It is 27 years since I joined Geography at SDSU and now, after my five year stint as Department Chair, I feel more rooted to this place than ever. I don't want the accompanying photograph to suggest that we are an ancient institution (although our centennial is just around the corner), but I think we are megalithic in the sense that the Department is well-grounded and stands the test of time (and precarious budget years).

The year I was voted in as Chair was the same year that the California budget crisis officially started and the summer of 2013 marks the end of the crisis (although perhaps not officially). This is the first summer as Chair that I have not been involved in budget-crisis meetings, and I am feeling rather light-headed and giddy.

I am not sure I like the moniker of Churchill Chair (Sir Winston and I differ hugely in our politics, gambling, and drinking habits), although it is not a stretch to think of 2008-2013 as SDSU’s war years. Our state budget was slashed, salaries and hiring were frozen, and programs were cut.

It is testimony to our megalithic foundations in excellent research and teaching that we survived these years relatively unscathed; indeed, we have done remarkably well these last five years. Here are some highlights: two successful external reviews in November 2010 and 2012 respectively; three new endowments and two new scholarships; the number of our undergraduate majors increased from 81 in 2008 to 153 in 2013; we held on to all of our lecturers and hired three new tenure track positions (Kate Swanson in 2008, and Anne-Marie Debbané and Arielle Levine in 2011); nine of our tenured and tenure-track faculty secured promotions; five faculty received honors and/or awards including the prestigious Albert V. Johnson Award to John Weeks; we hired a new staff member (Allison Bailund in 2011) and have just secured permission to hire another new staff person this Fall. We are also looking at some new faculty hiring as part of our contributions to two the new Clusters of Excellence (see note from Ming-Hsiang Tsou below).

From the four new Clusters of Excellence that were established this Spring, Geography is part of two: not too shoddy a result! And worth noting on its own is the Outstanding Department Award, which we received from SDSU Associated Students in 2012. I could go on at length about individual faculty accomplishments — grants secured, books written, classes developed, programs established — that helped propel us through these tough times but I think you get the idea.

Continued page: 11
Drs. Li An, Stuart Aitken, and Doug Stow received an NSF award of $1.3 million for four years (2012-2016) in July, 2012. This project, entitled “CNH: Sustainability of Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) in Coupled Natural and Human Systems”, is featured by collaboration with researchers from multiple campuses and multiple disciplines: Drs. Rebecca Lewison from SDSU Biology, Minjuan Wang from SDSU Educational Technology, Richard Bilsborrow from Biostatistics at UNC Chapel Hill, and Xiaodong Chen from Geography at UNC Chapel Hill.

The study site is Fanjingshan National Nature Reserve (FNNR), a high priority conservation area in China, and the only habitat of the endangered Guizhou Golden Monkey in the world. The interdisciplinary project is characterized by the collection of a wide range of data, including demographic and socioeconomic data from extensive household surveys and participatory mapping; land-use and land-cover data from remote sensing and vegetation surveys; and monkey habitat use data from digital camera trapping. With such extensive data, this project aims to reveal how coupled natural and human (CNH) systems (characterized by human livelihood, demography, the environment, and their reciprocal relationships) may interact with local Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) programs over space and time. The project will not only enhance local environmental policy making, but also shed light into research questions of global importance that are related to improving the effectiveness and sustainability of PES programs. In addition, this project educates K-12 students and teachers in both the United States and China through on-site workshops and online communications, helping develop PES related curricula and train future academic leaders in multiple disciplines.

Two fieldwork sessions have already wrapped up with preliminary vegetation cover and socioeconomic data collected for the study area. More comprehensive and in-depth surveys will be carried out in the upcoming 2013-14 academic year.

Professor Kathleen Farley continues to do research on land-use change, production of and payment for ecosystem services, and conservation policy. Her project on these themes in the Ecuadorian Andes is wrapping up and she and her collaborators have been giving talks and publishing the results of this work, with articles in Conservation Letters and the Annals of the Association of American Geographers coming out over the last year.

Leah Bremer, who graduated from the Joint Doctoral Program in August 2012, continues to be involved in this work while also doing postdoctoral research at The Natural Capital Project at Stanford University and at the University of Hawaii. Professor Farley’s newest research project brings some of these themes to a local context. In collaboration
with Professor Levine, they are evaluating participation in conservation programs among ranchers in San Diego County and the potential for Payment for Ecosystem Services to incentivize conservation of southern California rangelands. They will begin interviewing ranchers this summer. In teaching news, Kathleen taught Geography 570 in Spring 2012 and joined Professors Richardson and Costello in taking her class to Yosemite National Park, where they learned about vegetation change in Yosemite Valley over the past 150 years and its relationship to fire management.

Dr. Arielle Levine’s research focuses on human-environment interactions in marine and coastal regions. Over the past few years, Dr. Levine has been examining community involvement in fisheries co-management efforts in American Samoa and Hawaii, where local communities partner with government agencies to control marine resource extraction in their local areas. Her research documents the outcomes and implications of Community-based Fisheries Management programs in those island groups, as well as factors that contribute to or inhibit successful fisheries co-management regimes. Dr. Levine has also collaborated with local natural resource agencies on these islands to document human coastal use patterns through participatory mapping. Most recently, she collaborated with NOAA’s Pacific Services Center, as well as American Samoa’s Coastal Management Program and Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, to document the spatial range and intensity of extractive, industrial, and recreational activities in the Fagaloa harbor region of American Samoa. In the coming year, this project will be extended to map human activities in the coastal and watershed area of locations targeted for a regional marine protected area.

Dr. Levine has also been working with Ph.D. student Jaime Rossiter to examine marine protected areas (MPAs) on Hawaii Island. Rossiter spent the summer conducting interviews with local resource managers, fishermen, conservation organizations, and other stakeholders to better understand local perceptions of and responses to MPAs. Levine and Rossiter recently completed a paper examining the unique contextual variables that have contributed to the successful outcomes of Hawaii’s Fish Replenishment Areas.

Dr. John O’Leary continues to teach courses in introductory physical geography (recently renamed ‘Earth’s Physical Environment’), the geography of natural vegetation, regional climatology, and the teaching of college geography. He also continues to supervise the four teaching assistants who teach the eight Earth’s Physical Environment labs. During spring/early summer of 2012 and continuing until April 2013, he has been working with a doctoral student (Kelie Uyeda) and master’s student (Ian Schmidt) in measuring biomass of chaparral shrubs in the San Dimas Experimental Forest in the San Gabriel Mountains and near Kitchen Creek in eastern San Diego county. This effort is part of a larger research project funded by the US Forest Service. The overall goal is to utilize remote sensing technology to estimate annual peak fuel biomass and dry season biomass in chaparral vegetation over the southern California region. This spatially explicit information may be used to predict wildfire spread in the wildland-urban interface. Doug Stow is the project’s principal investigator, and Drs. Allen Hope and Ming-Hsiang Tsou are co-investigators.

Dr. Ming-Hsiang Tsou and his student, Cynthia Paloma, developed a Collaborative Multimedia Textbook for iPads.

The Introduction to GIScience iBook leverages the capabilities of iBooks to deliver rich, interactive content.

Local participant in mapping workshop, American Samoa
on the iPad. This iBook is designed to capture the attention of digital and mobile natives; the target audience is high school, community college, and first year undergraduate university students. The price will be right as well: Free! Funding support for this project is through the National Science Foundation, GeoTech Center and SDSU Geography. Download URL: http://mappingideas.sdsu.edu:8080/Book/public/Download/view

The GIScience iBook prototype includes Chapter 1, the first section of Chapter 2 and the rough outline for the rest of the textbook. We hope to encourage collaborators to contribute content for the other chapters in the iBook by demonstrating the potential of iBooks to enhance text with rich interactive multimedia content on a mobile internet-connected iPad. You do not need a Mac or iPad to participate as a contributor or reviewer. You may contribute your content in a standard format; we will integrate them into the iBook. For more information, please contact Cynthia Paloma: paloma “at” rohan.sdsu.edu.

Building a New Research Cluster, Human Dynamics in the Mobile Age (HDMA)

In 2013, one of the major initiatives in the university’s strategic plan was to support areas of excellence, largely through cluster faculty hires. Dr. Ming-Hsiang Tsou coordinated with 28 faculty members from three different colleges to build a new research cluster, called “Human Dynamics in the Mobile Age (HDMA).” With 28 full proposals submitted from different departments, only four proposals were selected by the University committee. HDMA is one of the four and the only one from the College of Arts and Letters. This new HDMA research cluster will focus on the research opportunities that spring from the convergence of new developments in spatial science, mobile technology, big data, and social behavior research.

There is growing recognition of the importance of spatial and temporal dynamic relationships in explaining processes relevant to human behaviors, public health, and social activities, which has become known as the “spatial turn.” A maturing of mobile technology and smart phone devices enables social scientists to collect data on human activities and behavior digitally and to transform their research from qualitative analysis to computational modeling, simulation, and predictions with the focus on dynamic spatial and temporal relationships. Four new faculty lines (in Public Health, Geography, Sociology, and Communication) will be created in 2014 and 2015 to enable synergetic research collaboration among different colleges and departments.

Our vision for developing the HDMA area of excellence across the Colleges of Arts and Letters, PSFA, and CHHS, is to generate new multiple large-size, collaborative human dynamics research projects ($5 - $10 million per year from NSF, NIH, DoD, NICHD, National Institute of Justice, and private sectors) involving new hires, core faculty members, and other faculty members participating in the HDMA cluster. SDSU will become the national leading research university in the area of human dynamics, public health, spatial science, big data, and social behavior science.

SDSU to Take Statewide Leadership Role in Geo-Education

Beginning in Summer 2013, the Department of Geography becomes the host institution for the California Geographic Alliance (CGA). With core funding from the National Geographic Education Foundation, the CGA promotes geographic education through policy advocacy and teacher professional development and works to improve geographic literacy across the state of California. The leadership team at SDSU includes Dr. Kate Swanson (Alliance Coordinator), Dr. Thomas Herman (Operations Manager), Dr. Stuart Aitken (Assistant Coordinator),
and Dr. Ming-Hsiang Tsou (Geospatial Technology Coordinator). As Alliance hosts, our goal is revolutionize K-12 geography education in California across all grade levels using cutting-edge multimedia/mapping technologies. We also hope to move the CGA toward becoming a self-sustaining organization and to increase the number of incoming college freshmen selecting geography as a major.

Our specific plans include developing a digitized, interactive California atlas to be used in schools (and informal education venues) across the state. We also hope to develop a content-rich, media-savvy website that contains: student-led research projects; professionally designed curriculum; educational resources (videos, podcasts, and other digital content); and a career pathways component to promote jobs in geography. Ultimately, we hope to inspire youth to become more invested in geography through geography awareness week activities, K-12 geography courses and content infused into other areas of the curriculum, youth summer institutes, and student-led research projects focused on critical social and environmental issues in their communities. Overall, the SDSU leadership team is tremendously excited to work with the CGA’s dynamic membership on innovative and effective strategies for improving geography education, as well as increasing geographic literacy across the state.

American Indian Youth and Geography
The Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of Youth and Space has launched a new initiative to work with Native American children and youth in the San Diego area to promote the pursuit of a college education and expose them to the value of geography as a field of study. In Summer 2013, Ph.D. students Lydia Wood and Sam Cortez are working with faculty members Kate Swanson, Thomas Herman (Adjunct), and Giorgio Curti (Adjunct) – as well as David Kamper from American Indian Studies — to bring geography learning activities into the American Indian Recruitment Program (AIR). AIR has been working to increase Native American participation in higher education for over ten years, and this new partnership, funded by a President’s Leadership Fund award, helps SDSU geographers make connections with local indigenous youth and their communities. During the 2013-14 school year, an SDSU team will continue to mentor 3-4 Native American high school youth, engaging in geographic research and fieldwork to increase their understanding of issues facing indigenous communities and connect them to community leaders who are working on these issues. This year-long mentorship program is funded by a $10,000 grant from the HDR Foundation.

Geography Classes Online
This last semester, Dr. Stuart Aitken and Diana Richardson joined the growing ranks of faculty who are teaching online; they both took the University’s semester-long instruction on how to teach a Distance Education (DE) course and then took the leap with their summer courses: Geography 102, People, Places and Environment (Aitken), and Geography 321, United States Geography (Richardson). Both reported great success and they look forward to teaching more online or hybrid courses.

Richardson’s 321 class last summer had 18 people enrolled in the face-to-face format; this year the same course online had 54 students. The trend is clear. More students, especially during the summer, are taking DEs. Many SDSU students work, travel, go home, or are otherwise not on or near campus during the summer, yet still need to stay on track, catch up, or get ahead; the online format gives them an opportunity to do this. Design of the course and communication between faculty and students is critical in making an online course successful. Richardson
even offered a “real” field trip to her students to Cuyamaca Rancho State Park; approximately 2/3rds of the class made the trip and very much enjoyed the interaction.

Message from the Incoming Department Chair, Dr. Piotr Jankowski
This is an exciting time for Geography at SDSU. The department has successfully participated in two proposals for developing research clusters of excellence at SDSU; Human Dynamics in the Mobile Age and Climate and Sustainability Studies. These have been two out of four research clusters recently selected in an open competition, which attracted 28 proposals from various interdisciplinary teams at SDSU. As a result, the department will fill two new faculty positions; one in spatio-temporal data analytics and the other in climate modeling. These positions will strengthen two of department’s concentration areas: Geographic Information Science and Physical Geography, and broaden possibilities for cross-disciplinary collaborations.

I look forward to the opportunities and challenges that will inevitably arise during my term as the new department chair. The department offers high quality undergraduate and graduate degree programs and its faculty members carry out nationally and internationally recognized research, which was clearly underscored by two recent external reviews. I will work with my colleagues to maintain the high quality of these programs and ensure the department’s standing as one of the leading academic departments at SDSU. I look forward to meeting many of you and to hearing your ideas concerning the future of the department.

Professor John Weeks Retiring
Professor John R. Weeks recently transitioned from full professor to emeritus professor. During his almost forty years at SDSU, John has assembled an impressive record of research and scholarship, gaining him national and international recognition as a social scientist with expertise in demography, spatial demographics and GIScience. His work is well known in the fields of geography, demography, public health, sociology, and urban planning. With around eighty articles and chapters in academic journals and seven books, John has compiled an impressive record of scholarly publications. One, Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Issues, has been the leading introductory text in demography for the last thirty years.

Since coming to Geography twenty-one years ago, John’s interests have moved from demography in general to a more specific focus on spatial demographics, a field of study for which he is now one of the world’s leaders. His work has produced new and exciting ways of analyzing and interpreting demographic patterns and processes by utilizing census data, qualitative information from surveys, remotely sensed imagery, spatial statistics, and models from GIScience.

Five years ago, John was awarded a $3,000,000 grant (on which he is PI) from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development for a project entitled “Health, Poverty, and Place: Modeling Inequalities in Accra Using Remote Sensing and GIS.” This project forwarded his long-standing interests in the spatial inequalities of health and wellbeing in African urban areas, which is continuing with support from a NASA Interdisciplinary Earth Science award. Using spatial demographic techniques, John and his colleagues uncover new patterns of women’s and children’s health, fertility, and poverty.

Here in San Diego County, John has been involved with developing health indicators for immigrant populations, focusing on a variety of topics including the spatial aspects of crime, reproductive changes amongst women, and infant health and mortality (with Rubén G. Rumbaut). In addition he has worked with Professors Jankowski and Stow (with NASA funding) on origin-destination analyses of undocumented Mexican immigrants.

John also works tirelessly for his graduate students and will continue to do so as an emeritus...
professor. To date, he has chaired six doctoral dissertation committees and twenty master’s thesis committees, and contributed as second or outside reader on thirty more. His research funding supports many of these students, and his commitment goes beyond their graduation.

In sum, John is not only the epitome of our teacher-scholar model, he is one of SDSU’s pre-eminent scientists and scholars. There is no doubt that his work has helped the Department achieve its top ranking as a graduate program in the U.S. He is an inspiration to his colleagues and students in geography and the College of Arts and Letters. This is not just here-say; in 2001 John was selected to give SDSU’s Phi Beta Kappa lecture, and in 2003 he was awarded a “Monty” as an outstanding colleague. In 2008, he was made a fellow of the California Council on Science and Technology. These honors and awards notwithstanding, John is a truly wonderful colleague. His door is always open and he is always willing to spend time with whomever knocks seeking advice: whether that is the Department’s Chair or a first year undergraduate student. We are happy to welcome John’s continued activities.

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Don I. Eidemiller an old colleague and friend of the Department passed in February this year. He was 92 years old.

Don graduated from San Diego State College in 1943 whereupon he attended the U.S. Naval Reserve Midshipmen’s School at Northwestern University in Chicago. Finishing his schooling in 1943, he was assigned to Amphibious Forces-Atlantic. Don was in the first wave on Utah Beach, Normandy, France on June 6, 1944 (D-Day) and served as a Navy weatherman.

Following his service, Don earned a master’s degree in physical geography from the University of California, Berkeley in May 1949 and later that year accepted the position of assistant professor at Texas A & M. In May 1956 he earned a Ph.D. from Indiana University in climatology and in September joined the faculty at San Diego State College where he taught physical geography, meteorology, and climatology.

Don was instrumental in establishing the “Co-operative Weather Bureau Station”, which began operations on April Fools Day 1958. The station recorded temperatures, wind velocity and direction, precipitation, solar radiation, barometric pressure, relative humidity, and evaporation. The station also provided forecasts to students through the Daily Aztec newspaper. Don once remarked that he liked weather forecasting because it was like betting on the World Series.

During his tenure at SDSU, Don served as Chairman of the Athletic Board, was an Oceotl Advisor, and coach of the Geography Globegazers (a basketball team). He was also an active participant in the College Community. Don chaired the Geography Department from 1964-1967 and was selected for outstanding faculty contributions to the university in 1982. In 1983, he retired as Emeritus Professor. He will be greatly missed.
Graduate Student News

We will have four continuing student groups in the fall.

The Geography Graduate Student Association (GGSA) is an academic and social organization providing an open and scholarly forum for SDSU geography graduate students to grow as academics and young professionals.

Supporting Women in Geography (SWIG) at SDSU is the local chapter of a nationwide organization dedicated to promoting the participation and empowerment of women in the field of Geography.

American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ASPRS) at SDSU is the local chapter of a nationwide scientific organization with the mission to advance knowledge and improve understanding of mapping sciences to promote the responsible applications of photogrammetry, remote sensing, geographic information systems (GIS), and supporting technologies.

Volunteer Hazard Mapping Corps (VHMC) was formed to assist San Diego County Emergency Services in the handling, analysis, and production of geographic data during emergency events.

GRADUATING Ph.D. STUDENTS

Norman Dale Carter
Dissertation: The Struggle to Create a Residential Community in Downtown Los Angeles
Advisor: Fernando Bosco

Denise Marie Goerisch
Dissertation: Smart Cookies: The Gendered Spaces of Labor, Citizenship, and Nationalism in the Girl Scout Cookie Sale
Co-Advisors: Stuart Aitken and Kate Swanson

Marta Maja Jankowska
Dissertation: Integrating Space and Place into Children’s Perceptions of Environmental Health Hazards in Accra, Ghana
Advisor: John Weeks

Nicole Elizabeth Simons
Dissertation: Improving Emergency Management Response to Wildland Fire Events
Advisor: Piotr Jankowski

Sarah Marie Wandersee
Dissertation: LCLU Change in Human-Environmental Systems: Understanding Complex Interactions Among Policy and Management, Local Livelihoods, and Conservation
Advisor: Li An

Alex Ivan Zvoleff
Dissertation: Understanding the Dynamics of Changing Land-use and Land-cover, Population, and Climate in the Chitwan Valley, Nepal
Advisor: Li An

GRADUATING MASTER’S STUDENTS

Noah Matthew Albers
Christopher Chavis
Samuel Cortez
Fangming Du
Philip Sheridan Elder
Raymond Mark Lee
Daniel Lewis Lusher
Kristin April Meseck
Alex Thomas Messina
Jameson K. Newton
Steve W. Norwood
Alex William Samarim
Jessica Rose Simms
Marilyn R. Stowell
Tim Nicholas Tidwell
Madeline Anne Tuller
John Ballesteros Urata
Milo Jesus Vejraska
Undergraduate Student News

Message from the new Undergraduate Student Representatives

SDSU Geography!

Let’s make this a memorable semester, and get outside and spend some quality time together! Thomas Strand and Jane Westfall are your new Geography Undergraduate Representatives, and together they are planning events for each month of the Fall Semester, so that if you miss one, you can always come to another.

In September, we will kick off the new semester with a BBQ Celebration at Shelter Island!

In October, we will have a camping trip to Joshua Tree, where campers are welcome to bring friends and family. Let’s enjoy the desert!

In November, we will have a department hiking trip, guided by one of our department’s wonderful professors. Where we hike is up to you!

Looking forward to a wonderful semester, Geographers!

GRADUATING STUDENTS

BACHELOR OF ARTS
Geography
Sabina Angela Caliguri
Matthew William Clarkson
Alegandra Coronado
Brant Derell Cowan
Shannon Nicole D’Agostino
Stephen Joseph D’Annibale
Mark C. Daly
Ian James Stuart Dawes
Dalene Marie Early
Athena Atasha Fonseca
Robin Scott Gilson
James Joshua House
Carl Klemens Jablonski
Erin Esperanza Kellison
Jesus Villarreal Lopez
Timothy Patrick McDermott
John Joseph Mead
Gustavo Emmanuel Montalvo
Catherine Joan O’Brien
Landon Joseph O’Donnell
Jeehyun Park
Laura Ann Powell
Hayden Eric Prante
Alex Michael Putko
Melinda Ann Rehfeldt
Lanchester Rowell Retuya
Jonathan Dwight Ringdahl
David L. Saunders
Joel Edward Schmidt
James Andrew Takeda
Joshua Neal Truelson
Kyle Roy Vanvalkenburg
Stacy Leigh Williams
Lester Lok Wong

BACHELOR OF ARTS Urban Studies
Noora Bassam Alkowni
Alicia Amador
Lindsay Leigh Apell
William Joseph Cangiano
Richard Huy Duong
Trystan Elizabeth Flannigan
Danielle Akeyla Hewitt
Lily Ann Kurkjian
John T. Le
Justin Hoon Lee
Zhiting Liao
Lindsay Taylor Loy
Meagan T. Powers
Olivia Arlene Quintanilla
Gabriel Nathan Reyes
Theresa Ann Rodriguez
Sergio Correa Rubio
Mallory Anna Scarpello
Elena Wichers Shulman
Kristy Lee Thornton
Sara Toma
Frederick Douglas Trujillo
David Joseph Westfall

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
Geography
Dustin Conley Farrelly
John Gregory Halmaghi
Former SDSU Geography graduate students Leah Bremer '12, Martin Lacayo '10 and Gregg Verutes '08 are now staff for Stanford University and the Natural Capital Project. While it may not surprise most geographers, all three serve in completely different roles. The Natural Capital Project is developing innovative approaches to valuing the benefits humans obtain from nature with an open-source ecoinformatics toolkit called InVEST. Gregg leads science outreach and capacity building efforts. He is also a GIS specialist focusing on coastal resilience and marine spatial planning. Martin is a software engineer working with an interdisciplinary team. Currently, he is creating a tool to model visitation from tourism and recreation. Leah is working to develop and implement hydrological, biodiversity, and socio-economic monitoring in water funds around Latin America. This summer the team is releasing a water funds prioritization tool called RIOS.

Integrated Valuation of Ecosystem Services and Tradeoffs (InVEST) is a decision-support tool that allows nature’s benefits to be incorporated into decision-making. InVEST models have been used in over a dozen significant policy applications worldwide—from the designation of ecosystem function conservation areas in China, to the establishment of water funds in Latin America, to marine spatial planning in Belize.

Jonathan Rossiter: Class of 2010
Since completing the Master’s program at SDSU, I have been working as an adjunct instructor at several community colleges, including Mesa, Palomar, Saddleback, Cuyamaca, and Southwestern Colleges, as well as teaching at SDSU for two semesters. These colleges extend from the Mexican border to Orange County, and as a result much of my time is spent driving. This experience is typical of new adjunct instructors in all disciplines: one must work at numerous schools to procure a full teaching load (I typically teach seven classes each semester, at three different schools). We even have our own nickname: freeway flyers. For those, like me, who aspire to be hired as full-time professors, working as a freeway flyer is a great way to build experience and a large professional network.

Teaching has been very rewarding. I teach physical geography lecture and lab, world regional, and human/cultural geography courses, so the content I teach constantly feels fresh. Working with community college students is also particularly fulfilling. They range from brilliant to woefully underprepared, but they almost universally find themselves in my classroom because they want to be there.

While my course load and long commutes can make semesters grueling, time between semesters has enabled me to travel extensively. In the last year I have visited the national parks of the southwest, Hawaii, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Travelling enriches my life, but it also enriches my career, as the places I visit and learn about help me provide a personal touch and a sense of authoritativeness in the classroom.

SDSU Geography alumni Grant Fraley and Marta Jankowska opened up their brewery - ChuckAlek
Independent Brewers - this January in Ramona, CA. The idea behind the brewery is reflected in the name, ChuckAlek, which is a tribute to Grant’s grandfather Chuck and Marta’s grandfather Alek. Drawing on the heritage theme, the brewery and the beers are reflective of their families’ unique stories, a concept that fits in nicely with the beers and styles that Grant, the head brewer, is interested in producing. The brewery specializes in historic and old world styles including Breton - a Historic Porter, Dowser - an Altbier, and The Hussar - a Grodziskie (Gratzer) Ale. Grant and Marta welcome any Geography alumni to make a trip out to Ramona and sample their beers! You can find more information, special events, and beer descriptions on their website: www.chuckalek.com

Two Ph.D. students, Giorgio Curti ’10 and Jim Craine ’05, with some input from Stuart (it’s gonna be fine) Aitken, recently edited a book, entitled, The Fight to Stay Put: Social Lessons through Media Imaginings of Urban Transformation and Change. It is published in a media geography series edited by another of our old Ph.D. students, Chris Lukinbeal ’00, in collaboration with two European colleagues. The book includes contributions from six of our current- and ex-students and five SDSU/UCSB faculty members.

Media Geographies is a sub-part of the field that has boasts some of its origins from here at SDSU, and has involved several of our faculty and students over the years. The highly successful e-journal Aether: The Journal of Media Geography, for example, was founded by Jim Craine and Chris Lukinbeal in collaboration with Paul Adams at UT Austin and Jason Dittmer at University College, London. The Fight to Stay Put moves media geographies in a new and interesting direction, with its trenchant focus on combatting the social and spatial inequalities that emerge from neoliberal globalization and urban re-structuring.

CHAIR’S MESSAGE CONTINUED
Throughout all of this, Patti has been steadfast in monitoring our budget situation and remarkably canny in saving us money (I swear her ancestral roots must be Scottish not Irish). Allison joined our staff in the middle of all this and took no time at all to get up to speed and move forward with programs that needed some work.

So let me now dispel with the megalith metaphor and talk a little about the department moving ahead and, in particular, the transition to our new Chair, Piotr Jankowski. As well as thinking of the Department as well-grounded I also see us moving ahead to new fertile horizons in good ways. Perhaps an appropriate metaphor is birds flying in a skein, or V-formation. The skein is sometimes efficient enough to reduce drag (from budgets and other turbulence) by 65%. The chair and others in positions of leadership in the department fly at the tips of the V and are rotated in a timely fashion to spread “flight fatigue equally among the flock members” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V_formation). Piotr is now taking point, and I am excited about his vision and what the future holds. I was chatting to President Hirshman the other day and he has high hopes for regular hiring to start again in Fall 2013. In December 2013 we move back to Storm Hall and although the Geography Annex has served us well, I think I am right in saying that we’re all looking forward to returning to our spacious third floor.

Sadly, I won’t be joining the excitement of the move in December. It is time for me to put my office into boxes and, as a great guru said, “get on thy bike and rideth.” I am off to Slovenia on a research scholarship from Fulbright where I’ll be studying the children of the izbrisani (the “erased”). Please don’t erase me from your thoughts as, in the words of another great guru, “I’ll be back” about this time next year, flying somewhere near the back of the skein. It has been a great five years. Thank you all.
LET US HEAR FROM YOU.

Making a donation to the Geography department will help our graduate and undergraduate Geography students. Your donation will be used to purchase equipment and computers, maintain the laboratories and other facilities, as well as support the numerous scholarships awarded by the department.

There are many ways to give to Geography. The simplest way is to send a check. You may also use a credit card or set up an endowment. Please see http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/calweb/giving/index.htm for more information on the types of gifts.

If you choose to send a check, please make it payable to The Campanile Foundation and mail it and the attached form to:

The Department of Geography
San Diego State University
5500 Campanile Drive
San Diego, CA 92182-4493

To make a secure donation via the web, please visit http://giveonline.sdsu.edu/giving and make sure that you type in the “Geography Department” as the beneficiary in the text box. Do not use the drop down menus.

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