

Indiana University

Department of Geography E-Newsletter

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 2

SPRING 2019

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Zlotin Retires 1

IU Day! 2

Laura Seifers 3

Hannah Davis 5

**Christopher
Van Allen** 6

Chair's Letter 7

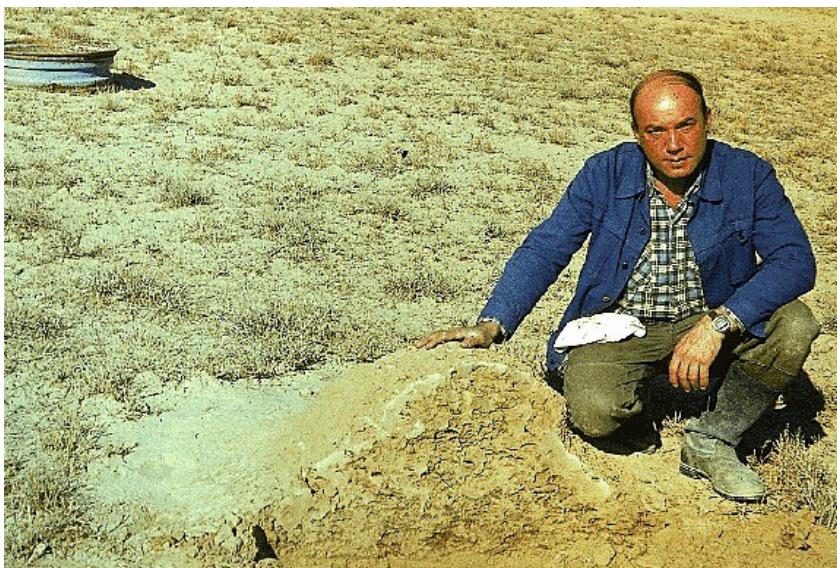


Roman Zlotin Retires

Roman Zlotin, who joined the Department of Geography in 1997 as a Lecturer, will retire at the end of this academic year. Roman taught Introductory Physical Geography, Geography of North Central Asia, and Russia and Its Neighbors for the Department of Geography. He also taught courses for Central Eurasian Studies, the Russian and East European Institute and the Department of International Studies.

In addition to his teaching Roman remains a tireless researcher focusing on steppe environments. His love of grasslands dates from his time at the Soviet Academy of Sciences where he was a noted researcher prior to coming to the U.S. He continued that work in New Mexico after coming to the U.S. and has spent each summer working there since the 1990s, in addition to his annual trek to Russia. He will continue this work in retirement.

The Department will host a retirement party for Roman in late April. If you would like to attend, please contact the Department of Geography main office for details.



Them Changes...

We have a number of big changes coming to the department. First, we invite you to check out our new website which is available at:

<https://geography.indiana.edu/>

Also, this fall we will welcome three new faculty. **Annie Shattuck** will join us as our new critical food studies specialist. **Michael Dwyer** will join us as our new international development specialist. **Julio Postigo** will be joining us as our specialist on human dimensions of global environmental change.

IU Day!

IU Day is 10 April 2019! This year, in addition to our regular events, the Department of Geography is sponsoring a crowdfunding event for the **John Odland Graduate Research Fund**. The John Odland Graduate Research Fund was set up by the family, friends and former students of IU faculty member John Odland upon his death to support opportunities for graduate students to enhance and expand their research activities. Each year, the department uses the fund to make one or two fellowships that enable students to begin fieldwork on their Master's and PhD research projects. To participate in crowdfunding go to: <https://iufoundation.fundly.com/odland-graduate-research-fellowship>

The Indiana University Foundation solicits tax-deductible private contributions for the benefit of Indiana University and is registered to solicit charitable contributions in all states requiring registration. For our full disclosure statement, see <http://go.iu.edu/89n>.

**Find your
home in
Geography**

APRIL 10, 2019

IU DAY

ALL IU. ALL DAY.

Graduate Student Spotlight: Laura Seifers



Laura Seifers fell in love with the Department of Geography when she was taking courses during her undergraduate years when she majored in the Department of Anthropology at Indiana University. She started her studies in the Department of Geography in 2015. In her research she is interested in New Mexico chiles, especially chiles grown in the Hatch Valley in southern New Mexico. Her research focuses on how these chiles are grown and the significance of them to people both inside and outside of New Mexico.

She got interested in this specific topic about ten years ago when she lived in New Mexico. The process of buying chiles and preserving them for the year is conducted by a group of family members who purchased them in large quantities from their preferred producers. According to Laura “there is an entire ritual during harvest time in New Mexico surrounding chiles” that merited study. This chile production process became an important part of her understanding of how food contributes to identity building. A few years ago when she was living back in Bloomington she saw Hatch chiles in grocery stores, and she wondered ‘why is this here?’ Therefore, she wants to understand the reason behind exporting this chiles - not only the product but the entire ritual outside of New Mexico. Especially, she is interested in how this phenomenon is affecting the New Mexican identity and food identity outside of that region. Her plan for further research is to not only look into the region of Hatch but New Mexico as a whole. Lots of different chiles are grown in various regions of this state and these chiles have different connections with the people that produce and consume them. Her future research focuses on how these localized foods and emerging growing areas could be protected, with more agency given to those whose livelihoods depend on chile production. In 2016, there was a lawsuit where the Hatch Chile Farmers sued a company using the name of Hatch because the company was not using chiles from the Hatch Valley region. They capitalized on the name because the name had lots of recognition and reputation. People who grow or eat Hatch chiles believe that the landscape where they are grown coupled with the methods of production create a product that tastes different than other chiles, and their protection is important as it directly ties to heritage as well. According to Laura, in the US we don’t have the same protection for food like the European Union does, for example. The rural communities that are cultivating the products play a crucial role in the food system but will have to continue to tackle new issues like intellectual property rights that come with a wider distribution and larger role in the globalized food system. Therefore, Laura is asking how producers could have more protection over their foods, and have more control of the ritual experiences being shown to new audiences.

Laura likes the opportunity of working in Geography as it is an interdisciplinary subject. According to her, it is important for graduate students to take courses that are not strictly within the scope of their research. She says that she learned things that contributed to new perspectives on her own work, particularly with some of the seminars offered by the department. She especially recommends taking both quantitative and qualitative methods courses for everyone, and says that the great thing about Geography is that you can take what you’ve learned from so many different places.

Laura Seifers (cont.)

Laura appreciates the teaching opportunities that she has received while in this department. Geography of Food is a class that she took as an undergraduate student and she has been able to teach that course and continue to incorporate exciting new ways for undergraduates to learn and love food studies in Geography like she did. She forms good relationships with the students that continue outside of the class. She loves to see how the students are excited about other Geography courses and offers suggestions for future coursework, and also likes to write recommendation letters for her students and help them job search to continue their passions.

Laura feels fortunate to find a strong supportive environment among graduate students and is always inspired by the variety of work in the department. She says, "I love how supportive we are, helping each other with our problems and helping each other to do better." She looks forward to the future.



On Social

Media?

Follow us!

Twitter:

@IUGeography

Facebook page:

IU Geography

APRIL 10, 2019



ALL IU. ALL DAY.

Undergraduate Student Spotlight: Hannah Davis



I'm a senior double majoring in Geography, with a concentration in GIS and Remote Sensing, and Environmental and Sustainability Studies, with a concentration in Sustainable Food Systems. I'm also minoring in Sociology. I grew up in Columbus, IN and then attended Lawrence North High School in Indianapolis, IN. I chose to join the Geography department at IU because I was drawn to the breadth of topics encompassed by the field, and the expertise offered by the faculty within these various topics. I have always been interested in the use of spatial analysis to look at compelling issues about justice and environmental health. Furthermore, I've really enjoyed the challenges of courses that cover new programs and methods used for mapping and data analysis.

For the past year, I have been a research intern in the Critical Food Studies Lab in collaboration with the Geography department. Currently, I am contributing to work identifying service deserts, areas lacking in food access and healthcare services, in 11 counties in southern Indiana. The bulk of my research over the past year primarily consisted of collecting and analyzing data on agriculture in Indiana to understand historical trends. Using mapping software in my analysis allows me to identify both temporal and spatial patterns. The insights gleaned from this research will provide food scholars with a better understanding of the historical and geographic patterns that exist in these data. Through the CFS lab, I also worked on a short project with Green Camino, a local compost collection company. I performed work using GIS that assisted the company in planning their pickup routes in coordination with municipal sanitation routes. It was rewarding to be able to use my spatial analysis skills to do work that aided a local business.

Additionally, I am currently enrolled in the Geography senior capstone course. My group is focusing on Superfund sites across the U.S. In particular, I am analyzing the spatial distribution of contaminated sites to determine whether site location/severity correlates with demographic variables. I plan to look into variables such as household income and cancer rates. Pairing spatial data on Superfund sites with demographic data can help determine what people are most at risk of toxic exposure from Superfund sites, and whether these sites are handled differently depending on the affected population. I hope to make conclusions about whether or not environmental contamination disproportionately affects disadvantaged people and the extent to which Superfund sites lead to negative health impacts.

Outside of school, I have worked on stage crew at the Musical Arts Center on campus for my entire undergraduate career, where I help construct sets and work backstage during operas and ballets. After graduation, I hope to work somewhere that allows me to use my spatial analysis skills to solve problems and learn more about our world.

Alumni Spotlight: Christopher Van Allen



Hello fellow Hoosiers! My name is Chris Van Allen and I am an Indiana University and Geography Department Alumni. While I started off as a Biology major (and even had a two week stint as a Biology and Astronomy double major!), I ended up taking the Geography class “Regions of the World.” That class was so much fun and came natural to me, so I decided to give geography a try my sophomore year. Fast forward to May, 2018, and I graduated with a BA in Geography with a concentration in Globalization, Development, and Justice, a minor in history, and a certificate in GIS and Remote Sensing. During school,

I had the opportunity to get to know several great professors in the department, do a semester long study abroad in England, work in Dan’s food lab, and had a wonderful internship doing GIS work with local company 39 Degrees North! After graduation, I was very grateful to gain more experience with a summer internship at the Indianapolis International Airport, with tasks such as doing data management and creating projects for runway lights, building and terminal mapping, and updating the emergency egress plans. My time there was truly great and I got to learn about an airport more than I ever thought I would.

As much fun as my time at the airport was, my next adventure was just getting started; being with a new non-profit working and living in rural Haiti! I had previously been to Haiti twice on mission trips and had always been interested in doing work in the country, so when the opportunity came, I grabbed it. Our organization is called Zanmi Fondwa ('Zanmi' is the word for 'Friend' in the Kreyol language and 'Fondwa' is the region we do our work in), and we are dedicated to



providing stability through housing, education, and economic development. I have been living in Haiti since September 2018 and have had some truly amazing experiences. Working in a different country has taught me so much in such a short amount of time. I have learned management tools, how to provide meaningful and long lasting development to a region, what it means to be dedicated to

**On Social
Media?
Follow us!**

**Twitter:
@IUGeography**

**Facebook page:
IU Geography**

Christopher Van Allen (cont.)

something, and more - all while having to learn and speak a different language. When not on the job, I am teaching English two days a week at a local school to 6th-9th graders. I also enjoy exploring the region and spending time at the local orphanage.

In regards to what my future holds, I am undecided. I do know I would like to go back to school to get my masters, preferably in geography or international development. I also truly enjoy the work I am doing in Haiti, so I would be extremely grateful to continue to work for Zanmi Fondwa or be in a job like this. However, I am confident that, because of my education at Indiana University and with the Geography Department, I am set up to succeed in whatever I aspire to do next. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share what I have been up to the past year. I always enjoy keeping in touch, and look forward to seeing subsequent newsletters and all that IU Geographers are doing!

Chair's Letter



Dear all,

So after 21 years of being an administrator of something, I am stepping down as chair of the Department of Geography on 1 July 2019. I think the department is in a good place. We have three new faculty arriving in fall of 2019. The last five years have been marked with considerable success: we have a healthy, vibrant faculty and graduate program, undergraduate enrollments are increasing (85% in the last five years), and our undergraduate majors continue to meet with success on the job market. Our recent external review was highly successful and will put us in good stead moving forward,

with new ideas to grow the program further. I will be turning things over this fall to Rebecca Lave we has served for several years now as the Director of Undergraduate Studies, so the department is in very good hands. As she steps into the chair, she will be replaced in her role as Director of Undergraduate Studies by Justin Maxwell. Darren Ficklin will assume duties as Director of Graduate Studies, taking over from Scott Robeson. Kristi Carlson continues as Fiscal Officer and Susan White as Graduate and Departmental Secretary.

Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to have wonderful colleagues and staff, and to work with our alumni, who are a source of constant inspiration to me. I wish you the best and I thank you for your support of the Department of Geography!