

MADISON GEOGRAPHIC

The Official Newsletter of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Geography Club • December 2008

UPCOMING GEOGRAPHY CLUB NEWS AND EVENTS

T-Shirts:

Buy a Geography T-Shirt! Perfect Holiday presents for friends and family! Only \$10 per shirt! \$15 for tie-dye! And they come in 6 different colors! E-mail maggie.strassman@gmail.com for more info or stop by Sunshine's office (room 160 Science Hall.)

Meetings:

The UW Geography Club meets every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:00pm in room 388 Science Hall. We usually eat FREE PIZZA and we are always looking for new projects, so bring your ideas! Everyone is welcome.

AAG:

We're going to Vegas, baby! If you are interested in being part of the Quizbowl team at the National AAG Meeting, or if you want to just come along for the ride, stay on the lookout for updates from the Club about deadlines and Quizbowl tryouts! Go to aag.org to learn more about the meeting, held March 22-27, 2009

For more info about the club, email maggie.strassman@gmail.com

GEOGRAPHY AWARENESS WEEK HUGE SUCCESS

By Adam Nellesen

The Geography Club, alongside the Elementary Education Club, recently participated in Geography Awareness Week. According to a National Geographic website, GAW is a program launched in 1987 by presidential proclamation which is held every third week in November to promote the importance of geography education in the United States. This year the Geography Club, with incredible help and organization from GIS Certificate Program Manager Karen Tuerk, visited 22 local area elementary school classrooms to give interactive presentations focused on Africa. The presentations included activities that attempted to show the diversity of cultures, physical features, languages, and other aspects of the continent.

Overall, the presentations went amazingly well, from the enthusiasm of the presenters to the excitement of all those in the classrooms, which ranged from kindergarten to 5th grade. The organizers chose the theme of Africa because, of all the continents, Africa is the one about which studies show young children know the least. Diversity across space was the biggest idea that Club members tried to emphasize in order to enlighten the children about the so-called "Dark Continent."

AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR BOB OSTERGREN

Q: Where are you originally from?

A: I grew up in the Twin Cities, and went to the University of Minnesota.

Q: What got you started in Geography/European studies?

A: Like so many others, I discovered geography late. I was originally a history major before I became interested in historical/cultural geography.

Q: What are you currently researching?

A: I am currently working on a book with one of my former graduate students, entitled Building Nazi Germany, in which I am exploring how during the 1930s the Nazis made special use of space and architecture to further their political agenda.

Q: Do you have any advice for undergrads?

A: I think our majors should try to get to know the field as broadly as possible. Take as many courses as you can, and don't be afraid to branch out into different areas of the discipline.



Continued on next page

"SOME OF EUROPE'S OTHER CITIES" WORD SEARCH

AARHUS
 AKUREYRI
 ANTWERP
 BERGEN
 BITOLA
 BRNO
 CORK
 DAUGAVPILS
 DEBRECEN
 DRESDEN
 DURRES
 GOTHENBURG
 GRAZ
 HOMEL
 IASI
 KAUNAS

L O M R E L A P A V T K U D J R S E X R K G
 U A H P Q V D T I I O H T I R A S P O L O C
 C O I O O R L K C D A N C U A K P B W T X D
 E J C R E R A Z N V G N R E W A I Q H A M Y
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 N E D T N E E O L L N E K W O T N H L J N E
 E E J A X C R D A P A S R M E B U O U U C R
 N O S B E Q K U V L A P O R U R T K I S H G
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 L E B C Y U A M M A C I G E B D F F S K S N
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 O G E U S L I P V A G U A D G F T L D V R Q
 W W R T P E C I S O K Z C A T H Y Y F W X K
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 P V C E Z G H Q V O P G Y R X A T D C X Y A
 E Z H V V C W N L L G M O D H P X C M B S J

KHARKIV
 KOSICE
 LODZ
 LUCERNE
 LYON
 MANCHESTER
 MORIBOR
 PALERMO
 PLOVDIV
 PORTO
 SCHAAN
 SPLIT
 TARTU
 TIRASPOL
 TURKU
 UTRECHT
 VALENCIA

Created By Matt VanOosten

GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION IN MIDDLE

SCHOOLS: PART ONE

By Nick Murphy

Last spring, I graduated from this university with a degree in geography. This fall, I am attending the UW School of Education Secondary Social Studies Program so I can teach social studies to middle and high school students. This semester I observed a 7th grade geography class at a Madison middle school.

Before I arrived, I had no idea what to expect. I feared it might resemble the class I remember taking in 7th grade, which was really a history class inexplicably labeled geography on my report card. Fortunately this wasn't the case, as I arrived to find the students being taught about the seasons. The students soon were tasked with mastering contour maps and vertical profiles, as well as learning about immigration and globalization. We even had a geocaching activity with GPS units outside the school.

This all seems great, right? Then why is it said that Americans don't know their geography? Perhaps this is obvious. Not every school has a geography class taught

in this way, especially high schools. Americans would have an absolutely atrocious knowledge of history if it was taught as infrequently and carelessly as geography is. But even when it is taught, geography is often a collection of facts that students are to memorize from a textbook. The general population doesn't typically see it the way us folks at Science Hall do: as a dynamic and integrating process of exploration.

I hope more undergraduates with a passion for geography consider teaching as a career, in part because I get lonely being the only geography major surrounded by history majors in my School of Ed classes, but also because Americans should get an opportunity to learn the importance of our discipline. Then hopefully, someday, when we tell people we are geographers, they won't assume our major contribution to society is our ability to recite all 50 state capitals.

Tune in next semester when I write about the State of Geography in a high school near you!

Interview with Prof. Ostergren continued...

Q: How many places have you lived and where?

A: Here in the U.S., I have lived mostly in the Midwest (South Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin). I've also lived for periods of time in Europe, most often in Sweden.

Q: What's your favorite place you have traveled to?

A: That's a tough question because I have been so many places that I really enjoyed, but I think the most intriguing place (and the place to which I would most like to return right now) was Istanbul.

Q: What's your favorite place in Wisconsin?

A: Madison, of course; but I'm also fascinated with some of the older neighborhoods in Milwaukee.

Q: What's your favorite animal? Do you have any pets?

A: I like dogs, but don't have one at the moment. For a long time, we had a little West Highland Terrier, to which I was very much attached. Haven't gotten another dog since he died.

Thanks to Genevieve Schaad and Rebecca Wangard for this interview.