

East Carolina University

# VECTORS

*News and Notes from the Department of Geography*

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## Department of Geography News

### Notes from Burrell

We have completed another very successful academic year, as you will see in this issue of Vectors. We started our new degrees in Applied Atmospheric Science and Geographic Information Science and Technology in the Fall, and we were just given the go-ahead to develop a proposal for an MS in Community Planning. Stay tuned to hear more about that in the future. So, while we are dealing with budget cuts to the university, some of which have filtered to the department, we continue to move in very positive directions. Faculty and students continue to be very active in the discipline, as illustrated by the numerous awards you will read about in this issue.

The department will be undergoing an external review in the Fall, and we are currently in the process of developing our self-study report. Part of that report includes how successful we have been in educating and training our majors and graduate students, as well as what our alums are doing. There is a very brief on-line survey [here](#). We are interested in receiving input from everyone, no matter when you graduated even if the self study will focus on more recent graduates. Although we are proud of what we are doing, and believe we are accomplishing a great deal, we know we can do better. This external review will help us improve. Thanks in advance! *Dr. Burrell Montz, Chair.*

### Alumni Spotlight

Congratulations are in order for our featured alum, Christopher N. Padgett, AICP. On March 31st the Daily Reflector posted the announcement, **Chief Planner Named for Greenville.** *The Ayden Assistant Town Manager has been named Greenville's new chief planner, city officials announced...* In the 12 years since completing his undergraduate degree, Chris

has circled wide and is returning to the Emerald City. A native of Swansboro, NC, he earned a B.S in Urban and Regional Planning in the Spring of 1998. He went on to earn an MA in Public Administration in the fall of 2004. Chris did not go far from ECU for his first position as an urban planner for the city of Jacksonville, NC. He then started moving further afield to become a Planner II in Jefferson County, Kentucky and further still



as the Director of Planning and Development for the City of Jeffersonville, Indiana. His circle back started in 2004 with a return to NC. It was to New Bern this time as the Land Use and Transportation Planning Coordinator for the Eastern Carolina Council of Government, then to Ayden as Assistant Town Manager and Planning Director. Now the circle is being completed as he prepares to take over as chief planner for the city of Greenville. He feels fortunate to have worked as a professional planner for over twelve years in three states and for communities ranging from as small as 5,000 to as large as 700,000.

These days Chris is also busy at home; he is

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married with two young daughters. His wife, Dr. Jamison Padgett, is a dentist and partner in the Capps, Bowman, Padgett, and Associates dental practice in Greenville. His elder daughter, Taylor Kathryne, is a six-year-old first grader at St. Peter's Catholic School and his younger, Cannon Elizabeth, is three.

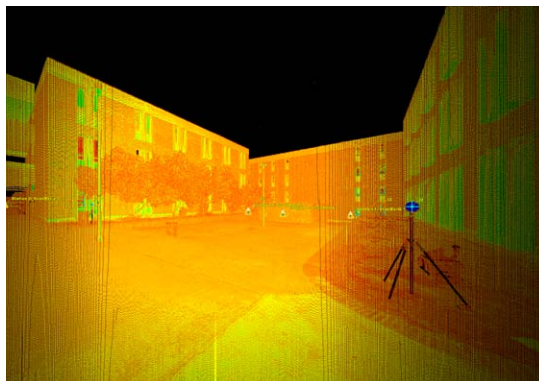
*"I firmly believe that it was the skills and knowledge I acquired through the (Planning) Program made me confident and able to provide the highest level of professional planning services to each of these jurisdictions."*

## Department News and Events

### Awards and Honors

#### 2011 Visualization Challenge Winners

The Visualization Challenge hosted by RENCI at ECU drew excellent presentations again this year. Cal Scheinert, a Geography major, won the Undergraduate category with his presentation of *Digital Terrain Models of Debris Flow Activity at Chalk Cliffs, Colorado* and Thad Wester, Geography graduate student, was the Graduate winner, with his presentation *Visualizations of Models from Point Clouds*. They were recognized at the 2011 Research and Creative Week Luncheon on Friday, April 8. Cal and Thad are both working with Dr. Thad Wasklewicz on laser scanning projects. Above is a visualization of the Brewster building courtyard



point cloud by Thad Wester. For more images see [www.thadwester.com](http://www.thadwester.com).

#### Merle C. Prunty Scholarship

ECU Geography undergraduate Cal Scheinert (seen above right) was awarded the Merle C. Prunty Scholarship in November 2010. The Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers annually awards the



Merle C. Prunty Scholarship to an outstanding undergraduate student from our region with the objective of encouraging talented undergraduate students to pursue professional careers in geography.

#### G. Herbert Stout Student Award Winners at 2011 NC GIS Conference

There were participants from 13 universities and colleges in the eighth G. Herbert Stout Student Award competition this year. ECU Geography graduate students brought home two of the awards. Haley Cleckner, for *Spatial Modeling of the Risk of Mosquito-borne Disease Transmission, Chesapeake, VA*; and Nicholas Lee, for *3D Storm Surge Modeling on the Outer Banks*.

#### Outstanding Research Award

Dr. Scott Curtis received an Outstanding Research Award from the Southeast Division of the Association of American Geographers, November 2010.

#### 2010-2011 Scholar-Teacher Award

Thomas Crawford, Associate Professor of Geography, was chosen to receive a 2010-2011 Scholar-Teacher Award. The purpose of the annual Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs' Scholar-Teacher Awards is to recognize faculty members who effectively integrate research/creative activity in classroom teaching. The award winners will excel in these two central facets of faculty responsibility.

### 2011 Meredith F. Burrill Award

Derek Alderman, Professor of Geography, is the recipient of the 2011 Meredith F. Burrill Award, bestowed by the Association of American Geographers (AAG). The award honors work of exceptional merit and quality that lies at or near the intersection of basic research in geography on the one hand, and practical applications or policy implications on the other. The AAG Awards Committee expressed the opinion that “this honor is merited by Alderman’s exceptional record of research and teaching in geography, service to the discipline, collaborative contributions, and in particular, his national reputation as a public intellectual. Alderman’s expertise in landscape inscription and the politics of street and place naming helps to raise the visibility and relevance of geography to matters of importance to society.” The AAG Meredith F. Burrill Award was established to commemorate Meredith “Pete” Burrill’s many and varied contributions to the profession of geography as a professor, president of the first UN Conference on Geographical Names, Executive Secretary of the United States Board on Geographic Names, and officer of the AAG, including service as president and editor of the journal *Professional Geographer*. Contributed by Association of American Geographers.

### Mitchelson Receives the NC Geographical Society 2010 Educator of the Year Award

During the annual meeting of the North Carolina Geographical Society at the Department of Geography on November 4 and 5, Dr. Ronald Mitchelson was presented the Educator of the Year Award. Ron received a PhD in Geography from The Ohio State University in 1979 and taught at the Department of Geography at University of Georgia from 1979 to 1993, rising to the rank of Full Professor. He served as Department Chair at Morehead State University from 1993 to 1999 and joined East Carolina University as Chair in 1999 and served until 2009. He currently serves as Senior Research Fellow in the Division of Research at ECU. Ron is a superb teacher who infuses his classes with enthusiasm, intellectual rigor, and an amazing ability to make complex concepts understandable and relevant to address real world problems and issues. His teaching interests have focused on transportation geography, quantitative techniques and spatial statistics, GIS and computer mapping, location analysis, and regional economic development issues. He is skilled at teaching at the introductory undergraduate level as well as the

upper division and graduate levels. He has been a university educator for over 30 years, successfully maintaining a high level of performance and passion (one of Ron’s favorite words).

### Foundation Journal Article Award

Dr. Derek Alderman and Ms. Heather Ward (Coastal Resource Management PhD candidate) received the 2010 Urban Communication Foundation Journal Article Award for their paper *Writing on the Plywood: Toward an Analysis of Hurricane Graffiti*.

### Rodger Lentz Kicks-off the Spring Colloquium Series

The Spring 2011 Geography Departmental Colloquium series kicked off on January 21 with “Revitalizing Wilson’s Center City: A Planning and Economic Development Challenge” by Mr. Rodger Lentz (AICP). Roger is the Director of Planning and Development Services at the City of Wilson. He has a MA in Geography with a Planning concentration from the University of NC at Charlotte and served as the President of the NC Chapter of the American Planning Association from 2007 to 2010.

Wilson, once the world’s leading producer of golden leaf tobacco, is challenged on multiple fronts – loss of jobs, declining population, and struggling city neighborhoods. The city is making concentrated efforts to transform downtown Wilson into a Main Street Community and to achieve national standards for revitalization of the city’s commercial district. The City of Wilson is using tiers, a phased growth planning technique that tailors and targets diverse urban growth strategies based on geographical area, to focus and manage its growth and development towards the city center and to provide city services efficiently and cost-effectively. The model of sustainable economic development through historic preservation and the tiers system for compact growth is a highly relevant topic to urban planning and urban geography courses being taught at ECU. It speaks to issues discussed in the classroom such as economic development of cities and towns, historic preservation, sustainable growth, land use, and urban design. The presentation was very well received, with faculty commenting on the connections between classroom concepts and real world projects. Other colloqui this Spring included:

*Monsoon in the Americas: Comparing Water Resource Strategies in the Western U.S. and in Southern Brazil,*





Dr. Tom Rickenbach, ECU Geography; *Will we ever Learn From Disasters? Disturbing Trends and Hopeful Signs*, Dr. Thomas A. Birkland, William T. Kretzer Professor of Public Policy School of Public and International Affairs, NC State University; and *Ethnic Entrepreneurship, Immigration, and Place: From a Multi-scaled and Comparative Approach*, Dr. Qingfang Wang, UNC Charlotte Department of Geography & Earth Sciences & UNC Charlotte Urban Institute.

To learn more about the colloquium series and future talks please contact Dr. Thad Wasklewicz (wasklewicz@ecu.edu) or Dr. Anuradha Mukherji (mukherjia@ecu.edu).

## **An Incredible Healing Adventure for Al Burne**

Although Al Burne has been teaching in the Planning Program for over a decade, only a very few people were ever privy to the challenges he has faced due to a lifelong illness or that he was on the transplant list for a liver. For some time he was considered not sick enough until suddenly finding out he might be too sick to receive a new liver. In December he found out that he had malignant tumors in his liver. It took Al a couple of months to find his way to the Mayo Clinic. But once there they evaluated his situation and recommended a new, effective, minimally invasive treatment in addition to providing a much needed infusion of hope. He would be able to stay on the transplant list and was even invited to be featured in a segment of the Doctors' show that aired on January 27. Fast forward to May 18th when Al received a new liver and was discharged only 5 days later. By the 31st of May he reports walking several miles a day between time on a treadmill, shopping, and walking between hospital clinic visits. In a recent email to the department he writes, "I can't explain why I have been as lucky as I have been and the many blessings that have inexplicably come my way at the precise times that I needed them during my ordeal. I hope to continue to be able to contemplate and count my blessings with my family for many years to come".

## **Undergrad Focus Erica McCarthy, DSLC Representative**

The Dean's Student Leadership Council (DSLC) is a student-run committee that is the liaison between the voice of the students and the Thomas Harriot Arts and Sciences faculty and administration. The committee meets two to three times a month with Dean Alan White

and Associate Dean for Undergrad Studies, Dr. Michael B. Brown, to have an open forum discussion about possible improvements that the committee foresees for the College. Erica reports that "The fantastic thing about the DSLC is that we actually have input in the current state and the future of Thomas Harriot College. This has been a terrific experience so far, because I feel closer in my involvement in the college and if I ever have problems or I hear of problems among my peers I know that there is a place where student input can be taken seriously".

Erica works for Information Technologies and Computing Services (ITCS), she is an usher for Student Rights and Responsibilities, and participates in orientation for new students. When asked why she switched to Geography, she explained that many courses required for her prior major did not interest her and after taking an Ecology class in Biology and a Geography course, she saw similarities between the topics and her wide ranging interests. Erica was encouraged to consider Geography as a major. Eventually she would like to work for an agency like NOAA, or the NC Cooperative Extension.

## **Our Newest Alums Fall 2010 Undergraduates**

Christopher H. Oakley, *BS Urban & Regional Planning*,  
Stephen D. Penn, *BS Urban & Regional Planning*,  
Nicholas W. Lee, *BS Applied Geography*  
Jared A. Motuz, *BS Applied Geography*

## **Fall 2010 Graduate Level**

Emily Wright, *MA in Geography. Thesis: Role of Cold Fronts in South American Monsoon Onset.*

## **Spring 2011 Undergraduates**

Thomas Ball, *BS Applied Geography*  
Joseph G. Beddis, *BS Urban & Regional Planning*  
Jonathan B. Ganzert, *BS Urban & Regional Planning, Certificate in Urban Design*  
Lee A. Herring, *BS Urban & Regional Planning*  
Daniel J. Martin, *BS Urban & Regional Planning*  
Ondrez M. Murphy, *BS Urban & Regional Planning*  
Cal R. Scheinert, *BS Applied Geography, Certificate in Geographic Information Systems.*  
Samuel H. Simpson, *BA Geography*  
Justin R. Smith, *BS Urban & Regional Planning*  
Milton, Spenser, *BS Applied Geography, Certificate in Atmospheric Science*

## **We Want to Hear from You**

Do you have news to share with your fellow Department of Geography alumni? How about an idea you think would make a good story for *Vectors*? Email Karen at mulcahyk@ecu.edu.