Departmental News:

- We welcome Tim Baird to the Department as our new “Sustainability Geographer.” Tim comes to us from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he completed his PhD. in early 2012. His dissertation, “Wildlife Development, Diversification, and Social Networks near Tarangire National Park, Northern Tanzania” illustrates his research and teaching interests in:

  • the social and economic dynamics of biodiversity conservation;
  • human adaptation to dynamic environmental, economic, and political factors; and
  • local, regional, and international strategies to manage natural resources.

Tim brings a wealth of international experience to Blacksburg, having worked for long periods in East Africa, and through independent travel in Central and South America, East and Southern Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and Oceania. Tim is developing and teaching a new College of Natural Resources and Environment course sequence in Seeking Sustainability and bringing a broad brush to the topic that has greatly expanded the college’s already strong expertise in the area of sustainability.

- The Virginia Chapter of the American Water Works Association (AWWA) recently announced that Geography, and GEA doctoral, student Tammy E. Parece is the winner of the 2012 VA AWWA Graduate Scholarship. The scholarship is based upon merit, for graduate students in Virginia’s universities who are planning careers in water resources. The Virginia Water Environment Association is dedicated to protection and enhancement of Virginia’s water environments; it presents awards annually to applicants enrolled in graduate programs in science or environmental engineering at Virginia’s universities.

- Bob Oliver has had two conference presentations and a research report of late:


- The Meteorology students and program faculty spoke to over 3,000 students and adults at the WDBJ WeatherFest in Roanoke October 19-20 – in glorious weather we might add.

- **Lynn Resler** presented two workshops on Mountain Geography at GeoFest VI at Andrew Lewis Middle School in Salem, VA on October 20. Her presentations were so inspiring to the K-12 teachers in attendance that she was unable to complete them for all the questions asked. The GeoFest is an event held annually by the Virginia Geographic Alliance in support of improvements in the teaching of Geography in the states K-12 schools.

- **Stephanie Freund** and **Kate Jones**, presented a poster entitled, “A geographic characterization of high elevation bogs in the southern Appalachian Mountains" at the undergraduate research symposium on Oct. 15-22, sponsored by the Office of Undergraduate Research at Virginia Tech. The poster resulted from an Undergraduate Research project directed by **Lynn Resler** during the Spring 2012 semester.

**Alumni News:**

- **Link Elmore**, (MS, 2012) wrote "to let you know that the job I emailed you about a few weeks ago has come about for me. I've accepted an offer to work at the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy in Big Stone Gap, doing GIS. I accepted a verbal offer a couple of weeks
ago but have been waiting until I received the official letter from the Director today to share the news. I will begin a week from this coming Monday, on the 10th.”

“|I'm thrilled to have a job in my chosen field, after returning to school for a graduate degree in geography. I truly value my years as a grad student in the Geography Department at VT as time well spent. Today, it has paid off with gainful employment!”

- **Juliette Fitzsimmons** (BA, 2008) tells us that “I work for a small solutions company in Alexandria, VA called SYNCADD and we do the majority of our work for the U.S. Army GIS and Real Property programs. On a more personal note, I’m completing my graduate GIS certificate this week through Penn State’s online program. I’m finishing up a course in Python, which I actually found pretty enjoyable (and challenging). I plan on earning my M.S. in GIS, but am still weighing my options. At the ESRI UC in July, I ran into Dr. Morrill and we talked a bit about the Geography Department at Tech. I really miss the academic environment in general, especially Virginia Tech’s. I hope the department is doing well and please send any GIS Hokies my way.”

- **Trish (Mahoney) Foster** (MS, 1991) has recently visited the department with her son Colin Collin, who “may be applying to Tech Engineering program. He just finished junior year of high school, so we’re making the college visits. VA Tech is definitely in the running. Thus far, we have only visited Northeastern in Boston (would be kind of nice with my sisters still living up west of the city). After his freshman year in college, it looks likely he may choose Mechanical Eng’rg., but that remains to be seen. It’s very exciting (as you know, I’m sure). It’s kind of far from Hershey, but I certainly wouldn’t mind him being in a beautiful area and on a beautiful campus.”

- **Vince Angelo** (BA, 1988) retuned to campus for homecoming against Duke October to play with his old mates in the Highty TIGHTY alumni band and stopped by the visit the department.

- **Jeffrey Dawley** (BA, 2007) was elected the College of Natural Resources and Environment’s alumni board president for 2012-2013. He has also been working for ESRI for a number of years and his latest project is a GIS application for the Arlington National Cemetery. You can find the application at [http://public.stage.mapper.army.mil/ANC/ANCWeb/PublicWMV/ancWeb.html](http://public.stage.mapper.army.mil/ANC/ANCWeb/PublicWMV/ancWeb.html)

**Interesting map:** Driving sides: This map shows the countries that drive on the left in blue, and right in red. Any ideas why each choice was made?
Departmental News:

- On 9 November, **Baojuan Zheng** successfully defended her doctoral dissertation, *Broad-scale Assessment of Crop Residue Management Using Multi-temporal Remote Sensing Imagery*. Committee members: **Dr. James B. Campbell**, Committee Chair (Department of Geography), Dr. Kirsten M. de Beurs (Department of Geography and Environmental Sustainability, University of Oklahoma), Dr. John M. Galbraith (Department of Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences), Dr. Randolph H. Wynne (Department of Forestry). In Spring Semester, Dr. Zheng will begin her postdoctoral appointment at the School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning, Arizona State University, where she will conduct research for a NOAA-funded project to evaluate drought risks and their impact on agricultural land and water use.

- **Tim Baird** has had a number of recent academic successes:
  
  - A manuscript was recently published in *African Geographical Review* titled *Parks and Place Fragments: the Implications of Biodiversity Protection in Tanzania and Indiana*. This paper uses examples from Tarangire National Park in northern Tanzania and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in northern Indiana to discuss the idea that parks and protected areas throughout the world can create “place fragments” where park boundaries seek to preserve and protect landscapes by dissociating social and ecological processes.
    
    http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19376812.2012.757976
  
  - A paper abstract has been accepted to the International Conference, *Transformation in a Changing Climate*, to be held in Olso, Norway, June 19-21 of this year. The aim of the conference is to bring together diverse perspectives on transformation, and to generate cutting-edge discussions on deliberate, ethical and sustainable transformation in response to the complex global challenges associated with climate change. The conference is hosted by the University of Oslo and co-sponsored by the IPCC. Baird will be presenting his work on social network transitions in East Africa.
    
  
  - Tim was named a finalist for the *J. Warren Nystrom Award* through the Association of American Geographers. This award recognizes the top paper resulting from a
dissertation in Geography each year. Finalists with present their papers at the annual meeting of the AAG in Los Angeles this April where a winner will be selected.

- Tim is also improving his teaching skills through his participation in the CIDER New Faculty Teaching Certificate Program

- Tim was a guest speaker for FREC colloquium (Fall 2012)

Geography Club News:

The Geographic Society has been quite active in outreach events. On November 10, a team of undergraduate and graduate students went to Harding Elementary School in Blacksburg and instructed 4th grade students on watersheds, the major rivers of Virginia, the provinces of Virginia, and climate. The elementary schools students were especially pleased when undergrad, Thomas Tutchings, presented a "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" aspect to his presentation. The Society received thank you letters hand written by all of the students.

On November 15, several members of the Society acted as judges at a Social Studies Fair at Gilbert Linkous Elementary School in Blacksburg. Judges were asked to review the posters that the children had put together and listen to whatever short presentations the children wanted to give. One of our Judges, undergrad, Gwen Ferguson, reports that "many of the children dressed up as a character that they were representing, a few even made food from a specific region. Subjects ranged from specific historical figures like Rosa Parks, some countries such as India or Mexico or even current crime rates. Overall the third, fourth and fifth graders did an exceptional job on their projects and it was quite a challenge to choose winners. Both the Geographic Society and the children at Gilbert Linkous benefited from and enjoyed this experience!"

On November 19, Brandi Cantrell presented meteorology lessons to the entire fifth grade at PB Smith Elementary School in Fauquier County to prepare them for their upcoming SOL exams. After the event, Brandi commented "Every time I asked a question, the
kids were eager to answer. Some kids came to me after the session and asked me questions about meteorology."

The Geographic Society also joined **Dr. James Campbell** and Dr. John McGee in presenting a Geospatial Program at Kids Tech University on Saturday, January 26, 2013. Our program was similar to the one that was presented last year but because our program was immensely popular last year, we had more equipment. This included additional stereoscopes, 3 laptops with GIS programs, a storm chasing video and a presentation on the distribution of tornados in the U.S. Our program, again, garnered much attention from students, their parents, along with the staff and faculty of VBI which hosts Kids Tech. We already have ideas on how to expand our program for next year.

**Alumni News:**

From **Lindsey Donaldson (Haller)(BA - 2009)** and **Josiah Donaldson (BA- 2009)**: Things are going great for Josiah and me. We are still in New Jersey, however we got orders to move to Milwaukee, Wisconsin this February! We have about 8 weeks before we move, which is exciting. Josiah got assigned to a Recruiting squadron there and I am still looking for prospective GIS jobs in the area. This move is definitely unexpected, but we are excited for a new adventure in a new place. This year we visited two amazing places we had never been to before in the US: upstate New York and Hawaii. Both are absolutely beautiful! Now we will get to explore Wisconsin and all the areas around it.

I am still working as a GIS technician for the Air Force and I really enjoy what I do. I am utilizing GIS in a very unique way: as a space utilization tool working with the Real Estate office to manage space on the Joint Base. CAD drawings of buildings on the installation are imported into GIS and then space polygons are created off of the polylines. Each space polygon has attributes such as: Space Type, Unit, Square footage, and number of personnel. We use this information for space studies, finding vacant space for new functions, and to respond to space requests. It is very interesting and challenging at times. I love that in my career so far, I have done something different with GIS every place I have worked.

Josiah is doing well also. He is still in the Logistics Readiness Squadron and he is currently overseeing the Vehicle Maintenance flight. He is also working on his Master's degree in Natural Resources online from Virginia Tech! He is really enjoying the classes he is taking and he hopes to finish his degree in the next year. This year he also volunteered with the New Jersey Wildlife Conservation Corps.

This is just a quick update on how we are doing and what we are up to! We think of VT often and we really miss Blacksburg (and Hokie Football!).
The Diffusion Interesting Map of the issue:

**Location of GIS Jobs:** looks like VT is pretty well situated to educate students for Geospatial Science Careers!

Faculty, alumni, and student clubs: please send me (carstens@vt.edu) your news from the world of academics, and from life afterwards. I am always pleased to put our collective accomplishments in the newsletter!!
Bon Richardson continues to be active since his retirement from the department with a recent book review “Migration, Mining, and the African Diaspora: Guyana in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries” which appeared in The American Historical Review.


The 2012 SEDAAG meeting in Asheville, NC saw a lot of departmental participation:

- **Korine N. Kolivras**, Yili Hong, Jie Li, Stephen P. Prisley, **James B. Campbell**, David N. Gaines, “Spatial Patterns of Lyme Disease Emergence in Virginia”

- **Ayanda M. Masilela**, “Conservation in Crisis: A Story of Community Resistance Against HydraulicFracturing in the Yellow Creek Conservation Zone”


- **Drew Ellis** presented a paper on “Modeling the Climate Sensitivity of the Central Arizona Surface Water Supply.”

- **Bill Carstensen** wrote a round of questions and served as a moderator for the World Geography Bowl – his first since his 10-year run as the chair of the WGB for SEDAAG.

Korine Kolivras recently gave a talk at UNC-Chapel Hill: *Environmental Variability and the Continued Emergence of Lyme Disease*. University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, Department of Geography’s Colloquium Series. March 1, 2013

Tim Baird, our newest Geographer in the department has taken little time to get his funded research going. He has been awarded a research grant through the National Geographic Society's Committee for Research and Exploration. With his Co-PI, Dr. Joel Hartter (University of New Hampshire), Tim will be examining the effect on cell phone use on social and environmental
outcomes near Tarangire National Park in northern Tanzania. His project is called “Texting the Last Great Herds: Maasai Social Networks & Land Use in the Age of the Cell Phone.”

**Jayashree Surendrababu** has just learned that she has won an ESRI summer Internship in their Charlotte Office

**Bill Carstensen** became a grandfather on February 7, 2013 with the birth of Carsten Hayes Onkey in Chicago, Il.

For the second year in a row the Virginia Tech team (the "Hokie Trail Blazers") has won ASPRS's Geoleague Challenge by designing a geospatial tool to help the Boy Scouts of America design trails at their Philmont Ranch in New Mexico. They faced teams from the University of South Carolina, the University of Georgia, the University of Mississippi and American River College. Our team was composed of **Ioannis Kokkinidis, Beth Stein, Won Hoi Hwang, Jayashree Surendrababu, Laura Lorentz and Catherine Howey.**

**Geographic Society News:**

The Geographic Society continues with its outreach activities. Society members have participated in two recent Kids’ Tech University (KTU) events -- February 23 and March 23, 2013.

The Society’s program for February 23 was titled *Our Changing Planet.* Members introduced the middle school students and their parents to on-line geospatial tools, such as ESRI’s ArcGIS Online and ESRI’s Change Matters. Members discussed how these tools can be used to identify and evaluate earth’s changes from natural and man-made events. We also included a display on the Landsat Program. We provided a handout to the parents with the URLs for the tools.

February 23, 2013: **Sierra Steffen** discussing the Landsat display with a middle school student

February 23, 2013: **Thomas Tutchings** with a middle school student and her mother

The Geographic Society Team for KTU on February 23, 2013 (The youngest member of the Society, Ben Oliver, is in the background being held by Faculty Advisor, *Bob Oliver*)
On March 23, the Society’s theme was *Mapping Home: The Importance of Place and Space*. One of the activities was extremely popular with the middle school students and involved identifying natural and man-made landmarks throughout the world. We had models of the landmarks, along with the geographic coordinates, and a fun fact posted throughout Cassell Coliseum. The students then used smaller pictures of the landmarks to place them on a world map. Students that were able to match all thirteen landmarks qualified for drawings for puzzles. As the day’s events were concluding, we were specifically asked by students and parents to present this activity again next year.

During both KTU events, *Mario Garza*, one of our meteorology students, accompanied Society members and discussed meteorological topics and presented a storm chasing video.

Future events planned for the Geographic Society include members participating in Virginia Tech’s Big Event on April 6 and the Relay for Life on April 19.
Alumni News:

Jim Crawford (MS, 1995) writes that “I am very pleased to announce that the Films Media Group of New York City has licensed my documentary film, Down in the Old Belt: Voices From The Tobacco South.”

“FMG is both the largest and oldest multi-media distributor to the North American educational market, providing content in DVD and digital formats, to universities, high schools, public libraries, the medical community, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. FMG licenses productions from the BBC, Bill Moyers’ Public Affairs Television, PBS, National Geographic, HBO, NBC News, CBS News, ABC News and a host of other producers.”

“Down in the Old Belt: Voices from the Tobacco South, released on DVD in 2005, won Best Documentary Film at the Appalachian Film Festival, was commended by the VA State Senate (Senate Joint Resolution No 174), and was picked up by PBS and aired on 150 PBS stations around the country. In 2007, I lectured and screened ‘Down in the Old Belt’ for the Botkin Lecture Series at the United States Library of Congress.”

“The documentary was sponsored by the History Museum of Western Virginia. The Virginia Foundation for the Humanities was the film’s most significant and supportive funding source during the research, production and post-production phases. I won’t try to list all the names, but my sincere thanks and respect go out to the hundred and more people who were part of this documentary effort. “

“Here is the FMG online link to Down in the Old Belt: Voices From The Tobacco South. http://ffh.films.com/title/50566”
The Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group which includes graduate student **David Kramar** was awarded the 2013 Wings Across the Americas Award in Research and Partnership for the research being conducted on the eastern golden eagle population. This is a prestigious award presented by the US Forest Service.

**Lynn Resler** has been elected the President of the AAG BioGeography Specialty Group.

We had several more SEDAAG presentations in Asheville than listed in the last edition: (The editor takes full blame for these omissions in edition #3):

- **Bridgette Rivers, Lynn Resler, Robert Oliver**, “Pungent Provisions: Continuing an Appalachian Tradition”
- **Andrew Evans, W. Mark Ford, and Lynn Resler**, “Modeling the Distribution of Northern Hardwoods in the Carolina Northern Flying Squirrel, Glaucosmys sabrinus coloratus, Recovery Areas of North Carolina and Tennessee”
- **Jason McVay** and **Lisa Kennedy**, “Utilizing Macroscopic Charcoal to Reconstruct Local Fire History: Laguna Limón, Dominican Republic”
- **Ioannis Kokkinidis**, Steven C. Hodges, **James B. Campbell**, “Using Remote Sensing to Track the Extent of Agriculture in Virginia: Methods and Issues”

**Bob Oliver** has been elected as the Virginia State Representative to the Southeastern Division of the AAG. He is now a member of the steering committee, and, as Virginia State Representative, also serves as a member of the steering committee of the Virginia Geographic Alliance.

**Tammy Parece**, PhD Candidate, Geospatial and Environmental Analysis, and **Jim Campbell** presented a paper at the recent ASPRS conference in Baltimore, based upon her experience teaching workshops in summer 2012 for community college and K-12 teachers. These two-day workshops, designed to prepare teachers to introduce geospatial content into their classes, were
held in Roanoke, Richlands, and Williamsburg. The paper was entitled “Helping Educators to Educate with Geospatial Technologies.”

Mary Harman has been elected as a full member of Full Member into Iota Delta Rho, the Interdisciplinary Research Honor Society. Iota Delta Rho is the Nation’s first interdisciplinary research honor society and was founded at Virginia Tech in 2011. We applaud Mary for her desire to participate in and promote interdisciplinary research at Virginia Tech, in the community, the state, the nation, and the world. Undergraduate Eric Guenther has been elected as an associate member of Iota Delta Rho.

Allison LeBlanc and Lisa Kennedy submitted an NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant and were awarded $14,795 for their project "Modern pollen spectra from coasts and lowlands of the Dominican Republic and their application to the interpretation of sedimentary pollen records".

We congratulate Professors John Boyer and Bob Oliver who have been nominated as “Favorite Faculty” by students in their classes. Virginia Tech’s Department of Housing and Residence Life allows students to nominate professors who have “positively impacted their learning experiences at Virginia Tech.”

On March 5, Dave Carroll, Drew Ellis, Bill Carstensen, and Paul Miller appeared on Weather Brains, “The best weather netcast in the Universe”, a weekly netcast on weather topics originating in Birmingham, AL. We were afforded a great deal of time to talk about our new program in meteorology. You can find the show at http://weatherbrains.com/weatherbrains/?p=3472 (we start about 29 minutes in).

Tim Baird has received a travel grant of $1000 from the International Travel Supplemental Grant program at Virginia Tech to support his upcoming conference presentation in Norway.

Drew Ellis has received $15,000 from the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research to support a project with graduate student Paul Miller. The grant is entitled “The Utility of Total Lighting for Warning of Pulse-Type Thunderstorms within the Central Appalachian Mountains Region”

We are pleased to announce Geography’s award Winners at the annual CNRE awards banquet on April 9, 2013:

- **Andrew Evans** – outstanding member of the Geography Graduate Association
- **Andrew Evans** – H. E. Burkhart outstanding Masters Student in Geography
- **Daniel Goff** – outstanding senior in the Department of Geography AND the College of Natural Resources and Environment
- **Kate Jones** – Geography nominee for the David W. Smith service award
- **Clancy Jordan** – outstanding member of the Virginia Tech Geographic Society
- **James Morrow** – outstanding member of the Blue Ridge Chapter of the National Weather Association and the American Meteorological Association
- **Bob Oliver** – outstanding faculty in Geography
- Tammy Parece – A.B. Massey Outstanding PhD. student in Geography
- Justin White – outstanding teaching assistant in Geography

We thank our 2012-2013 CNRE ambassadors from the department: Adrienne Engel, Kate Jones, Clancy Jordan, Bryan Mitchell, Caitlin Pennington, Kate Sauter, and Sam Weber. The ambassadors represent the CNRE at homecoming, recruiting of new students to the college, open houses, the majors fair, career fairs and other university and college activities.

We also are proud of our members of the 2012-2013 CNRE Leadership Institute: Katy Abelt, Matt Layman, and Ryne Noska. The leadership institute is a CNRE course in the application of leadership principles in the fields of Natural Resources. Students study leadership styles and visit national leaders in Washington DC and state leaders in Richmond during the experience.

Please send your accomplishments for edition #5 to carstens@vt.edu.

Geographic Society News:

Members of the Geographic Society participated in The Big Event on Saturday, April 6. The Big Event is a university wide volunteer experience that has been ongoing at Virginia Tech for over 10 years. Students and faculty assist Blacksburg residents with any number of different household tasks such as painting or yard work. This event allows Virginia Tech to give back to the community where we are located. Geographic Society members worked for several hours trimming and pulling up bushes. Homeowner, and Virginia Tech Alumni, Rick Roth, worked side by side with the Society and was very appreciative of their efforts. He commented that he would never have been able to accomplish the work without their assistance.

Interesting Maps of the issue:

Worldmapper (http://www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk/worldmapper/) at the University of Sheffield in the UK is a collection of world map cartograms, in which territories are re-sized on each map according to the subject of interest. There are now nearly 700 maps at the site.

Can you identify any of the subjects below? In incorrect order they map: alcohol consumption, forest loss, atheists, total population, and HIV/AIDS deaths. Answers are in 1 point type to the lower right of each map – enlarge to see after you guess.
Six meteorology undergraduate students attended the Annual Meeting of the American Meteorological Society January 6-10 in Austin, Texas. Senior class students Ashley Athey, Amanda Leitz, Dan Goff, Samantha Huddleston, James Morrow, and Amanda Weigel participated in the meeting with support from department and faculty funds.

First year M.S. degree student Paul Miller and faculty member Drew Ellis were awarded a $15,000 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s COMET program to support Paul’s thesis research focusing on the use of lightning-jump algorithms for short-term warning of pulse thunderstorm severity.

Junior class meteorology majors Adrianne Engel and Kate Sauter have received funded research internships for summer 2013. Adrienne will be working with researchers in the Atmospheric, Oceanic and Space Sciences program within the College of Engineering at University of Michigan. The program is designed to provide undergraduate students with a "hands-on" research experience. Kate will be working with scientists at the Center for Multiscale Modeling of Atmospheric Processes (CMMAP) at Colorado State University. CMMAP is a National Science Foundation-funded center with a research mission to develop a new kind of global atmospheric model that better incorporates clouds and their impacts on weather and climate.

Junior Amanda Leitz received a funded internship through Ball Aerospace in Boulder Colorado for the summer. Amanda will be putting together and presenting a presentation on Hurricane Sandy and the usefulness of Ball’s Joint Polar Satellite Systems (JPSS) on the topic.

Junior Kayla Jordan was awarded a funded research internship through WeatherExtreme Ltd., a research and consulting firm based out of San Diego, CA that specializes in forensic weather reconstruction, atmospheric modeling and forecasting; she will specifically be working on research projects involving aviation accidents caused by severe weather, as well as the forecasting of mountain waves that extend into the stratosphere.
James Morrow was awarded a summer internship with WDBJ-7, the CBS affiliate in Roanoke Virginia. He will be working in the television station's Weathercenter.

Sam Weber, a senior majoring in Meteorology has been awarded an internship position at NASA’s Langley Research Center in Hampton to begin after he graduates in May.

Mike Van Atta, Bob Oliver, and Bill Carstensen presented a poster at SEDAAG entitled “Situating Low-Income Housing: An Uneven Urban Landscape.”

Faculty member Yang Shao has had a number of presentations and papers appear recently:


- Yang Shao, MODIS-based Corn Mapping in the Midwest US - Generalization of Image Classification across Time, 12th International Conference on GeoComputation

On Thursday April 11, 2013 at 7pm EST, former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd appeared via Skype with John Boyer's World Regions class at Virginia Tech. You can see the interview at http://www.ustream.tv/channel/kevin-rudd-skype-with-vt.

Meteorology major Nick Luchetti has just had an article published on-line in Earth Magazine. You can find it at http://www.earthmagazine.org/article/national-weather-service-introduces-impact-based-warnings-tornadoes

Ph.D. Candidate, Tammy Parece won 1st place in the VT Engagement Showcase Graduate Poster Competition, held on April 17, 2013 at the Inn at Virginia Tech. Her poster titled *Virginia’s K-12 Students see their World from a New Perspective* provided detailed information on the outreach activities of the Geographic Society and discussed the benefits gained by the K-12 community and undergraduate students in our department. The poster is currently on display outside Bob Oliver's office (Geographic Society Faculty Adviser).

MS Student Mike Van Atta took first place in the OGIS symposium graduate poster competition on April 19 with his poster “Constricted Urban Planning: Investigating the Site and Suitability of Low - Income Housing in Fairfax County, VA”.

Undergraduate geographers and meteorologists took all three prizes in the OGIS symposium undergraduate poster competition on April 19. Students Kevin Gervais, Eric Guenther, Alison
Regan, and Nick Luchetti, Alec Barondess and James Morrow were authors of the top posters.

Congratulations to Bob Oliver, this week’s (April 29) teacher of the week awarded by the Center for Instructional Development and Educational Research (CIDER).

A recent press release announces that PhD candidate Tammy Parece is one of eight recipients of the 2013 Cabell Brand Center's Scholarship Awards, awarded in recognition of the “commitment the students have made to spend part of their life working towards the common good”. This scholarship encourages young people to accept the challenges of diminishing poverty, promoting the environment, and advancing peace and justice. The Cabell Brand Center for Global Poverty and Resource Sustainability Studies is a non-profit organization founded in 1987, and has been giving fellowships and scholarships for 25 years.

Tim Baird has recently:

- chaired a session at AAG entitled: Beyond Borderlands: New Frontiers for Research and Education in East African Conservation Landscapes
- given a talk at AAG (in the Nystrom Award session) called: Conservation, Disturbance and Livelihood Diversification in Northern Tanzania
- received a $1500 grant from the Provost Mentoring Program
- completed the year-long New Faculty Teaching Workshop through CIDER
- welcomed the birth of Alice Margaret Baird on 4/3.

Several faculty members and graduate students attended and presented at the Annual AAG meeting in Los Angeles:

- Lynn M. Resler, Yang Shao, Emily K. Smith-McKenna, Diana F. Tomback, and George P. Malanson, Factors predicting geographic variation in whitebark pine occurrence and tree island position at three North American treelines
- Yang Shao, and Lynn M. Resler, Machine learning approaches for the prediction of whitebark pine occurrence and tree island position at three North American treelines
Emily K. Smith-McKenna, George P. Malanson, Lynn M. Resler, Laurence W. Carstensen, Stephen P. Prisley, and Diana F. Tombback. *Feedbacks, Disease, and Climate Influences on Treeline Pattern and Process: An Agent-based Model Application*


Stephanie Freund (now an MS student at the University of Nevada Reno) and Lynn M. Resler. *Insular ecosystems of the southern Appalachian Mountains.*


Haitao Wang, Lisa M Kennedy, and Yang Shao. *Land Use and Land Cover Change of a Desert City using Landsat Imagery, Zhongwei City, Northwestern China*

Taylor Seigler, James Campbell, and Yang Shao, *Quantifying changes in exurban areas with the VIS model.*

Liz Dymond, Korine Kolivras, Y. Hong, J. Li, S. Prisley, Jim Campbell, D. Gaines, and R. Dymond. *Lyme Disease in Virginia: An Exploration of Environmental Impact on Disease Spread*

Mike Van Atta, Bob Oliver, Bill Carstensen, and Ted Koebel, *Constricted Urban Planning: Investigating the Site and Suitability of Low-Income Housing in Fairfax County, VA*

Justin White, Yang Shao, Lisa Kennedy. *A 20-year land cover change analysis of La Gonave, Haiti.*


Korine Kolivras and Candice Luebbering have had a paper from Candice’s dissertation accepted for publication:


Jim Campbell was a co-author for a presentation at the recent meeting of the American Society for Photogrammetry & Remote Sensing, Baltimore:


Jim Campbell is co-author with Baojuan Zheng (a recent Virginia Tech graduate, now a postdoctoral associate at Arizona State University) for a paper recently published in *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*:


Bob Oliver and MS student Jen Porter presented a paper recently:


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**Geographic Society News**

Geographic Society members participated in Relay for Life on Friday April 19, 2013. Relay was initially delayed because of rain and finally started at 8 p.m. Members walked around a course on the Virginia Tech Drillfield for several hours. As the evening went, mud on the Drillfield deepened (see picture). Geographic Society members raised a total of $835 for the American Cancer Society.

Four Geographers after 90 minutes of walking around the Drillfield
During the week of April 21, three mobile weather units made repeated trips to the City of Roanoke to collect data for one of our Ph.D. Candidate’s dissertation research. The vehicles were driven by Dr. James Campbell, Dave Carroll, and students from Dave’s Meteorology Field Methods’ course. Dave’s students participated in the data collection in preparation for their Storm Chasing exercises, which are scheduled to begin in May. Members of the Geographic Society rode along, acting as navigators for the drivers around the city streets, and also using hand held equipment to collect temperature readings from different paved surfaces.

On the morning of Tuesday, April 22, WDBJ (local CBS station) personnel met the team in the WDBJ parking lot and conducted some brief interviews. They then followed and videoed Dr. Campbell during his data collection trip around the Roanoke Airport. A brief report was made on the local evening news that night and can be found at http://www.wdbj7.com/news/wdbj7-virginia-tech-researches-roanoke-urban-heat-island-effect-20130422,0,2950883.story.

Blue Ridge Chapter of the AWS club news

The Meteorology Club at Virginia Tech has participated in many community outreach events. In the fall of 2013, they participated in Weather Fest and the National Weather Service Open house where they helped promote Virginia Tech Meteorology and stimulate interest in the field of Atmospheric Science. Members have attended the Annual American Meteorological Society during the past few years where they obtained contacts later invited to speak during monthly meetings. In previous years, members have done presentations at elementary schools to help stimulate scientific learning. The Meteorology Club has also been involved in Relay for Life for the past three years in a row, working with the College of Natural Resources raise money towards cancer research.
Alumni (and soon to be alumni) News

Two former MS students have moved on to impressive jobs recently. We congratulate them both:

- **Melanie Stine** accepted a tenure-track position at the University of Texas-San Antonio after successfully completing her dissertation at the University of Arizona.

- **Lauren Franklin** accepted a position at the Nature Conservancy in San Antonio, Texas.

Congratulations to senior meteorology majors **Lauren Yokley** (Montana State University) and **Dan Goff** (University of South Carolina), **Amanda Weigel** (University of Alabama-Huntsville) on their offers for graduate study.

MS Student **Jennifer Porter** has been accepted at numerous schools for continuing her graduate study. At present she is leaning to the University of Washington to pursue her PhD next fall. She is a current working with **Bob Oliver**.

**Andrew Evans** is going to Texas A&M University next fall to pursue his PhD. He is currently completing his MS with **Lynn Resler**.

*Bold names* are current department members or retired department members. *Italicized and bold names* are former department members, graduates and alumni.