STUDENT LOUNGE RECEIVES FACE-LIFT

The geography student lounge has been undergoing significant restoration and reorganization, and now serves as a comfortable room to work or relax. The Geography Club would like to thank the department for its generous donations of space and assistance in this endeavor.

On November 22, geography students Dan Adams, Jen Bruce, Andrea Nesbit, Jessie Olson, Marie Peppler, and Nathan Zukas gathered to paint the lounge, which now presents a much fresher face. Special thanks to Marie Peppler’s father, who built the new coat rack. In addition, the lounge was cleaned and organized to be made ready for student use. As a crowning touch, the cow logo that many of you will recognize from the Geography Club’s t-shirts was also painted on the wall. Thanks to all who helped paint or clean!

Have a spare couch, clock, radio or bulletin board? Donate it to the student lounge!

The geography club is looking to outfit the lounge with more couches; if you have a couch to donate, the club would gladly pick it up. Also, donations of a clock, radio or bulletin boards would be greatly appreciated. Contact Marie Peppler at marie@peppler.com if you have any items you would like to donate.

The student lounge can be found in room 480-2, down the hallway past the History of Cartography project. The lounge receives an especially strong wireless internet signal, and is home to a microwave and refrigerator for all your victual preparation needs. Feel free to stop by anytime.

Written by Nate Gauger

UPCOMING GEOGRAPHY CLUB NEWS AND EVENTS

Geography Meeting Day Has Changed!
Due to scheduling conflicts, the Geography Club will now meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month, at 5:30 p.m. in the Student Lounge of Science Hall (Room 480-2). Everyone is welcome.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 11 at 5:30 p.m.
We will be hosting two graduate students who will give presentations on their current research. FREE PIZZA will also be provided.

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Professor of the Month: Madeleine Wong

Madeleine Wong is teaching Geog 360 Quantitative Methods—Geographic Analysis (a.k.a.—Stats— and a required course for Geography majors). She is also the coordinator for Geog 277 Africa: An Introductory Survey.

What got you started in Geography?
I was always number one in my Geography classes in school, and, more importantly, ahead of the boys! That got me more interested and then I worked harder.

What are you currently researching?
I am looking at the trans-national interactions between Ghanaian immigrant communities in the United States and their home communities in Ghana.

Do you have a fun or interesting field research story?
When I was conducting interviews in Ghana, I had to be escorted by a male for safety and cultural reasons even though I speak the language and I am from there. I also did the most interesting interviews at the local drinking hole. It was the best place to get information. When people were tipsy they gave more information about their life in Ghana and their relationships with relatives abroad.

What passions you in your area of teaching? Stats! (She laughs.) It’s hard to teach but I feel good afterwards because I think I teach it in a way that people can benefit whether they wanted to take the class or not. I also like to bring in an international perspective into everything I teach.

Do you have any advice for undergrads in Geography?
If you have questions in my class, come and talk to me. Also, diversify what you are learning by taking credits outside of Geography. Studying Geography allows you to integrate it all. Do something you are passionate about.

Where are you from originally?
Ghana. Don’t be like me and ask, “So is Ghana a city or a state in Africa?!” Opps! For all of you great Geography students like myself, Ghana is a country in West Africa, to the East of the country named Côte d’Ivoire (formally Ivory Coast).

How many places have you lived and where?
1) Ghana
2) Sevenoaks, England
3) South Hadley, MA (college)
4) Boca Raton, FL
5) Toronto, Canada
6) Hamilton, NY
7) Madison.
My family lives in Maryland.

What is your favorite place you have traveled?
I love England; I try to go there once a year.

What is your favorite place outside the U.S.? Home! In Ghana.

What’s your favorite place in Wisconsin?
I’ve only been to Madison. I haven’t even been to Milwaukee except for the airport!

What’s your favorite movie?
Lord of the Rings is my current favorite movie.

What’s your favorite food and/or restaurant?
Fufu (a dumpling) and Palm nut soup—Ghanaian food. I also like Chinese food and restaurants.

What’s your favorite beer or beverage?
Cranberry juice.

What’s your favorite type of music and/or singer?
I enjoy a wide range of music. I like Zouk (Caribbean), Highlife (type of Ghanaian music), Reggae and Gospel. For a singer, I like Angelique Kidjo. She is from Benin (second country east of Ghana).

Do you have any pets? What is your favorite animal?
I do not have any pets, but I like animals.

Do you have any special talents?
I am a tennis buff.

What is an odd fact about you?
I am tone deaf and can’t sing a note, but I like to sing in the shower.

Have you ever had a near death experience?
Not exactly—see the next question.

Have you ever gotten lost before and where?
I got lost while skiing with a group in the Canadian Arctic in northern Ontario. We were trying to find the nearest shanty on the ice but couldn’t find anyone. Of course, we were being led by a Geography grad student with a map! They had to send out snowmobiles to look for us. We were out for a very long time and all of us were freezing and a little scared.

Thank you very much for the interview Prof. Wong. Would you like to leave us with a favorite quote?
“Keep hope alive.”

Interview and text by Andrea Nesbit

PUZZLE OF THE MONTH

Why did the sophomore refuse to date the geology assistant?

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The Mysterious Doors of Science Hall

Following the advice of Cheryl Murray, Department Administrator (and keeper of the keys to science hall), we traveled to the basement of Science Hall. This floor is home to the Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, and many Mysterious Doors!

This month’s door is found immediately at the bottom of the main staircase. It is a rather inconspicuous door, deceptively ordinary in size and shape, but, as we have learned, even the most ordinary of doors can be mysterious! In fact the only peculiar aspect of this door was the unusually wide metal frame and a curious droning hum emanating faintly from it. What was that hum? Were there ghosts trying to break free from behind that door? Is Science Hall actually haunted, as so many UW tour guides have told us?

Once again, Cheryl brought out her keys and slowly the door creaked open. As it opened, the humming grew louder and a faint but noticeable breeze began as the air in the hall was sucked into the room. I was just about to go with my prior assumption that there were in fact ghosts inhabiting this area of Science Hall and run, when I saw it — a really big fan.

As it turns out, this door is the access point to the steam tunnels. The room was filled with pipes and air ducts, looking conspicuously like the ghost containment apparatus from the movie Ghostbusters. So once again, there were no startling inhabitants found (living or otherwise) but another door was made a little less mysterious.

Written by Aaron Reiner

INSIDE ROOM 50 OF THE SCIENCE HALL BASEMENT:
This place is kind of creepy, and that is one big fan!
CLASS SPOTLIGHT ON:
GEOGRAPHY 370 INTRODUCTION TO CARTOGRAPHY
Interview with Professor Hong Jiang

Q: What aspects of map-making are covered in an introductory cartography course?
A: This is the first course on the subject for majors, and it serves as a broad introduction to cartography, with a dual emphasis on the theory and practice of making maps. The objective is to help students develop the faculty to think critically about cartographic processes and representations and to develop their skills in creating maps, especially thematic maps.

Q: How do you balance teaching cartography as both a science and an art?
A: The course focuses on the scientific aspects of map making, although it also touches upon the "artistic" aspect of map design. Let me use an analogy: to write elegantly, one first has to be able to communicate clearly and accurately, for which one needs to obtain basic literacy in writing. This course provides the "basic literacy" in cartographic representation and design. Students who are interested in the "artistic" aspect of map making need to take additional courses (Geog 572).

Q: Do students actually create maps? What tools are used to do so?
A: Making maps is the key practice required in labs and in student individual projects. The software packages used are ArcView GIS and Adobe Illustrator.

Q: How has computer technology affected the way cartography is taught? Do you feel that the ease of computer mapping in any way hinders the quality of learning that students receive?
A: While basic principles in mapping are covered, the course focuses on those mapping techniques that can be more easily rendered in computers; manual cartography is not covered. Lab exercises are done primarily with the aid of computers. The key drawback of computer mapping is, perhaps, that it is too easy to make bad maps. To encourage the students to look at maps critically, we (Professor Harrower, who teaches the class during the fall semester, and I) have made map critique an important activity in class. I do not think the quality of learning is compromised; just the contrary, computer technology has allowed students to make more effective maps, faster.

Q: How will the knowledge gained in this course complement other geography concentrations?
A: This is a required course for all geography majors, rightly so because it will help students in other concentrations to effective communicate spatial information and visualize spatial phenomena, be it about the physical environment, resource use, or the human society.

Q: Is there a large demand for jobs/research in today's cartography field?
A: In today's job market, demand for cartographic skills is increasingly combined with requirements in spatial data analysis (i.e., both cartography and GIS). In a previous interview, Professor Zhu has talked about related job opportunities.

Q: What fascinates you most about cartography?
A: It is the power of maps to connect that fascinates me. Let me explain this with my own experience. In my travels, wherever I go, I always try to obtain a map of the place first. Perhaps I have not developed an ability to orient myself well on earth, maps help me locate myself in the cosmos; they give me a feeling of knowing a place that cannot be replaced by any other means, not even by reality itself! Without maps (physical or mental), spatial reality experienced can often feel segmented and isolated.

A final question asked of Professor Jiang was what seemed to fascinate her students most about learning cartography. She wanted to speak to her class and get their opinion, however, time did not permit. So ask your friends that have taken this class and others; hopefully they will agree that cartography is pretty amazing!

Interview and text by Amber Woods