

MADISON GEOGRAPHIC

The Official Newsletter of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Geography Club • November 2002

THE COW IS BACK!

The Geography Club (and the famous cow t-shirts) returns to UW-Madison.

After a short hiatus, the Geography Club has now resumed activity! With the return of the Geography Club, the famous Wisconsin Geography cow t-shirt has also become available again.

The Geography Club meets every 2nd and 4th Monday of each month, at 5:45 pm in the Student Lounge (480-B Science Hall). At each meeting, the Club invites Geography graduate students to speak about their current research projects. The Club is always looking for ideas for future projects, both social and academic. Current projects include painting and redecorating the Student Lounge on November 22nd, and possible joint events with the Botany and Zoology clubs.

The Club also produces Madison Geographic, a monthly newsletter which highlights professors, classes and upcoming Club events.

If you'd like to find out more information or get involved, please come to one of our meetings, email us at uwgeogclub@yahoo.com, or drop a note in our mailbox in 384 Science Hall. Newcomers are always welcome.

Cow T-Shirts are here!

Available in five fancy color combinations for just **\$10** for short-sleeved and **\$15** for long-sleeved shirts. All proceeds benefit the Geography Club activities and adventures. To order, email: uwgeogclub@yahoo.com or drop a note in our mailbox in room 384 Science Hall.



UPCOMING GEOGRAPHY CLUB NEWS AND EVENTS

Paint Day:

Paint the Student Lounge and come to the Potluck dinner! Come help us redecorate on **November 22nd from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm** or so.

As part of the redecorating, a World Map, courtesy of National Geographic, will be put up in the Lounge. We're also looking to add student travel photos, so bring your cool photos of exotic places and pin them up!

Meetings:

The UW Geography Club meets every 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month, 5:45 in the Student Lounge, 480-B Science Hall. We usually eat **FREE PIZZA** and listen to Grad Student talk about their research and give advice. We are always looking for new projects, so bring your ideas! Everyone is welcome.

For more info about the club, email uwgeogclub@yahoo.com

CLASS SPOTLIGHT ON:

GEOGRAPHY 377 INTRO TO GIS

Interview with Professor A-Xing Zhu
by Aaron Stephenson

Q. What is GIS?

A. GIS stands for Geographic Information Systems, and basically it is a set of computer techniques used to store, manage, analyze, and present geographic information.

Q. What will students learn in this class? What kind of work is involved?

A. In the lecture, they will learn basic concepts and theories in representing, storing, presenting, and analyzing information. In the lab portion, they will learn how to conduct GIS operations through exercises in cases where they will use data compilation, analysis, and presentation techniques. The idea of the course is to build a foundation for students in GIS.

Q. What are some real-world uses for GIS?

A. Anything that requires geographic of spatial data can use GIS, from resource management to political decision-making (both civil and military).

Q. What kind of careers are available to someone experienced in GIS?

A. Anything from government agencies where one can be a GIS specialist, to private companies where one can be a GIS analyst or create GIS computer programs, and it is even common for people to start their own consulting firms.

Q. Where did GIS come from?

A. It is actually the end result of many decades of a coming-together of three fields: computer cartography, quantitative geography, and computer science.

Q. What is the most interesting thing about GIS, at least for you?

A. I like all sorts of things about it, but perhaps the aspect I enjoy most is developing techniques to solve problems in physical geography.

Q. One last question I'm sure all prospective students want to know: How hard are the exams?

A. <laughs> Well, that's hard to answer. It is a very relative thing. For students who work diligently, do the readings, come to lecture, use my office hours, and want to learn about GIS, they aren't that difficult. Certainly, to get an A, one must study; but then, if one is aiming for a C, the exams aren't that hard to do. <smiles and laughs>

Professor of the Month: Patrick Moss

Patrick Moss is teaching Geography 339 (Environmental Conservation) and Geography 120 (Global Physical Environments) this semester.

What got you started in Geography?

I started out as a physics student my freshmen year of college and didn't like it. After looking around for a different major, geography interested me and I stuck with it.

How many places have you lived and where?

I grew up in Melbourne and attended the University of Melbourne where I received a BS in ecology and a BA with honors in Geography. I then studied the last two year in Iowa City at the University of Iowa and now I'm in Madison.

What are you currently researching?

I am a paleoecologist so I am studying fossil pollen grains from the last 100,000 years or so in Northeast Australia and the Midwestern United States.

Do you have any fun field work study stories?

On my first day working on my PHD I found myself on a boat on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.

What passions you in your area of teaching?

I enjoy helping students learn and understand concepts. I also enjoy uncovering the truth behind things and exposing students to that. The media can sometimes warp things and it's our job to uncover the truth.

Do you have any advice for undergrads in the Geography department?

Just enjoy yourself and enjoy your time here. We are fortunate in our department to have a large breadth of studies so even if your area of interest is in, for example, physical geography you can take geography classes that deal with human geography or other areas.

What is the strangest place you have ever traveled to?

As part of some field work I went to Ngarragullgan in Northeastern Australia. It's an archeological site that is also a sacred Aboriginal site that they believe is occupied by evil spirits. An elder of the Aboriginal tribe took us to the site, which is miles from any civilization, and the entire time was making noises in an attempt to scare off the evil spirits.

What is your favorite place in Wisconsin?

Since I haven't been many places yet I would say Madison. It's like Iowa City, but bigger and better.

What is your favorite movie?

Star Wars Episode 4

What is your favorite food or restaurant?

Shish Café on the west side.

What is your favorite beer?

James Boags, it's a Tasmanian beer and a premium lager.

What is your favorite type of music or band/group?

Pearl Jam

What is your favorite animal and do you have any pets?

I don't have any pets, but my favorite animal is the Tasmanian Devil.

Have you ever had a near death experience?

During a three day drive across Australia we where coming up to a town called Dubbo. As we approached the last hill before the town a truck coming towards us had jackknifed and was coming sideways straight for us. I closed my eyes and thought that was the end. When I opened my eyes we were ok and somehow we got around the truck and only scraped one side of the car.

Have you ever gotten lost before and where?

All the one way streets in Madison are probably the worst.

Are there any odd facts about you that someone wouldn't normally know?

I am a supporter of the North Melbourne Kangaroos Australian Rules Football Club.

**Coming next month ...
Professor THOMAS VALE!**

The ^{of} Mysterious Doors ^{of} Science Hall



Come see the Student Lounge door and Geography Club home on the fourth floor of Science Hall. Just follow the signs to Room 480-B!

Have you ever noticed an abundance of doors that lead nowhere scattered about Science Hall? Did you ever enter a room and then wonder which door you came from? Have you always wanted to open one of those tiny doors in the hallways? Soon, all your questions will be answered.

This month begins a new series devoted to all the odd-sized doors in strange places throughout Science Hall. And, since this is the first issue of Madison Geography, it seemed only appropriate to feature the most important door in Science Hall – the door to **480-B, the Student Lounge and home to the Geography Club.**

This door may not look unusual, but if you've ever been up to the lounge, you know that it's at the end of a very convoluted passage and leads through an odd doorway (watch your head) to a strange room with many other doors and an assortment of mix-matched furniture. The special thing about this door, however, is that it loves visitors and is always open for new company. So, if you're looking for a place to study, keep a lunch cold in our huge red-light fridge, or just hang out, the door to the student lounge is waiting for you!

PICTURE OF THE MONTH



**SWANS ON UNIVERSITY BAY,
LAKE MENDOTA**
Photograph by Marie Pepler

PICTURE OF THE MONTH will usually run on the cover, so send your submissions to uwgeogclub@yahoo.com or drop them in the Geography Club mailbox in Rm. 384. See Your Photos Here!!!