

ALUMNI NEWS

We are pleased to share expanded Alumni News & Insights from the following individuals:

ANDREW BOND, MA '79, PHD '83 is managing editor of *Eurasian Geography and Economics* at V.H. Winston/Bellwether Publishing in Columbia, Maryland, where he has worked for almost 20 years. In his early days there the journal was called *Soviet Geography/Post-Soviet Geography*, and he often found himself and his colleague, Matt Sagers, “on call” 24/7 doing research and writing material to round out issues of the journal. Submissions are way up right now but he leaves the research and writing to younger scholars, like UWM Geography’s Dennis Wei (who is a member of their editorial board). As editor, it is Andy’s job to ensure the journal “platform” is in good condition.

BLAINE BLAESING, BA '86 is a project manager for DigitalGlobe in Boulder, Colorado. He has completed seven marathons in the last few years.

After graduating from UWM Geography, Blaine moved to Phoenix to work in the mapping department of the power and water company. The job gave him insights into the business world, though he found the practice of cartography to be just a little bit different from what he had envisioned it would be. A few years later he moved to Chicago to work for Rand McNally as one of the first members of the company’s new digital cartography group, a team that took the Rand McNally Road Atlas from being a 100% manual product to being a 100% digital product. He also worked on a few city map projects and on their World Digital Database, from which they currently create all their world atlas products.

In 1996 he moved to the Boulder, Colorado area and took a job with a fledgling company, then called EarthWatch, and now known as DigitalGlobe. They have come a long way since their first attempt to launch a high resolution imaging satellite, which failed, leaving the company to struggle for a time. During the next several years Blaine worked at a number of start-up companies, but has since found his way back to Colorado where he is now a project manager in the production segment of DigitalGlobe. Both he and the company are doing well. DigitalGlobe’s imagery is often seen on television news, as part of coverage of such issues as the war in Iraq and the 2004 tsunami.

Outside of work he runs marathons – seven of them in the last few years. This last April he had his sights set on the Boston marathon. Next Spring he’s planning to do a 50-mile race near Whitewater, Wisconsin. And, when not running, he’s busy with his new digital camera and some really nice image processing software, or else “digging” the latest music.

JUDITH RUETSCHÉ, BA '04 has often been asked “Milwaukee, Wisconsin? Why in the world would you leave Switzerland in order to study at UW-Milwaukee?”

Oh well, it wasn't quite that way. She didn't leave Switzerland only to pursue studies at UWM. There were lots of other circumstances that led her to Milwaukee. However, she is very happy that she ended up here and had the opportunity to study Geography at UWM. Judith (pronounced “yu-dith” by the Swiss) found the UWM campus, with its urban atmosphere and its various relations to the city of Milwaukee, to be unique in the UW-System. For her as a student, this was a very stimulating place to be. And, she continues to appreciate Milwaukee as a city. Though she's now in graduate school at UW-Madison, she keeps strong ties to Milwaukee – asserting “It's my hometown.”

Since her career and interests are both products of her background, she finds herself very centered. Places and people have always fascinated her, encouraging her to travel. She found journeys to Ecuador, Mexico, Argentina, South Africa and other countries were instructive experiences; walking in alleys, breathing the air, climbing mountains and talking to local residents were her means of comprehending landscapes. Traveling led her to study tourism and to work as a travel consultant for many years. Communication in several different languages, analysis and coordination of services, as well as teamwork, were skills she learned and with time mastered successfully. However, her work was not completely satisfactory, since she found the travel industry handles places largely as products rather than as precious, complex environments where humans live and work.

So, her undergraduate studies in Geography at UWM provided a more thorough understanding of people and places. Building on her earlier experience, she learned Geography was an excellent preparation for the graduate studies in Planning she is now pursuing at UW-Madison. UWM courses such as quantitative analysis, GIS, urban environmental hazards and the history of cities improved her analytical skills, spatial understanding and the awareness of environmental quality and environmental inequity.

It was, however, the internships at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in Milwaukee, the City of Mequon, and the Swiss Center of Transportation History (www.viastoria.ch) that helped Judith realize planning could be a potential career. In those internships she worked directly with professional planners, landscape architects and geographers, and was exposed to environmental planning, natural resource management and tourism analysis. All three internships demanded profound knowledge in Geography as well as careful planning in order to shape new landscapes; she was delighted to see theory put into practice. Upon starting graduate studies in Urban & Regional Planning at UW-Madison last Fall, her priority was to continue to combine studying and working in the field of Geography or Planning.

Fortunately Judith has been able to realize those intentions. Since last December she has been working as a project assistant at the Institute for Environmental Studies at UW-Madison. Together with two US and two European universities, she prepared a web-based distance education course in urban ecology. It is the basis for US students studying Urban Ecology this Summer in Europe. Not only did she get to develop the web portion of the course, but she is accompanying exchange students on their European trip (namely Amsterdam, Berlin, and Estonia) this Summer, providing on-site coordination and introducing them to the social and cultural differences.

Looking back on her career development, Judith has realized she probably won't ever stop building upon her knowledge and “experiments” with urban places and natural resources. She

says Geography and Urban & Regional Planning intertwine with her passion for traveling, and that's why she is happy about her career. She's certain she has chosen something she can relate to in everyday life.

*Please keep in touch, so we can all keep up-to-date with what "geographers are doing."
Our students are eager to meet alumni and learn how others have utilized their UWM geography degrees.
They truly benefit by spending time with alumni.
If you have internship opportunities, or if you are interested in speaking to a class or joining our students
for a brown bag lunch, please contact us so we can make the appropriate arrangements.*