

NEWSLETTER

Geography Department welcomes Dr. Jeff Van Looy & Ben Gilmer!

JEFF VAN LOOY

My name is Jeff VanLooy and I am a new Assistant Professor in the Geography Department at Radford University.

I'm originally from Grand Forks, North Dakota which is located on the border with Minnesota. I have had a great interest in geography literally for as long as I can remember. I have also enjoyed doing outdoor activities such as hiking, backpacking, and skiing. Growing up in North Dakota where the winters are long and cold, I gained a particular interest in cold environments, and specifically glaciers. Due to my recreational interests in the environment I decided to

pursue a B.S. degree in Geography, with an emphasis on physical geography, at the

University of Utah, which I completed in the summer of

2007. While there, I studied glaciers and their mass balance with the use of remote sensing techniques and specifically digital elevation models. Now that I am at Radford University, I look forward to continuing my re-

search, teaching, and getting the students as excited about geography as I am.

—Jeff Van Looy



University of Idaho. At the same time I decided to pursue a B.S. degree in Cartography, both of which I completed in the spring of 2000. After completing my undergraduate work I attended Kansas State University where I earned an M.A. in Geography, with my thesis research focusing on fluvial geomorphology. Immediately after I graduated in 2002 I moved to Salt Lake City, Utah to pursue a Ph.D.

BEN GILMER

My name is Ben Gilmer and I am an instructor in the Geography Department at Radford University. I grew up on a small farm not too far from Radford, in the small town of Lebanon, VA.

Special points of interest:

- **Introductions: Dr. Jeff Van Looy & Ben Gilmer**
- **Geography News**
- **Geography Club Activities**
- **Geography Week**
- **GIS Day**

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Geography Department welcomes Dr. Jeff Van Looy & Ben Gilmer! (Continued)



Ben Gilmer

Shortly after graduating high school I attended Radford University as an undergraduate student in the Economics Department, but quickly ended up in the Geography Department after only one week of my first Geography class. After graduating from RU in 2004, I began working for the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) as a GIS Specialist. While working for the DNR, I was extremely fortunate to be exposed to many of the wonderful applications of environmental geography through my diverse work

“ getting my feet wet ” in water quality studies. After working for the DNR for over a year, I

conservation needs-assessment for the state of West Virginia; studying the environmental and economic impact of ecotourism on the Aysén Glacier Trail in Patagonia, Chile; irrigation techniques in urban agriculture in Havana, Cuba; and comparing different methods for reconstructing historic fires in the Pacific Northwest U.S. Upon completion of my degree at WVU, I was very excited to come back to Radford in an entirely new capacity...sitting on the other side of the desk! I am truly enjoying this experience and I look forward to sharing my enthusiasm for geography with my students and others in the RU community.



attended West Virginia University where I earned an M.A. in Geography. My thesis research was primarily focused

-BEN GILMER

Wine is geography in a bottle” –

Jancis Robinson

Geography of Wine



Dr. Bernd Kuennecke will offer “*Geography of Wine*” for the first time in

the Geography Department. The course will be a 400 level seminar and will cover topics such as spatial distributions and geographical patterns of viticulture throughout the world. Other points of interest will include analysis of physical and cultural geography of wine regions

throughout the world and what factors into a quality wine (landscape, people, techniques, economics, politics etc.)

The course requires no formal prerequisites however, a substantial amount of reading should be expected and materials will be challenging as expected with an upper division course.



The course will be launched in Spring 2008 and will hopefully be welcomed by students and enjoyed by many!



Geography of Wine

Spring 2008

Geography Week, November 15-21, 2007

International Geography week takes place worldwide during the week of November 15 through 21st with November 14th designated as International GIS day. Some informative activities are currently being planned for the campus community as well as anyone else who would like to participate for the week. The Geography Club will be closely involved with the plans to kick off Geography Week.

A general concern is that not

enough information is available to students about Geography. Geography Week is designed to raise awareness regarding the everyday need an importance of Geography.

Please check with the Geography Department at Radford University for additional information on Geography Week activities as the date approaches. Current information will be posted on our website located at www.radford.edu/geog-web/

as soon as information becomes available. Please look for the Geography Week link that will [soon] appear on the main page.



Geography Greek to Most Students

Study: Geography Greek to young Americans

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- After more than three years of combat and nearly 2,400 U.S. military deaths in Iraq, nearly two-thirds of Americans aged 18 to 24 still cannot find Iraq on a map, a study released Tuesday showed.

The study found that less than six months after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, 33 percent could not point out Louisiana on a U.S. map.

The National Geographic-Roper Public Affairs 2006 Geographic Literacy Study paints a dismal picture of the geographic knowledge of the most recent graduates of the U.S. education system.

"Taken together, these results suggest that young people in the United States ... are unprepared for an increasingly global future," said the study's final report.

"Far too many lack even the most basic skills for navigating the international economy or

understanding the relationships among people and places that provide critical context for world events."

The study, which surveyed 510 young Americans from December 17 to January 20, showed that 88 percent of those questioned could not find Afghanistan on a map of Asia despite widespread coverage of the U.S.-led overthrow of the Taliban in 2001 and the political rebirth of the country.

In the Middle East, 63 percent could not find Iraq or Saudi Arabia on a map, and 75 percent could not point out Iran or Israel. Forty-four percent couldn't find any one of those four countries.

Inside the United States, "half or fewer of young men and women 18-24 can identify the states of New York or Ohio on a map [50 percent and 43 percent, respectively]," the study said.

On the positive side, the study noted, seven in 10 young Americans correctly located China on a map, even though they had a number of misconceptions about that country. Forty-five percent said China's population is only twice that of the United States. It's actually four times larger than the U.S. population.

When the poll was conducted in 2002, "Americans scored second to last on overall geographic knowledge, trailing Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan and Sweden," the report said.

The release of the 2006 study coincides with the launch of the National Geographic-led campaign called "My Wonderful World." A statement on the program said it was designed to "inspire parents and educators to give their kids the power of global knowledge."

<http://www.cnn.com/2006/>

"The study found that less than six months after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, 33 percent could not point out Louisiana on a U.S. map."

-Geography Greek to Most Students

Are you one of the 88%?





Geography Department Website
www.radford.edu/geog-web



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