected volcanic cone that is celebrated in Peter Wier's 1960s movie "Picnic at Hanging Rock". Australians are enthusiastic hosts who are conscious that they are not centrally located on the world's academic flyways, so they make the most of visitors from overseas. Since August marks the tail end of the Australian winter, when outdoor diversions are relatively restricted, audiences were plentiful and lively.

**Karl Nordstrom** writes: The second half of the past academic year was a busy one for me. A trip to Italy to participate in a workshop in Pisa did not materialize because of the events of 9/11, so fall semester was business as usual. Things then got a bit hectic. Subsequent activities included offering a short course in Brazil in February; making a keynote address at the 7th International Coastal Symposium in Northern Ireland in March, conducting a field study of horseshoe crabs in Delaware Bay in May with Nancy Jackson; conducting a field study on the beaches of Elba Island, Italy in June with Nancy and colleagues at the University of Florence; making a lecture tour in Japan in July; and conducting another brief field study in Ocean City, New Jersey in August. My association with my Italian colleagues will continue, with trips to examine a marble beach in Pisa in January 03 and to run a workshop in Ravenna in October.

I am continuing to focus on human altered geomorphic systems and environmental restoration. My next field study will be in March and will examine aeolian transport across human-modified foredunes at Ocean City to determine the influence of dune height on vegetation. Right after that study, I head for Switzerland to be a discussant at a conference on "the environmental future of aquatic ecosystems."

I am pleased to be a part of the new working group in Geography at Rutgers on spatial aspects of restoration, initiated with Tenley Conway, Wendy Mitteager, Tamara Shapiro and Ying-Chih Chen. We hope that others who are interested in restoring natural environments in developed areas will join our discussions and collaborate with us in future research efforts.

**Frank Popper and Deborah Popper** did presentations on their Great Plains work in fall 2002 at Cornell University, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and the University of New Mexico. A reprint of their University



of New Mexico talk appeared in the Albuquerque Tribune. A second edition of Anne Matthews' book about their work, *Where the Buffalo Roam*, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction when it first appeared in 1993, was published by the University of Chicago Press in November 2002, with a long updating chapter by Ms. Matthews and a foreword by the University of Kansas environmental historian Donald Worster. Frank Popper attended board meetings of the American Planning Association in Providence and Housing Policy Debate in Baltimore.

**David Robinson** writes: The past year has been both hectic and rewarding. In addition to chairing the department, I have taught several classes, enrollments ranging from 8 to 270! On the research front, I continue to explore hemispheric snow cover, last fall co-organizing the 4th SnowWatch Symposium. Grants from NASA, NOAA and NSF continue to support these efforts. Our recently ended drought kept me busy as state climatologist. In addition to sitting on the state drought advisory taskforce and testifying before the state legislature, I gave a record 505 interviews to the media this past year. Progress also continues on the New Jersey Weather and Climate network, including continuing to seek major support for further development. On the personal side of the ledger, I continue as scoutmaster for a troop of almost 50 boys. Both Doug (17) and Drew (13) are on their way to the Eagle rank, run cross-country, play baseball, Doug now driving to some of the activities (yikes!).

**Kevin St. Martin** has spent the last year deeply involved in several research projects that focus on fishing communities in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions, the nature of community economies, and the discursive barriers to community-based management of fisheries resources. He is PI on three grants and co-PI on three more that will run through the remainder of this academic year. Along with Bonnie McCay (Human

Ecology), Kevin facilitates the Rutgers Fisheries Project, where a number of researchers (faculty, post-docs, and graduate students) have come together to work on the aforementioned projects and share ideas/insights related to fishing communities, economies, and the environments. Recent research has involved site visits throughout the Northeast, extensive key informant interviewing, and GIS analysis of fisheries data. Presentations by Kevin and other project members were given at the American Anthropological Association annual meeting, NMFS workshops on fishing communities, and at Rutgers University. Kevin is expanding his research in two general directions: the first is toward a comparison of fisheries elsewhere in the world to those in the Northeast and, second, toward a greater understanding of community-based economies.

In addition to research, Kevin was recently awarded (along with Robin Leichenko) a Bildner Inter-Cultural Fellowship that will support the inclusion of a broad range of geographic traditions into the department's History and Theory of Geography course (470). The revision of this course, currently considered a "capstone" course for Geography majors, will hopefully increase its appeal to non-majors from Philosophy, History, and related departments.



David Robinson, Maxine Lurie, Peter Wacker, Ronald Becker, Howard Green, and Richard Hunter.

**Peter Wacker** writes: In June I took the McGreevey "buy-out," and retired after 38 years on the faculty. I have, on the wall of my new office, a plaque attesting to my new status of "emeritus" (better than "demeritus") They spelled my name correctly but indicated that I had retired from the "field of Historical Geographer."

I would like to express my thanks to those who were able to come to either or both the wonderful symposium and retirement dinner arranged for me by Dave and Joanna and artfully carried out by Betty Ann, Elaine, Michelle and Mike. Thanks also for all the kind words I have been receiving. Thanks to the symposium speakers and the "roasters" at the dinner. I have been showing my nomination to the National Register around to friends and relatives. Everybody laughs at my image accompanying Washington crossing the Delaware. It was just so pleasant a day! Finally, thanks to Dave for "sentencing" me to a life in Lucy Stone B-242 with even more working space than I had before, typing away, listening to classical music, and interacting with a community for which I have so much regard and affection.

We did just a little travelling this past summer. I gave a talk for the Bayshore Discovery Project in Bivalve, Cumberland County and we got a ride on the Meerwald, a restored oyster schooner. On a hot day in July we rode around New York harbor on a restored New York fireboat with the Roebling Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archaeology, listening to a retired fire fighter telling us about the vessel and how in 1944 NYC below 32nd Street could have been levelled had they not sunk a munitions vessel which had caught fire in Bayonne with three other fully loaded munitions vessels and wharves piled high with munitions ready to go. We saluted everyone we could by pumping water and in Roebling's honor saluted the Brooklyn Bridge. We did stop traffic a couple of times. In August we flew to Amsterdam, took a tram ride around the city, got on

a river boat for a fantastic trip along the Rhine-Main-Danube to Vienna. We came right after the flood and cleared under bridges by a foot or so. We had been down the Danube to the Black Sea just before NATO bombed the bridges.

But life is also interesting around here. As I was transferring some of my files from home to my office. I was using the cart with the attached TV which we keep in the department. As I rounded into the long hall, there I see a young woman hurtling toward me on in-line skates. I start to laugh. She says as she passes me "if you don't tell on me skating I won't tell on you stealing the TV." As I unload my car onto the cart I encounter her again and assure her that I am not stealing the TV. She says "oh, you are an honest person" and helps me get through the entrance doors at LSH. This place really does have a life of its own.

**Lyna Wiggins** writes: I'm happily on sabbatical this whole academic year! I'm spending the year at the University of California, Santa Barbara in the Geography Dept. with Mike Goodchild and all of the folks there. I've got a research grant from the Public Policy Institute of California, to help with a Central Valley run of Keith Clarke's cellular automata model of urban growth.

### Graduate Student News

**Katherine Albert** writes: I presented a paper entitled "Working too Close to the Stump: Rural Poverty, Environmental Justice and Forest Politics in Maine and eastern Canada" at the AAG meeting in LA last March. It was selected for the Best Student Paper Award in two specialty group competitions- CARLU and Canadian Studies. I just achieved ABD status and am fully immersed in the grant-chasing phase. I'll be spending the spring semester at the Canadian-American Center at the University of Maine, and I plan to start my field work in northern Maine and Quebec in the Fall of 2003.

**Julie Silva** writes: I spent 5 weeks in Mozambique doing fieldwork on a research project being conducted by the Center for International Climate and Environmental Research (CICERO) in Oslo. The goal of the project is to assess how economic changes are constraining or enhancing strategies for coping with climate variability. This project is being carried out over a three year period and has a large GIS component which Robin Leichenko and I are working on. The GIS mapping work entails development of a dynamic vulnerability profile for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. The socioeconomic, trade and globalization, and agricultural data for this component of the project has been compiled in a GIS. Data on regional agricultural cropping patterns and climatic variability has been obtained. A series of maps have been created which



Chókwè District, Mozambique

show the spatial distribution of socioeconomic conditions, agricultural cropland, and climate variability at the national level. Indicators have been developed using agricultural and trade data to gauge the degree of market involvement. The mapping analysis aims to identify broad economic and climatic regional trends as well as particular circumstances of each nation.

The fieldwork is part of the project's micro-level component. The goal of the micro-level analysis is to gather basic information on how farmer responses to climatic variability are affected by economic changes. The research team visited two rural villages in Southern Mozambique, Matidze and Massawasse. Both communities were located in the Limpopo River Basin, an area with high exposure to floods and droughts. The area experienced severe flooding in early 2000 and is currently affected by a drought. The communities are located approximately 100 kilometers apart and share similar geographical endowments but have experienced different levels of external investment. Matidze is located in Mabalane District and has 192 households. Massawasse is located in Chókwè District and has 236 households. Subsistence farming is the primary economic activity in both villages but Chókwè has more commercial farming. While the survey data has yet to be analysed, preliminary results show that the use of market-based coping strategies such as informal trading and casual labor have increased over the past five years. However many people face considerable constraints to engaging in these activities.

**Alex Standish** writes: I have just moved to New Jersey to start a PhD, from London where I have been teaching geography and other subjects (maths, sport, history) in schools for ten years. I have just completed an MA in education. I looked at how the geography curriculum in England has qualitatively changed from a knowledge based approach to one that focuses on values and skills. Here I want to study development and globalisation. I'm looking for a soccer team and squash partners if anyone is interested!



## Alumni News

**Ken Bielen** writes: I continue to work for Feller, Finch & Associates, a mid-sized civil engineering firm in northwest Ohio. I've primarily been doing grants writing and grants administration for funds for new and replacement water and sewer systems for small communities. We recently completed a replacement water system for a village of 560 persons. The price tag was over 2 million dollars but I was able to secure five grants that covered more than half of the project cost.

On a personal note, we took 17 jr. high and high school youth (including my two high-schoolers) to the Lawton, Oklahoma area for a week in July to help build a new fellowship hall for a Native American congregation. Their church is located on the north side of Lake Lawtonka, in the shadow of the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.

I also took a whirlwind tour through New England visiting colleges with my daughter. She is looking at small, private schools, so, alas, she is not interested in Rutgers.

**Michael Craghan** writes: As of October my career has taken a little detour. I am working for FEMA in the Federal Insurance and Mitigation Division of the Philadelphia regional office. Most of my job is to support the National Flood Insurance Program. I'll be coordinating flood studies, running hydrologic and hydraulic models, doing lots of outreach, introducing them to GIS, and responding to disasters. They hope that some of my coastal expertise will come in handy as they try to figure out some problems in the Chesapeake, Delmarva, and Delaware Bay areas.

In addition to that craziness, I've submitted the complete m.s. for a book, "Physical Geography: A Self-Teaching Guide" that John Wiley & Sons will be publishing next summer. I'll let you know when it hits the street.

**Alan Frei** writes: After finishing my Ph.D. at Rutgers in 1997, I went to the

National Snow and Ice Data Center, which is part of the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences at the University of Colorado, Boulder. For one year as a post-doc, and then as a research scientist, I did research there for over three years. I then came back east to Hunter College, which is part of the City University of New York, as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography, where I currently and happily reside. I continue to do research, and collaborate with Dave Robinson, as well as teach undergrad and graduate courses here at Hunter.

**Steven Gordon** received the U.S. Air Force Academy's "2002 Outstanding Educator Award". The award is voted by fellow faculty and is the highest faculty honor given each year.

**Benjamin Hassid** writes: Currently, I am working for NJ Transit as a part time Field Representative. Yes, I do work with maps and yes, I do go out into the field. I enjoy the work, and this is proof to the Rutgers community that yes, there are jobs out there related to studying our world.

**Christy Henges Jeck** writes: Since moving to the San Francisco Bay Area in December 1999, I have been researching and writing about water issues in the Western United States for a non-profit research organization, the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment, and Security. On a personal note, my husband and I are expecting our first child (a boy) in January.

**Tom Lewis** although "retired", is in his fifth year as a resident Associate Professor at the University of Connecticut where he teaches two sections per semester and co-directs the Connecticut Geographic Alliance. He has recently submitted an article for publication which deals with the southern New England tornado hazard. He and Valerie recently had dinner with Niels West, another Rutgers geography PH.D and his wife Ann. All lived in Kilmer WWII housing while grad

students, just about where the Geography building is now.

Editor's note: Historical images taken by John Brush can be viewed at <http://mapmaker.rutgers.edu>

**Doracie Zoleta-Nantes** writes: I am presently involved in revitalizing the Geography Program in the University of the Philippines. I assumed the chair position since May and it has been so excitingly intense since then. We are revising our curricular offerings and are undertaking capacity-building in the only department of Geography in the Philippines. Right now, I am undertaking research on the following topics: development refugees caused by large-scale infrastructure projects (like dam constructions) and risk and vulnerability assessment on earthquakes among a number of communities and residents in Metro Manila, the Philippines.

I would like to invite faculty members in our department to consider doing, or encourage their graduate students to undertake, collaborative research with us here in the Philippines, maybe via the Fulbright program?

**Dina Sa** writes: I live with my two dogs in a garden home in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I love the Cajun food and life. I have also become quite an avid LSU football fan! Tailgating is a way life, a way of enjoying the company of friends and family and an easy way of making numerous new friends! As they say here Louisiana "It's all good!"

### In Memorium

It is with great sadness that I report the death of our friend and colleague **Jim Allen**, who died July 30 after suffering a heart attack on an MBTA (Boston) commuter train. Jim received a Ph.D. in the Geography Program at Rutgers in 1973 and was a scientist with the U.S. Geological Survey. Jim also spent time in academia, with positions at Northeastern University and the University of Arkansas. Anyone who needs more information may contact Karl Nordstrom at [nordstro@imcs.rutgers.edu](mailto:nordstro@imcs.rutgers.edu)

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# Geography Department News

## Newsletter of the Rutgers Geography Department

### CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT **POLITICAL ECOLOGY AT HOME**

University Inn, New Brunswick, N.J.  
March 29, 2003

Sponsored by the Graduate Program in Geography  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

#### Conference organizers:

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Suggestions or information for the newsletter should be sent to the editor, Mike Siegel ([misiegel@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:misiegel@rci.rutgers.edu)), or use the mailing address above.

The Rutgers Graduate Program in Geography invites participation in a one-day conference devoted to the theme: "Political Ecology at Home." This is the first of two events organized under the rubric: "Political Ecology at Home/Environmental Justice Abroad" (the second to be held in 2004). Recent efforts to apply the key concepts of so-called third world political ecology to core industrialized countries and parallel moves to extend environmental justice analysis to resource management conflicts on the periphery represent some of the most exciting new developments in the field. It is this rich confluence of interests that the conferences are being organized to explore.

The field of political ecology has conventionally applied the tools of political economy and human ecology to the study of environmental problems in the third world. A number of recent contributions to the field, however, have argued that key political ecological concepts are as applicable to research in advanced industrialized countries as they are to underdeveloped nations. At the same time, while the First World/Third World regional binary is deemed generally untenable, many political ecologists working in this genre have sought to identify meso-scale forces that give particular regions – e.g. the "American West" or Canada's "Maritime Provinces" – their distinctive character, arguing in effect that these forces retain considerable explanatory power in research on society and natural resources. Still others eschew regional analysis altogether, focusing instead on social relations embedded in industrialized production regimes or the unique political ecological problems of sub/urban settings.

Details about the conference may be found on the department's webpage:

<http://geography.rutgers.edu>